

**ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN MEDICAL COLLEGES
ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY MANAGERS
COUNCIL ON GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**HIGHER EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS APPLAUD FINAL PASSAGE OF AMERICA
INVENTS ACT**

Following is a statement by the above-named higher education associations on Senate passage today of H.R. 1249, the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act. The bill now goes to the White House for the President's signature.

The nation's research universities and medical colleges applaud the Senate for approving the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act, which reforms the U.S. patent system. It is a thorough, balanced measure that will bring that system, which is vital to innovation and competitiveness, into the 21st century. When the President signs this legislation, as he has said he will, he will set in motion reforms that strengthen our nation's capacity to innovate and expand our economy's potential for growth and prosperity.

We appreciate that the concerns of universities and medical colleges were addressed in ways that ensure our institutions' ability to carry out their public missions. These institutions are the nation's principal source of the basic research that expands the frontiers of knowledge. The patent system plays a pivotal role in helping them transfer the discoveries made in their laboratories to the commercial sector for development into products and processes that benefit society. The associations' position on patent reform closely followed recommendations by academic and industry leaders convened by the National Academies in 2004.

H.R. 1249 will clarify and simplify the patent application process and harmonize the U.S. patent system with that of our major trading partners. These improvements will enable U.S. inventors at universities and elsewhere to compete more effectively in the global marketplace. The bill includes a number of carefully developed provisions to improve patent quality and reduce patent litigation costs. The bill also will help provide the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office with the resources it needs to end the current major backlog of patent applications, streamline Office operations, and enhance its capacity to support the modernized U.S. patent system.

Enactment of this measure is especially important at a time when our nation's economy is struggling and there are concerns about America's ability to thrive in the increasingly competitive global marketplace. Solving these problems is a difficult puzzle for the nation's policymakers, but let there be no doubt: patent reform is a critical piece of that puzzle.

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