

U.S. Senate Working on Patent Reform Bill

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Colorado business owners in many industries are responsible for protecting their intellectual property. Unfortunately, this task has become much more difficult in recent years, thanks to the proliferation of patent "trolls." These so-called trolls obtain patents with the sole intention of forcing competing companies into high-cost lawsuits.

Because the patent troll problem does not seem to be going away on its own, some lawmakers in Washington are pushing for patent reform. Congress passed a patent reform bill just three years ago, but advocates for additional reforms said that it does not go far enough to protect business owners from costly and unnecessary lawsuits.

If the proposed bill is signed into law, the losing party in a patent lawsuit may be required to cover the winner's legal costs. Although patent reform legislation does have the support of the White House as well as some congressman, including Rep. Jared Polis of Colorado, opponents argue that reform could undermine the patent system that is already in place. Broad reforms, they argue, could be detrimental to intellectual property rights.

Although the Senate Judiciary Committee is working diligently on the bill's final edits, some lawmakers aren't certain whether it will pass both the House and the Senate. Because this is an election year, some lawmakers may be hesitant to sign it.

Regardless of what Congress decides, it is important for business owners to protect their patents from infringement. Inventions, machines, devices, and other items are often among a company's most valuable assets. For help with patent protection, it may be a good idea to turn to an intellectual property attorney.

Source: Politico, "[Lawmakers: Patent reform will advance](#)," Jessica Meyers, March 5, 2014



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