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Remarks by Director Squires — U.S. Chamber of Commerce International IP Index

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Remarks as delivered

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U.S. Chamber of Commerce International IP Index

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Good morning, and thank you, Kelly, for that kind introduction.

And thank you to the U.S. Chamber for the extraordinary work that goes into compiling, producing and releasing the International IP Index each year. Your report has undeniably become one of the most important global benchmarks for intellectual property systems. The fourteenth edition evaluates 55 economies across 53 indicators, providing a remarkably comprehensive picture of how intellectual property systems function around the world. And I have to admit, I have a special appreciation for indexes.

Before joining the USPTO, I spent about ten years at Goldman Sachs. On Wall Street as you know, indexes are not just academic constructs — they are decision tools. Investors rely on them to understand exposure, measure performance, and identify risk across entire markets.

A well-constructed index takes something vast and complex — an industry, a sector, sometimes the entire global economy — and translates it into signals that help people make better decisions. In other words, indexes tell you where capital is flowing, where risk is building, and where the next opportunities might emerge. That same logic applies to innovation policy. Because ideas behave a lot like capital. They move toward environments that are predictable, protected, and capable of supporting long-term investment.

Indexes like the Chamber's help policymakers see that landscape clearly. They show where innovation ecosystems are strong, where they are weakening, and where reforms can unlock growth. What makes

the Chamber's Index so valuable is that it performs the same function for the global innovation system that financial indexes perform for capital markets: it provides a clear signal about where ideas are most likely to flourish.

And this year's results tell a powerful story.

For more than a decade, the United States has remained the global benchmark for intellectual property protection.

Once again, the United States ranks first globally, with an overall score of roughly 95 percent — a position it has held every year since the Index was first launched. That outcome reflects something fundamental about the American innovation system.

Inventors invest when the rules are clear. Entrepreneurs take risks when the law is predictable. And innovators build when they know their ideas will be protected. That confidence is the foundation of our innovation economy.

Now, at America's Innovation Agency, we take great pride that our patent system remains strong and occupies the number one spot in the report. And as you've seen we've taken the hard work head on – from eligibility, to quality, both front end and back end efforts – and even now feedback loops to ensure fairness and with global reach, consistency, predictability, and efficiency. We're hiring – slated for over 1000 new examiners this year – adding week in and week out to our cadre of the best in the world at what they do – our examiners. We're teaming, we're training, we're incentivizing, we're market-engaging, leaving no stone unturned to make sure the best system in the world is even stronger, more robust, more resilient, more responsive, and more relevant than ever before. We're here to deliver on our innovators' ambitions and the brilliant tomorrows that they build for us all, tinker by tinker, breakthrough by breakthrough, dream by dream.

And recognizing that, and with the help of market information, profoundly like your index, we're reimagining the Office to meet the future. We're framing the critical dialogue between the market and our agency as entrusted stewards of tomorrow's ideas. For if capital markets allocate financial capital, intellectual property systems allocate innovation capital.

That is why we see the USPTO as the Department of Commerce's Central Bank of Innovation.

Just as a central bank's mission is to ensure the stability and flow of capital through an economy, the USPTO's charge is to help ensure the stability and flow of ideas, and by protecting them, encourage new ones, in a marvelous, virtuous cycle that has sustainably delivered prosperity for over 250 years, like no nation before, like no nation ever.

Every application we intake — trademark or patent — it matters not — represents an innovator bringing a new concept into the economic system, into the real economy, into the real world.

This is the conversion of human ingenuity into a definable, translatable, economic asset class, and it's remarkable.

What's more remarkable is when that happens consistently, robustly, and at scale, innovation then becomes synonymous with national power and resiliency.

Just as the Federal Reserve stands alongside the Department of Treasury as the institution responsible for injecting hard-dollar capital into the economy, the USPTO similarly serves an essential role within the Department of Commerce for the injection of soft-dollar intellectual property assets into the stream of commerce and translated into real and measurable economic contribution and output.

A central function for a central bank, be it monetary policy or innovation policy.

Now, excitingly, this means for us that we see the Chamber's index as an extraordinarily valuable policy tool. The index readily provides a rational, structured, and actionable way to surmise the global innovation landscape and its contours and horizons — and gauge where intellectual property systems are impactful, where emerging risks lie, and where policy redress may be effective. And where, whether, and to what extent innovation tethers to the real economy.

Such metrics allow us — at the micro level — to identify risks earlier, understand their drivers more clearly, and take proactive steps in anticipation of scenarios developing that may otherwise frustrate policy goals, and undermine innovation ecosystems.

And at the macro level, the scale of the economic impact of IP is mindboggling.

In the U.S., IP-intensive industries account for roughly 41 percent of U.S. economic output — some estimates put it at around 6.2 trillion dollars — and support more than 63 million American jobs. And as you well know at the Chamber, those industries indeed power America's global trade competitiveness.

In fact, IP-intensive services account for about 31 percent of total U.S. services exports, making them one of the largest contributors to the United States' global services surplus.

That is exactly the core engine of American ingenuity driving economic growth at work.

And as such, at the USPTO, we are obligated to continue to do the things necessary for us to always set the bar as THE global standard for intellectual property protection.

Now as to that, quality is a top priority of course.

And we are equipping our examiners with the most advanced tools available, including artificial intelligence-enabled search capabilities that allow them to analyze prior art more effectively than ever before.

Our examiners now have access to AI search tools such as Similarity Search, More Like This Document, and image-based design searching, just to name a few, with additional tools being released soon, in just a few weeks. Same thing on the trademark side. Searching areas and classifications that used to take five months, now takes five minutes. Sometimes, five seconds. You heard me correctly. They're tested and ready for release very shortly. As to the examination fundamentals of quality and pendency, the basic blocking and tackling side we need to get right, we are making steady progress across both patents and trademarks. But we can do more, we shall do more. Confidence in an IP system ultimately is inherently and inexorably the three-legged stool of quality, clarity, and timeliness.

Confidence at the agency is now strong again and being born stronger every day.

We also are becoming much more market-engaged, recently launching our Standard-Essential Patent Working Group — dedicated to ensuring that all patent holders — regardless of their size or sophistication — are treated fairly and receive strong and predictable enforcement of their rights whenever standards incorporate patented technologies. Standards-essential patents represent significant investment, ingenuity, and risk-taking by American inventors as they enable interoperability, create markets, and unlock innovation.

Yet, the SEP ecosystem has become increasingly hostile amidst widespread efforts to devalue contributions, unclear rules about rights, and systematic suppression of licensing rates. Our working group is designed to counter this, and ensure that American inventors can obtain meaningful protection for their breakthroughs.

I recite these several examples of specific initiatives the Chamber's index affords us by providing a line of sight into and accompanying means for calibrating our actions nimbly.

But the index has tremendous additional value in the other, riveting story it tells – and tells in real time. It provides fundamental insights about risk. And critically, if you read the report as we do, there's an unmistakable and concerning trend: some of the intellectual property frameworks of the world's most advanced economies are in atrophy and decline. If that trend continues unabated, it risks normalizing lower global standards for innovation protection at exactly the moment when the reverse should be true – and attaining more is within reach because the pace of global technological competition is accelerating.

Indeed, the 2026 International IP Index offers a clear warning on the weakening of IP rights globally and one that we must pay close attention to as we forge a path to strong intellectual property rights.

I'll give you some examples of the problem areas the index points to. And as to these, I'm here to tell you that America's Innovation Agency will continue to lead the fight to ensure that IP rights are protected for our rights holders. With clear rules, committed enforcement, effective international cooperation, and a steadfast defense of the value of IP, we can and will ensure that the next wave of breakthroughs is protected, promoted, and put to work for the benefit of society.

One area we've taken the fight to the market is advocating for strong copyright protection around the world, and we are working closely with other federal agencies to press our trading partners to eliminate or narrow overbroad copyright exceptions to ensure that foreign copyright regimes adequately protect U.S. creators in those markets.

We continue to insist on strong civil, criminal, and border enforcement around the world, including satellite and cable signal piracy. Already in the enforcement context, we have strongly advocated for ex parte authority because it allows the suspension of suspected counterfeit goods without requiring a right holder complaint, thus ensuring efficient control of imported goods — at the border. International discussions and engagement are central to the mission of protecting IP rights. Markets are global; supply chains and scientific collaborations cross borders; and inconsistent standards discourage investment and create legal fragmentation.

Which is why I'm sure it comes as no surprise that an increasingly strong warning signal we see emanating from WIPO demands prompt attention. We need to ensure that WIPO stays in keeping with its core mission to promote IP protection. Too often proposals are entertained that weaken intellectual property rights, or

attempt to redefine IP rights in ways that undermine the incentives that drive invention, investment, and technological leadership.

That is not what WIPO was created to do. WIPO itself states that it is the United Nations agency that serves the world's innovators and creators — ensuring that their ideas travel safely to the market and improve lives everywhere.

The index, you see, tells a different story, and from what we're observing in both policy and structure, it seems that WIPO's mission statement is being forgotten.

Someone should remind them.

We will.

We are also leading the effort to make foreign markets safe for U.S. innovators, including by training foreign government officials with IP-related responsibilities. Notably, our agency is maintaining and expanding the reach of the IP Attaché Program — which I know is a Chamber favorite — it certainly is of mine — and we'll be establishing a new post in Seoul.

We continue to use not only bilateral engagements but also broader cooperation frameworks such as IP5, ID5, and TM5, as well as the G7 and G20, to explore and develop initiatives that are designed to enhance our internal operating processes on both the patent and trademark sides as well as to achieve convergence across jurisdictions in law and practice, where possible.

Because markets are global.

And innovation competition is global.

When IP systems weaken, investment slows, uncertainty grows, and innovation migrates to jurisdictions where protection is stronger. Such are the times for a Central Bank of Innovation to act.

Nearly every major technological breakthrough of the past century — from semiconductors to biotechnology to artificial intelligence — has been supported by strong intellectual property frameworks that reward invention and encourage investment.

That is the lesson reflected in the Chamber's Index, and the story being told anew with the Chamber's annual release each year.

We at the USPTO are listening, and we're listening intently.

As the leader on IP rights, count on our agency to affirmatively promote IP agendas that recognize the centrality of IP to economic resilience, and that are attentive to the needs of emerging technologies.

So, I want to thank the U.S. Chamber for continuing to produce its vital report, its actionable intelligence — and for the leadership it represents in defending the role of intellectual property in the global economy. It gives policymakers around the world something incredibly valuable if they're willing: a clear roadmap for strengthening innovation ecosystems.

Because at the end of the day, a strong intellectual property system may begin with a legal structure, but its efficacy rests on whether or not it is a foundation for economic growth, an opportunity for

technological leadership, and a catalyst for human progress.

The United States is proud to lead and will continue to do so, to do the hard work and necessary work to ensure the next generation of inventors, entrepreneurs, and creators can eagerly bring their ideas to market — any and all markets of their choosing — and, by so doing, make all our worlds better.

Thank you.

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