

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The President
United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Kamala D. Harris
The Vice President
United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

May 12, 2021

Re: Appointment of Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris,

We write to you to express our interest in a strong and diverse United States intellectual property system. The National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) was founded in 1899. The mission of NAWL is to provide leadership, a collective voice, and essential resources to advance women in the legal profession and advocate for the equality of women under the law. We, the undersigned attorneys, are the Co-Chairs of NAWL's Women in Intellectual Property & Technology Law affinity group.

We believe a strong intellectual property system requires strong leadership, which starts with the appointment of a qualified executive to serve as the Director of the USPTO. The Director position should be filled with a top-caliber, knowledgeable, intellectual property professional who has demonstrated the ability and commitment to encourage innovation and economic growth in the United States. In addition to being a champion of innovation and creativity, we believe the Director must also be able to demonstrate a dedicated commitment to, and track record of, encouraging women and under-represented minorities to participate in the innovation economy, through embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion ideals for both inventors and practitioners.

As women lawyers, we are acutely aware of the disproportionate number of women and minorities amongst both intellectual property attorneys and inventors. For example, according to the USPTO, in 2019 only 21.9% of patents had at least one female inventor.¹ Indeed, the disparities in women and diverse inventors have been highlighted by the bipartisan coalition of U.S. senators and representatives who recently introduced the Inventor Diversity for Economic Advancement ("IDEA") Act.²

¹ <https://www.uspto.gov/ip-policy/economic-research/publications/reports/progress-potential>

² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/4075>

On behalf of NAWL, we, therefore, respectfully request that during the process of evaluating the qualifications of candidates for the position of Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, significant weight be given to their track records on improving diversity and gender equality within our intellectual property system, the scientific community, and the legal community.

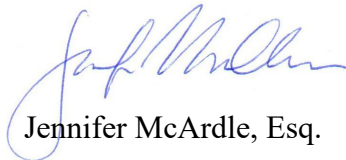
Respectfully submitted,



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CC: Catherine M. Russell
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