



June 2, 2026

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chairman
House Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary
2142 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Jordan and Ranking Member Raskin,

In advance of the Judiciary Committee's upcoming hearing on "Medicines and IP: Balancing Innovation and Access," I write on behalf of the Alliance of U.S. Startups and Inventors for Jobs (USIJ) to express our deep concern regarding legislation such as the Eliminating Thickets to Increase Competition (ETHIC) Act that would undermine American innovators' constitutionally protected patent rights and hinder their efforts to develop the breakthrough medicines patients rely on.

USIJ represents inventors, entrepreneurs, research organizations, and venture-backed startups across industries, which depend on secure patent rights to attract outside investment and commercialize new technologies. This is particularly true in the life sciences sector. Startups and small companies develop [the majority of new medicines](#), and they often must raise billions of dollars in capital to research, develop, and commercialize these drugs.

As a coalition of small innovators and market challengers, USIJ supports Congress's goal of promoting competition in the drug marketplace. However, the ETHIC Act would not achieve this goal. The bill is premised on misconceptions about how patent law works and would ultimately discourage legitimate innovation rather than prevent misconduct.

To address the alleged problem of companies filing numerous patents on a single drug product and creating so-called "patent thickets" that block generic entry, the ETHIC Act would limit the number of patents that innovators can legally defend on a single product. It presumes that many of these patents lack merit and exist primarily to shield products from competition.

But this assumption overlooks the strong safeguards already built into the patent system. First, U.S. patents are only granted for novel and distinct innovations. New medicines are typically protected by multiple patents because they incorporate many distinct advancements developed through years of research and investment. These innovations -- which can include improved formulations, new therapeutic uses, and more convenient delivery mechanisms -- frequently deliver [meaningful clinical benefits](#).

Existing patent law also prevents companies from extending patent terms by filing additional patents. [Terminal disclaimers](#) require that when a later patent builds on an existing one, its expiration date must be tied to the earlier patent.

Most importantly, there is no clear empirical evidence that so-called patent thickets are a widespread problem. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office recently examined the issue and [determined](#) that "simple counts of patents can be misleading when every patent is counted equally, because the number of patents does not provide a clear picture of the landscape without a review of the scope of the claims in each patent." Put simply, it is wrong to conclude that more patents mean less competition.

Rather than addressing a demonstrated problem, the ETHIC Act would weaken innovators' right to enforce valid patents. By limiting the patents that can be asserted and defended, the bill would make complex, research-intensive technologies more vulnerable to appropriation and increase the risks involved with developing and improving innovative medicines.

Those increased risks would translate directly into reduced research investment for small companies and startups, fewer new drugs reaching patients, and ultimately fewer opportunities for future generic drug development.

Policies that weaken the reliability of patent protections will only make it more difficult for U.S. startups and inventors to continue pursuing breakthroughs that benefit patients. As such, we respectfully urge the Committee to reject the ETHIC Act and instead work to preserve the strong patent system that has made the United States the global leader in biomedical innovation.

Sincerely,

Chris Israel
Executive Director
Alliance of U.S. Startups and Inventors for Jobs