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Opening Statement by Director Squires before the House Judiciary, Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, Artificial Intelligence, and the Internet

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OPENING STATEMENT

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OVERSIGHT HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE JUDICIARY, SUBCOMMITTEE ON COURTS, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY,
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND THE INTERNET

March 25, 2026

As prepared for delivery

Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Johnson, Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member Raskin, Members of the Subcommittee:

Good morning and thank you for this opportunity to discuss the USPTO's operations and initiatives.

I thank President Trump for his confidence in me to lead America's Innovation Agency, and for his steadfast commitment to intellectual property – reaffirmed yet again with his National AI Policy framework released Friday.

It's also the honor of a lifetime to serve Secretary Lutnick, a phenomenal leader, with boundless energy and unparalleled experience, himself an inventor on nearly 500 patents.

I am honored today to provide the Subcommittee an overview of the USPTO's recent activities and accomplishments.

America's Innovation Agency has two foundries:

- For Patents – America's Invention Agency, and
- For Trademarks – America's Branding Agency.

Together, we function as the Department of Commerce's "Central Bank of Innovation," – every unit of intellectual property we put into circulation is a potential job, a new business, a competitive advantage, an investible asset, a life-saving drug, all flowing into the real economy, into the real world. And at scale, American ingenuity means national prowess and global reach.

I can't thank the USPTO's highly educated and talented workforce enough for their dedication and commitment. I say to everyone, 'they are the best in the world at what they do.' Because, quite simply, they are.

And none of this would be possible without the fee authority so thoughtfully provided by Congress, allowing us to operate like a business, maintain long-term financial stability, and achieve our statutory mission.

We also greatly appreciate the continued authority to spend anticipated fee collections – which lies at the heart of our US global leadership. We look forward to working together to maintain both it and our global lead.

Indeed, we lead today because our Founders did the extraordinary 2 centuries ago – enshrining IP protection into our Constitution. And with it – the American experiment itself, the American experience itself.

Last month, I told the head of the UK IPO how our Constitutional charge allows us to lean into AI, quantum, medical diagnostics – wherever the onrush of technology is going.

His candid reply, "I know – wish I had that."

Think about that – the very empire we won our independence from: two democracies, two outcomes, but only one clearly atop the IP world today. That's why it's incumbent upon the USPTO to have an "America First IP" agenda built atop the unique legacy our Founders bestowed upon us. And we're doing exactly that, with the urgency of now.

As I'm before you today, our first priority was slashing the unacceptable backlog by 50,000.

Another 100,000 to come this year.

By the end of my tenure – and with your continued fee-setting authority – choking backlogs will be a thing of the past, and improved quality – a confidence-indicator.

I'm confident, because we just announced our first agentic-AI Trademark Classification tool. Five months of manual searching, is now a FIVE-SECOND outcome.

In Patents, our AI search-assistant delivers a top ten list of prior art – before the first office action – providing quicker pathways to allowance.

And, across both, AI fraud detections helped us purge 70,000+ baseless filings – in just under a year.

You see, AI tools will become our Examiner's super-powers, supplying them with a cadre of agents to deploy as they see fit.

On policy, Congress affords us discretion, and our north star to its exercise is always both the letter and the spirit of the AIA, balancing – as instructed – economic impact, resource efficiency, and the integrity our IP system.

We are restoring balance and fairness on both the front-end – with eligibility determinations – and the back end as to trials and error correction – with new feedback loops in between.

Mr. Chairman, I am humbled and proud to lead this unique and vibrant agency. We are back on our front foot. And delivering the brilliant tomorrows American ingenuity affords, tinker by tinker, breakthrough by breakthrough, dream by dream.

Just as a central bank stabilizes the flow of capital into the real economy, the USPTO stabilizes the flow of innovation into the knowledge economy. And with born-strong protection, new ideas soon blossom – in a marvelous, virtuous cycle that has delivered prosperity and bettered peoples' lives for over 250 years, like no nation before, like no nation ever.

Thank you again – I look forward to your questions.

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