

18 March 2014

The Honorable Mary Landrieu
U.S. Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Landrieu,

On March 12th you received a letter from the Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy expressing concerns about the impact pending patent reform legislation may have on small businesses and startup inventors. IEEE-USA completely agrees with the SBA's assessments of these proposals. We share the SBA's concern that legislative proposals could do lasting harm to our innovation economy by making it harder for smaller patent holders to acquire and legally protect their ideas.

IEEE represents over 200,000 individual technology professionals in the United States. Our members include thousands of small business owners, entrepreneurs and independent inventors whose livelihoods depend on ideas – and the laws that protect those ideas. Our members serve on the “front line” of the US patent system. They create start-ups, invent cutting-edge technology, and contribute greatly to the United States' ability to compete in the global economy. Legislation that makes it harder to obtain and enforce patents will impair their ability to raise capital, take risks, innovate, create domestic jobs, and grow.

As the subject-matter specialists in the Senate on the perspective of small business entrepreneurs and independent inventors, you have a unique role. We ask you and your Committee members to protect the sector of the economy pertaining to your jurisdiction and urge your other Senate colleagues to ensure that legislation be more narrowly crafted only to curb abuses rather than adversely affect all patent holders.

We look forward to a continuing dialog with you and your colleagues on ways to craft legislation that improves our current patent system without harming small businesses. Please feel free to contact Erica Wissolik at e.wissolik@ieee.org or (202) 530-8347 if you have questions or would like to speak with IEEE's members about their concerns.

Sincerely,



Gary L. Blank, Ph.D.
IEEE-USA President