

December 9, 2014

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles L. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Michelle K. Lee to be the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

The American Intellectual Property Law Association (“AIPLA”) is pleased to submit this letter in response to President Obama’s nomination of Michelle K. Lee to be the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

AIPLA is a national bar association with approximately 15,000 members who are primarily lawyers in private and corporate practice and government service and in the academic community. AIPLA’s members represent a wide and diverse spectrum of individuals, companies, and institutions, and are involved directly or indirectly in the practice of patent, trademark, copyright, and unfair competition law. Our members represent both owners and users of intellectual property.

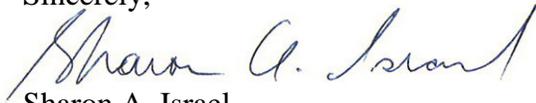
In November, 2013, AIPLA issued a White Paper on Recommended Qualifications for the Next Director and Deputy Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The report states that the candidate for Director of the USPTO should have “at least 15 years of industry or USPTO experience, with 10 or more years of managerial and fiscal responsibility in a substantial corporation, administrative agency or law firm.”

Additionally, the report listed specific skills and attributes that are important for the holder of this Office including successfully managing and leading a large enterprise, including proven success in labor/management relations and employee retention; demonstrated capabilities in strategic planning, budgeting, and financial management; experience in congressional and international intellectual property policy advocacy and proven diplomacy skills; and a demonstrated commitment and willingness to engage and listen to the stakeholder community in transparent and constructive discourse when contemplating and evaluating office operations, regulatory changes and policy decisions.

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Upon reviewing the background and experience of Ms. Lee with these recommendations in mind, AIPLA has found that she meets the qualifications set out in our White Paper. This important position has been vacant for over a year and AIPLA urges the Committee to move forward with the confirmation process. We look forward to working with Ms. Lee upon her confirmation and we thank you in advance for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon A. Israel". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sharon A. Israel

President

American Intellectual Property Law Association