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September 30, 2011

**VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION**

Jill Sayenga  
Acting Director  
Administrative Office of the United States Courts  
One Columbus Circle, NE  
Washington, DC 20544

Dear Acting Director Sayenga:

I am writing because of information that I have received about spending related to an intellectual property conference in Tokyo, Japan, which is scheduled for late October 2011. I am concerned about the amount of taxpayer dollars the Federal Judiciary and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts spend on travel, especially during this time of fiscal constraint.

The website for the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals (CAFC) states that the conference is part of an "International Series" of conferences that was developed in November 2010 to "look for the 'best practices in legal systems' worldwide and 'how those practices—both in terms of governance and the practice of law—relate to innovation and the betterment of societies.'" The website lists the Department of Commerce and the United States Patent & Trademark Office (USPTO) among those funding the conferences. It is my understanding that the USPTO is spending \$189,600 to sponsor the Tokyo conference.

According to information I have received from a whistleblower, the USPTO will be sending at least four participants to the Tokyo conference, including its Director, Deputy Director and its Deputy General Counsel and the CAFC will be sending as many as eight participants including: the Chief Judge of the court, five other Circuit Judges, the Circuit Executive and Clerk of the court.

Consequently, I have a number of questions about the Tokyo conference, the other conferences in the International Series and the amount of government funds being spent on travel by the Federal Judiciary. Accordingly, please respond to the following requests for information:

1. Has the CAFC previously sponsored or is it committed to sponsor any of the conferences in the International Series? If so, for each such conference, set forth the date(s), location, title and subject matter. Also, for each such conference, set forth how much the CAFC paid or is planning to pay to be a sponsor.
2. Has the CAFC paid for any of its judges or employees to attend any of the past conferences in the International Series? If so, for each such conference, identify by name and title, the judge(s) and/or employee(s) who attended. Also, for each such conference identify the date(s), location, title and subject matter. Finally, for each such conference, set forth how much the CAFC paid for the judge(s) and/or employee(s) to attend, broken down by (a) conference fees, (b) travel expenses, (c) hotel expenses, (d) meals and (e) other expenses.
3. Is the CAFC planning to pay for any of its judges or employees to attend the Tokyo conference? If so, identify by name and title, the judge(s) and/or employee(s) who are scheduled to attend. Also, set forth how much the CAFC is planning to spend in connection with its judges and/or employees attending, broken down by: (a) conference fees, (b) travel expenses, (c) hotel expenses, (d) meals and (e) other expenses.
4. If you submit your responses after the Tokyo conference has taken place and CAFC judges or employees attended, identify by name and title, the judge(s) and/or employee(s) who actually attended, if any. Also, if applicable, set forth how much the CAFC actually paid for the judge(s) and/or employee(s) to attend, broken down by (a) conference fees, (b) travel expenses, (c) hotel expenses, (d) meals and (e) other expenses.
5. Other than the Tokyo conference, is the CAFC planning on paying to have any of its judges or employees attend any of the other conferences in the International Series? If so, for each such conference, identify by name and title, the judge(s) and/or employee(s) who are scheduled to attend. If specific individuals are not yet scheduled to attend, for each conference set forth how many individuals the CAFC is planning on paying for. Also, for each such conference identify the date(s), location, title and subject matter. Finally, for each such conference, set forth how much the CAFC is planning to pay for its judge(s) and/or employee(s) to attend, broken down by (a) conference fees, (b) travel expenses, (c) hotel expenses, (d) meals and (e) other expenses.
6. During the last three years, has the Federal Judiciary (including the CAFC) sponsored any conferences or seminars? If so, for each such conference or seminar, set forth the date(s), location, title and subject matter. Also, for each such conference or seminar, set forth how much the Federal Judiciary paid to be a sponsor.
7. During the last three years, has the Federal Judiciary paid for any of its judge(s) and/or employees to attend a conference or seminar? If so, for each such conference or seminar, set forth the date(s), location, title and subject matter.

And for each such conference/seminar, identify by name and title, the judge(s) and/or employee(s) who attended. Also, for each conference or seminar, set forth how much the Federal Judiciary paid for the judge(s) and/or employee(s) to attend, broken down by (a) conference fees, (b) travel expenses, (c) hotel expenses, (d) meals and (e) other expenses.

8. During the next three years, is the Federal Judiciary planning to sponsor any conferences or seminars? If so, for each such conference or seminar, set forth the date(s), location, title and subject matter. Also, for each such conference or seminar, set forth how much the Federal Judiciary is planning to pay to be a sponsor.
9. During the next three years, is the Federal Judiciary planning to pay for any of its judge(s) and/or employees to attend a conference or seminar? If so, for each such conference or seminar, set forth the date(s), location, title and subject matter. Also, for each such conference or seminar, set forth how much the Federal Judiciary is planning to pay for its judge(s) or employee(s) to attend. If possible break down those amounts by: (a) conference fees, (b) travel expenses, (c) hotel expenses, (d) meals and (e) other expenses.
10. Does the Federal Judiciary have a policy governing its sponsorship of conferences or seminars? If so, and if that policy is in writing, provide a copy of the document. If the Federal Judiciary has a policy but it is not in writing, set forth the policy and explain why it is not a written policy.
11. Does the Federal Judiciary have a policy governing its paying for its judges or employees to attend conferences or seminars? If so, and if that policy is in writing, provide a copy of the document. If the Federal Judiciary has a policy but it is not in writing, set forth the policy and explain why it is not a written policy.

These are basic questions, the answers to which should be readily available. Please respond in writing by October 14, 2011.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Janet Drew or Tristan Leavitt of my staff at (202) 224-5225.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member