

Press Coverage | October 14, 2022

6 Months of Vidal Prove She's Not Playing Around at USPTO

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Troutman Pepper Partner Michael D. Hobbs, Jr. is quoted in the October 14, 2022 *Law360* article, "[6 Months of Vidal Prove She's Not Playing Around at USPTO.](#)"

Vidal has set a clear agenda of incentivizing innovation, making the intellectual property system more inclusive and improving patent quality, according to Troutman Pepper partner Michael D. Hobbs Jr. Attorneys said those goals have been present in her actions since she was sworn in on April 13, and praised her proactiveness and emphasis on consistency.

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With Vidal focusing heavily on patents, Troutman Pepper's Hobbs expressed some concerns on what might be falling through the cracks in trademarks. In particular, he said, pendency times for applications are around eight months right now, when normally they're closer to three.

"It's a combination of the pandemic and an increase in volume, but you have clients who are really going blind into marketing and branding and new product decisions because they don't have a response back from the Patent and Trademark Office," Hobbs said. "I would love to see a focus on improving the pendency of that."

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Efforts to get people from underrepresented groups involved in innovation have also been a focus, such as by having the agency work with students and teachers. Vidal also launched a pro bono program to provide counsel at the PTAB, and has noted the disparity in the low percentage of women who receive patents versus the high percentage of women using the agencies' pro bono services, Hobbs said.

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