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America's AI Boom Has a Blue-Collar Challenge

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Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit International Patent Licensing System Must Be Maintained

By Brian O'Shaughnessy

Earlier this year, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative released its 2026 Special 301 Report, an annual assessment of policies worldwide that undermine American intellectual property rights.

This year's report places standard essential patents at the center of global trade tensions, warning that foreign approaches to patent enforcement are distorting the licensing markets that underpin modern technology.

At the heart of those concerns is the licensing agreement, the mechanism through which companies access and monetize the technologies embedded in global standards. Those agreements rest on a basic principle: When two or more parties enter into a formal, written contract, the contract is legally binding and enforceable.

That principle sustains modern commerce.

Agreements involving intellectual property rights are no exception. In fact, patent license agreements are at the heart of one of the quiet successes of today's technology marketplace: Devices made by separate and unrelated companies can seamlessly talk to one another. Phones from one manufacturer can connect to WiFi routers made by another, and cars can communicate over 5G networks designed and made by yet another.

Often, these companies own patent-protected technologies that they could exclude others from using, but which are essential to comply with a standard.

Because interoperability is the ultimate aim, these companies will commit to license such standard essential patents, or SEPs, on terms that are fair, reasonable and nondiscriminatory, or FRAND.

But over the past decade, a handful of high-profile disputes have come to illustrate how fragile this system is. While regulators have traditionally focused on the threat of holdup, i.e., where a SEP owner demands terms or royalties above market rates, the greater threat to our innovation ecosystem has come from those who hold out in refusing to take a license or to abide by the terms previously negotiated.

When a company continues using a patented, standard-essential technology while refusing to pay agreed-upon royalties, it deprives the inventor of the compensation that justified the original R&D investment.

When licensees unilaterally stop paying — or attempt to revise terms they previously agreed to — it signals to the entire market that even negotiated, FRAND-compliant agreements might not be enforceable.

Another area where the patent licensing system is fraying is in the failure of national courts to respect and enforce arbitration awards regardless of the country of origin of those awards.

Nations around the world have agreed — through long-standing international treaties — to honor these awards.

If a national court allows a losing party to relitigate a question already resolved through arbitration, it threatens the reliability of arbitration as an alternative dispute-resolution mechanism. This undermines the patent license in question as well as the dependability of international contracts on which global commerce depends.

The solution is not complicated, and it does not require rewriting long-standing frameworks. It simply requires courts and arbitrators to do what commercial systems have depended on for centuries: enforce contracts according to their terms.

The SEP licensing framework has enabled decades of innovation, investment and broad interoperability. Preserving that progress requires maintaining the straightforward expectation that commerce relies upon: When parties make a deal, they must keep it. And if they do not, the law will be there to ensure that the agreement can be reliably enforced.

Brian O'Shaughnessy is a partner in the Intellectual Property Practice Group of Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP. He is chair of the Bayh Dole Coalition Board of Directors, and a past president of the Licensing Executives Society (USA & Canada). Inc.

More Than We Can Be: U.S. AI Force Will Protect National Security and Humanity

Sept. 19, 2026, Fairfax, Va.—Americans for Limited Government Executive Director Robert Romano today issued the following statement on President Donald Trump's plan to create the U.S. AI Force branch of the military and name an AI czar:

"President Donald Trump is once again exhibiting extraordinary leadership in the domain of national security to modernize America's military posture and capabilities, and has wisely announced his plan for the creation of the U.S. AI Force to bring artificial intelligence into the employ of the Department of War, to build the next generation of autonomous weaponry and cyber capability that will ultimately be used in war. The AI arms race has already begun, the genie is out of the bottle and we cannot wish it away. It is more than we can be on our own, the U.S. AI Force will protect national security and humanity, and put the

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit America's AI Boom Has a Blue-Collar Challenge

By Sen. Rob Portman

America's artificial intelligence future may depend as much on electricians, welders, and construction workers as it does on software engineers.

Technology companies are investing at a remarkable pace in the infrastructure needed to power AI. Microsoft, Meta, Amazon, and Alphabet are expected to spend about \$700 billion just this year. That figure doesn't include the additional investments required for semiconductor manufacturing and electric grid renovation.

But there's a major obstacle: America doesn't have enough skilled workers to build everything the AI economy will require.

By 2030, the United States could need an additional 140,000 more skilled tradespeople -- welders, HVAC technicians, construction workers, electricians, and others -- to meet AI infrastructure demand. Finding and training them should be a national priority.

During a recent trip to Switzerland, I was briefed on the latest data from the nearly century-old Swiss apprenticeship model. This skills-based program has helped support one of the most innovative economies in the world by providing clear, respected pathways into technical careers.

Through Switzerland's Vocational Education and Training system, students can begin apprenticeships as early as age 15, combining classroom instruction with practical experience at participating companies. Today, roughly 70% of Swiss young people participate in apprenticeships spanning construction, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, healthcare, banking, and other industries.

Importantly, choosing an apprenticeship doesn't close the door to higher education. Graduates can enter their chosen profession or continue their studies and pursue a university degree. The system therefore gives students multiple routes to successful careers rather than treating vocational and academic education as competing tracks.

Employers benefit, too. Companies see an estimated 7% to 10% return on their investment in apprenticeship programs, and many apprentices ultimately remain with the companies that trained them. Businesses gain a reliable way to develop talent while workers receive skills tied directly to available jobs. Programs can also evolve alongside technology and industry, rather than training workers for jobs that may no longer exist.

That approach is particularly relevant as America builds the physical foundation of the AI economy.

Demand for skilled trades is poised to increase dramatically. Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang has estimated "six-figure salaries for people who are building chip factories or computer factories or AI factories." Meanwhile, more young Americans are showing interest in vocational education as they face uncertainty about some white-collar careers and rising higher-education costs.

Employers should seize that opportunity by investing not only in wages, but also in apprenticeship pipelines.

Some states have already started. Colorado's CareerWise program, partially inspired by the Swiss model, combines classroom education with paid apprenticeships in fields such as information technology and advanced manufacturing. Similar efforts are emerging elsewhere as employers look for sustainable ways to develop skilled workers.

Those programs should become the beginning of a broader movement.

America's AI leadership won't be secured by algorithms and computing power alone. It will also require people who can build chip plants, install electrical systems, wire data centers, and maintain the infrastructure beneath the digital economy.

Switzerland has spent generations building that kind of workforce. As America confronts its own AI infrastructure challenge, we should learn from its example.

*Former U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH)
represented Ohio in the U.S. Senate from 2011 to 2023.*

most sensitive aspects of this technology under Department of War purview while preserving the private sector via the civilian defense contracting process.

"In addition, an AI czar will be able to coordinate directly with the White House and AI companies to work on voluntary, industry-wide standards that can review models and ensure that frontier models are safely built while avoiding regulatory bottlenecks or unnecessary Nuclear Regulatory Commission frameworks that will stifle innovation in an arms race where the next important model will soon be produced in minutes and hours, not months and years.

"In 2019, President Trump wisely issued Space Policy Directive-4 to stand up the U.S. Space Force to secure near space, eventually becoming its own branch in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, and today he has again proven the foresight in calling for establishing the U.S. AI Force within the Department of War, cementing American leadership in space and technology for the next century while keeping the private sector and free markets able to make investments without fear of nationalization. Congress should act on this proposal as it did in 2019. The U.S. must remain ahead of China and all other peer adversaries on AI, and bringing it under Department of War auspices is vital to national security."