VERMONT: A LONG HISTORY OF INNOVATION AND INVENTION
THE AMERICA INVENTS ACT

***Senator Leahy is the author of S. 23,* The America Invents Act**

Nearly six years after Senator Patrick Leahy began the U.S. Senate's efforts to update America's patent system, the Senate is now debating the Leahy-authored America Invents Act*. This bipartisan legislation is the product of dozens of Senate hearings and business meetings, countless meetings with stakeholders and hundreds of hours of debate and consideration.* The America Invents Act *will make important reforms to improve the efficiency of the patent application system and the quality of patents issued by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and will make America's economy more competitive in the global marketplace.*

Vermont's Long History of Innovation and Invention

Vermont's long history of innovation and invention began with the issuance of the first-ever patent granted in the United States. That patent, which was reviewed by Thomas Jefferson, and signed by President George Washington in 1790, was issued to a Vermonter – Samuel Hopkins of Pittsford – for developments in the making of pot ash, which has become an integral component of certain fertilizers.

Today, the State of Vermont is issued more patents per capita than any other state in the country. Since Samuel Hopkins received the first patent in 1790, Vermonters have secured patents for many interesting and useful inventions.

- In 1795, Samuel Morey of Fairlee received a patent for a crank motion steam engine. Morey also patented an internal combustion engine in 1826. Lake Morey is named in his honor.
- In 1830, Thaddeus Fairbanks of St. Johnsbury patented the platform scale, which came to be known as the Fairbanks Scale. He also patented a cast iron plow and a refrigerator in 1826.
- In 1837, Thomas Davenport of Forest Dale, a village near Brandon, patented the first direct current electric motor.
- In 1854, Gardner S. Blodgett of Rochester received a patent for an improved commercial wood-burning oven (a cast iron cooking oven).
- In 1874, Charles Orvis of Manchester patented the open fly fishing reel. He founded the Orvis Company.

And in more recent times, Vermont businesses have received patents for new and contemporary innovations.

- In 1992, Brattleboro's Omega Optical patented an optical filter with multiple passband and rejection bands.
- In 1999, Shelburne's Vermont Teddy Bear Company received patents for various stuffed animal designs.
- In 2007, Essex's Revision Eyewear received a patent for the design of protective goggles, used by the military.
- In 2009, the University of Vermont applied for a patent for a wood finish that releases fewer toxins into the air than standard finishes.
- In 2010, Castleton's Hubbardton Forge received a patent for a table and floor lamp design.

The America Invents Act would improve the process for Vermont companies and others to apply for and receive patents for new inventions, paving the way for a new generation of innovation and invention.

Background on *The America Invents Act*

Senator Leahy introduced *The America Invests Act* on January 25, 2011, with Republican Senators Orrin Hatch (Utah) and Chuck Grassley (Iowa). The legislation is cosponsored by Senators Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), Joe Lieberman (ID-Conn), Christopher Coons (D-Del.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), and Herb Kohl (D-Wis.). **The Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously approved the legislation by a 15-0 vote on February 3, 2011.**