Thanks, Joe I agree completely GO!

To: Senator
From: Joe
Re: Appropriations amendments to the Patent Office FY '81 budget
May 14, 1980
cc: Kevin, Mary, Linda, Tom, Eve, David B., Press, Bob, Ann M., Ann C., Leg, Ind.

The American Patent Law Assn has given me 4 amendments to this year's Patent and Trademark Office budget that I think are very good. We tried to find things that were important but which would not cost a great deal of money.

1. An additional $1 million for hiring new patent examiners. One of the greatest problems of the Office as you have stated is that it is understaffed and overworked. Patent pendency times are constantly going up because the examiner staff simply cannot process the patent requests fast enough. This makes the development of new products more difficult. Pendency time is now roughly 19 months and is projected to continue increasing every year in the foreseeable future. The present budget authorizes the hiring of 150 new examiners, the Patent Office says that it needs 180 which this amendment would pay for-- in other words an additional 30 examiners.

2. Patent examiners many times have to write their opinions in longhand because there is not enough support staff to type them up. This is a ridiculous state of affairs because the opinions are vital to the inventor and many times must be sent overseas to foreign patent offices to protect our foreign filings. The Office could use $400,000 in additional funding which would enable it to hire 30 typists and equipment. This gives each of the 15 patent examining groups an additional 2 typists to alleviate this problem.

3. As you know one of the greatest problems in the patent system is that between 2% to 28% of the search files are missing by the Office's own estimate. The PTO now only has 21 people going through their massive files looking for the missing materials. An appropriation of $200,000 would enable the PTO to double this work force.

4. There are 30 depository libraries around the country which maintain copies of

the 4,000,000 patents now on file in the PTO. At the main search room in Arlington inventors can use a computer terminal to find out what inventions exist in a certain area. For $500,000 computer terminals could set up in each depository library so that inventors who cannot come to Arlington can still find what they need without having to actually shift through the files.

The total cost of these amendments is $2.1 million yet they address some of the most critical problems in the patent system. These items have wide support in the patent and trademark bar and would be extremely well received. Senator Hollings has traditionally been sympathetic to your efforts to upgrade the PTO. I think that even with the current balanced budget mania that a very strong case can be made for these items which will return a lot more money to the economy by stimulating innovation than they are costing. I recommend that you write to Sen. Hollings as soon as possible with these amendments and that we get out a mailing outlining your proposals.

Senator - I agree with Joe.