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Remarks by John A. Squires for the USPTO America 250 Flagship Celebration!

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Remarks as delivered

John A. Squires

60th Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the USPTO

USPTO America 250 Flagship Celebration!

July 1, 2026

Thank you for that warm introduction, Jason, and for all of your and your team's fantastic work — and good afternoon, everyone!

Welcome to our America's 250 Flagship Celebration!

It's an incredible honor to steward America's Innovation Agency, and it is fantastic to gather today with colleagues on our beautiful campus, to welcome our National Science Foundation neighbors who are tuning in, and to speak virtually with our outstanding regional and community engagement offices throughout this **great** country of ours.

This celebration is a reminder of what's best about our agency — and it's simple, and it's elegant, AND it's an irresistible force — because it's all of you!

First off, I'm delighted to recognize a few of our leaders who have worked tirelessly to bring us together today. Without them, there would be no event (please hold your applause):

- the Supervisory Patent Examiners Classifiers Organization;
- the Asian Pacific American Network;
- Women in Science and Engineering;
- the Patent and Trademark Office Society;

- and the USPTO Military Association.

And a special thank you to:

- Beau Robbins, our Thomas Jefferson Living Historian;
- Philip Smucker, our George Washington Living Historian;
- the U.S. Army Fife & Drum Corps and U.S. Army Color Guard;
- Dr. Benjamin Fiore-Walker, the Alexandria Town Crier;
- And our wonderful USPTO Patenteers Chorus.

Thank you for your dedication in organizing today's incredible celebration.

And my personal message to our family here at America's Innovation Agency:

Each and every one of you is absolutely, beyond question, unequivocally, say-it-with-me-now, "The best in the world at what you do!" Our patent examining corps, trademark examining attorneys, our staff no matter your role — you are our Top Guns.

You carry America's Innovation Agency, in all its glory, forward on your broad shoulders — unflinchingly, undauntingly like Atlas himself lifting the mighty universe of invention and discovery. And your efforts are felt, every day, with every stride — by hundreds of millions of your fellow Americans not only from sea to shining sea, but throughout the four corners of the world.

It is the highest of honors to work with you in fulfilling the lofty and worthy mission of delivering on the dreams of America's fearless imaginers and tirelessly curious who have, innovation by innovation, built better tomorrows.

And today, of course, marks our Agency's flagship America 250 event, and where else would you rather be!!??

For the best way to honor our heroic past is to joyously celebrate our role in igniting American ingenuity. And at a time and moment in history when innovation has never been more prominent, important, or central to who we are as Americans.

Indeed, intellectual property has propelled our nation, changed the world, saved lives, saved the world — and as a result, we unquestionably lead the world.

And it's for a very good, and uniquely American reason.

That's because, of course, back in 1776, the first seeds of independence began with an idea by our Founders that every person was endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

That spark fueled the fires of freedom, ultimately alighting the entire world, and took hold with our hard-won independence as America became, anew, the birthplace of modern democracy.

Then, something even more remarkable happened. Subtly, but profoundly, as our young nation created its governance structure and guiding document — the likes of which had never been seen before — our Founders went further, and enshrined IP protection into the very heart of the American Constitution in Article I, Section 8, clause 8.

For you, and me, and every American, our Constitution secures for a limited time "to Authors and Inventors the EXCLUSIVE RIGHT to their respective writings and discoveries."

And there it is.

The word "right."

It's the only recitation of a "right" in the textual document itself. Otherwise, you have to look to the first 10 amendments — our Bill of Rights. But here it is unto itself — boldly, remarkably, daringly, beautifully — and ultimately SINGULARLY APPEARING in Article 1 amongst the Seven articles of the "Constitution Proper."

So, it should come as no surprise — but it always astonishes — that the USPTO is in fact one of the oldest federal missions in our government.

Before there was a Department of Treasury.

Before there was a Department of State.

Before there were most of the institutions we now take for granted in the Executive Branch — there was an affirmative, indelible commitment to the born strong newly United States, and to innovation.

Indeed, the patents we grant and the trademarks we register are the rising tide lifting the great ship U.S.A — with the spirit of innovation as the prevailing winds in our national sails.

When the spark of genius fires, and we award those exclusive rights with the imprimatur of America's Innovation agency, we set in motion a positive chain reaction, butterfly effect, a flywheel . . .

For one person's inspiration spurs another's curiosity.

And further innovation, and more curiosity.

And on. And on. And on.

The runaway train of new ideas generates even more new ideas.

And this amazing locomotive engine has spectacularly spurred innovation and advanced society at a pace unmatched by any other country or society in human history — even to this day.

And look at where we are:

In 1790, President George Washington signed the first U.S. patent. In 2018, President Donald J. Trump affixed his signature to U.S. Patent No. 10 Million. And when springtime comes next year, we will present President Trump for his signature U.S. Patent No. 13 Million.

That's 13 million new inventions, improvements, pushes of the envelope, and advances in our quality of life since America was born — that the world would never have otherwise seen. But for America. But for America's Innovation Agency.

From the birth of the Republic, innovation has been central to the American experiment itself, is-and-of the American Experience itself.

It is the very bedrock of American Exceptionalism itself.

For more than two centuries of invention, that exceptionalism has been steam engines and steel, electricity and aviation, semiconductors and software, biotechnology and artificial intelligence.

And in marks of trade, we've enjoyed innovation in living color: From green stamps to golden arches, and of course red labels on cola, white mustaches of milk, and denim blue jeans.

And for all of us who have World Cup fever — as America remarkably co-hosts in our 250th year and wildly supports our Men's National Team — just dominating! — I can't wait for tonight! We are displaying the 1993 trademark for Major League Soccer, which was established all the way back in 1994 as part of the United States' successful bid to host the FIFA World Cup.

As the late, great Mel Allen used to say in his trademark voice, "How about that!"

Of course that's just a tiny, tiny fraction of how innovation touches every American's — indeed, every global citizen's daily life. I could regale you with 13 million stories, but you know the story because you live it, because you breathe it, because you are the best in the world at doing it.

It goes without saying that for us, at America's Innovation Agency, in America's 250th year, our mission remains the same as when the word "right" was at the tip of a quill pen and inscribed on Constitutional parchment just as it is written into every American's DNA. These rights and protections we grant enable entrepreneurs to compete and investors to believe.

Every piece of IP we put into circulation is a potential job, a new business, a competitive advantage, an investible asset. And IS yet another win for BOTH society and the Constitutional foresight of our Founders, and the very freedoms they envisioned in 1776.

So, here we stand, today: The doorway to America's Innovation Agency is, in fact and deed, the entry point to the system of recorded and respected dreams.

But there is something else our national brand of ingenuity shares, which is also so very and uniquely American.

The inspiration and perspiration we see every day — and we are the very first in the world to see it — says as much about innovation, as it is a life lesson.

There is no quit.

Failure does not deter — it is part of every American dreamer's equipment . . . We shall prevail.

I have on my desk in the Director's office — on loan from the Smithsonian Museum — the model submitted from Thomas Alva Edison for his incandescent lamp — one of the greatest inventions in the history of mankind — the very incarnation of an idea.

Talk about being undeterred by failure. Thomas Edison was fearless, tireless and tenacious, inventing the lightbulb on his 1,000th try. Think about that: 1,000 adjustments, tinkers, changes here and there and back to the drawing board, again, and again, and again. Times 1,000. Times 1,000!!

And it's now legend what he said about his 1,000th and successful try: "I now also know 999 ways that don't work."

You see, our intrepid, tireless, and tenacious applicants inexorably learn more from their ideas that don't work, than the ones that do.

This is the gift of perseverance, of passion, of never say die. For it is the story of success. It is the story of American Ingenuity. It is the story of the U.S. And it is the envy of the world.

Patents and trademarks have advanced society in ways unimaginable at our founding — unimaginable, that is, except to the creative, the curious, and the brave.

And the dream of America has become the reality of today — 250 years later, thanks to YOUR tireless dedication to our mission, your energy, your persistence. YOUR indominable spirit is the mighty heart of American Ingenuity.

So, today, in closing, from our USPTO headquarters in Alexandria, to our regional and community engagement offices across the country, may you soak in all the fantastic events and activities we've created today, created to celebrate the astonishing and innumerable ways innovation has enabled our great nation to lead the way forward.

For tomorrow will be even better than today, because we make it so.

The spirit of innovation *is* the spirit of America. And nowhere is it more evident than at America's Innovation Agency.

So, I salute all of you, and together let us salute this semiquincentennial. Happy 250th, America!

Thank you!

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