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# It's time to restore America's system

BY SEN. CHRIS COONS (D-DEL.) AND THOM TILLIS (R-N.C.), OPINION CONTRIBUTORS — 06/10/19 08:15 AM EDT  
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Since our country's founding, the U.S. patent system has been one of the unsung heroes of America's success story. Patents are based on a simple concept: that American inventors, entrepreneurs and companies whose hard work and expertise lead to a new invention deserve to reap the benefits of their work for a limited time.

That respect for intellectual property, enshrined in the Constitution, has incentivized millions of Americans over the years to develop lifesaving cures, revolutionary technological advances, and groundbreaking manufacturing innovations. Patents have played a key role in building America into the economic, academic and military superpower it is today.

All of that, though, is now at risk, because our patent laws have become overly

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at all can be patent eligible – speaks to the broader challenge we face in creating a sensible patent system.

On one hand, we cannot allow companies to patent things that exist in nature, but we should support research into the natural world that could produce groundbreaking (and patentable) cures, technologies or other advances.

Similarly, we need to ensure more broadly that inventors are able to reap the rewards of their work, but on the other, we don't want to restrict research into creative ways to further innovate based on those discoveries.

That's why, this week and next, we're bringing together 45 expert witnesses from a wide range of diverse perspectives and opinions for three public hearings to figure out how to best move forward with patent reform legislation.

Over two weeks, the Senate and the American people will be able to hear testimony from dozens of experts, including those who agree with some of our proposals, and just as importantly, those who have concerns. That's exactly how this process is supposed to work – with everyone at the table, making their voices heard, so we can craft the best patent laws possible.

We think our subcommittee is up to the task, and we look forward to producing a bill that will ensure that America remains the world's global leader for research, development and innovation.

*Tillis is the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Intellectual Property and Coons is the subcommittee's ranking member.*

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