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REMARKS: INTRODUCED BY MR. RODINO

PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE AUTHORIZATION

HON. PETER W. RODINO, JR.
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1985

● Mr. RODINO. Mr. Speaker, the bill I am introducing today, by request of the administration, would authorize appropriations for the Patent and Trademark Office for the next 3 fiscal years—1986, 1987, and 1988. Specifically, the bill authorizes $84,739,000 to be appropriated for the payment of salaries and generally to administer the Patent and Trademark Office in fiscal year 1986. Thereafter, in fiscal years 1987 and 1988, such increased sums are authorized as may be necessary to cover increases in salary, pay, or other employee benefits authorized by law. The bill's express language continues the subsidy—50 percent—for independent inventors, nonprofit organizations, and small business concerns created by Public Law 97-247.

An effective and accessible intellectual property system provides us with new technology we otherwise would not create or might need to buy from other countries. The ultimate test for our patent law system, of course, is whether it advances the public interest.

I would like to point out that, in the past few years, the Patent and Trademark Office has made strides in reducing the backlogs traditionally encountered in obtaining a patent or in registering a trademark, in providing better services to the public, and in ensuring the value and patentability of newly issued patents. The integrity of the files also has been improved.

In response to a request of the Congress to develop a plan which would modernize the operation of the Patent and Trademark Office, the Patent and Trademark Office has undertaken a major effort to be a fully automated operation by 1990. It was an anachronism that the agency that reviews the cutting edge of our technology continued to operate essentially as it did in the 19th century, relying on vast papers files, handwritten correspondence, and minimal automation.

An automated Patent and Trademark Office, in addition to providing more prompt and certain protection for our inventions and trademarks, will provide the public with easier access to the vast reservior of technological information which the Patent and Trademark Office holds.

The record should reflect that problems with automation have occurred. Those problems and proposed solutions will be fully explored by the committee in oversight and authorization hearings on the Patent and Trademark Office.●