

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 1, 2011

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to request that the Administration consider adding funds to its budget to establish multiple satellite offices for the United States Patent and Trademark Office (PTO). On December 13, 2010, the PTO briefed the Colorado Congressional Delegation on its decision to select Detroit as the first satellite PTO office. We were informed that several cities, including Denver for which we had been advocating, were considered for satellite offices.

While we are disappointed that Denver was not chosen as the site for the initial satellite office, we applaud Director Kappos for his leadership in establishing this first satellite office. We strongly support the concept of multiple satellite offices and will closely monitor the success of the Detroit satellite. Moving forward, we believe a Western satellite site is the best way the PTO can promote economic growth.

The PTO plays a critical role in creating jobs and encouraging innovation across the country. Unfortunately, the persistent backlogs and staffing issues at the PTO have threatened the ability of small businesses and start-ups to innovate. A systemic change in the PTO's hiring and retention practices is necessary to improve the efficiency and productivity of our patent system. The establishment of regional satellite offices by the PTO will go a long way toward improving the recruitment efforts of this office by broadening the pool of qualified patent examiners.

Europe's use of four patent offices places our economy at a competitive disadvantage. We need to provide multiple offices to ensure the PTO is fully accessible and able to maintain a diversified workforce that is responsive to economic demands. It is essential, therefore, that we establish satellite offices in locations that will connect innovators and businesses across the country. Colorado is perfectly situated to ensure a qualified workforce for and promote the accessibility of the PTO.

Our hope is that, after the success of its pilot satellite in Detroit, the PTO will move quickly toward further expanding this effort. It is incumbent that the PTO has the resources to succeed in Detroit and that future budgets reflect the need to expand to multiple locations.

We request that the Administration's budget promote the establishment of additional PTO satellite offices for next year.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mark Udall in blue ink.

Mark Udall
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Michael F. Bennet in blue ink.

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator