



March 25, 2021

The Honorable Mazie K. Hirono
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hirono:

On behalf of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization, thank you for introducing the Inventor Diversity for Economic Advancement Act of 2021. On behalf of our 1,000 member companies, we are delighted to support your efforts and urge swift enactment of this important measure.

BIO is the world's largest trade association representing biotechnology companies, academic institutions, state biotechnology centers, and related organizations across the United States and in more than 30 other nations. BIO's members operate at the intersection of biology and technology to cure patients, protect our climate, and nourish humanity. As BIO looks to the future, we seek to advance disruptive innovation by 1) being a voice of science and for science; 2) uniting and empowering biotech innovators and their ecosystem to improve lives; 3) removing barriers to innovation; 4) championing broad access to biotech breakthroughs and scientific equality; and 5) catalyzing resilient and sustainable biobased economies.

BIO believes that diversity is important, not just as a matter of simple justice, but as a necessity in this competitive world. We must draw on the creative capacities of our entire population., and this is especially true in the biosciences, where the US leads the world in innovation. Unfortunately, we are not making the full use of our best minds. Despite the wealth of talent, only 22% of U.S. patents list at least one woman as an inventor. Only 13% of all inventors are women. African American and Hispanic college graduates apply for patents at approximately half the rate of their white counterparts. This must change, and the IDEA Act is a crucial step toward full participation in our innovation economy.

BIO commends you and Senator Tillis, and Representatives Velazquez and Stivers, for addressing this important issue and look forward to working closely with you on this legislation.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. McMurry-Heath", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Michelle McMurry-Heath, M.D., Ph. D.
President and CEO

Cc: The Honorable Thom Tillis
The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
The Honorable Steve Stivers