

High court upholds process for challenging patents

June 20 2016

The Supreme Court on Monday upheld the process for challenging invalid patents, making it easier for companies to fight so-called patent trolls.

The justices were unanimous in backing the legal standard used to cancel patents by a new appeals board at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Congress created the board in 2011 over concerns federal officials were issuing too many patents and fueling the rise of patent trolls—companies that buy up [patents](#) and force businesses to pay license fees or face costly litigation.

The high [court](#) ruled against Cuozzo Speed Technologies LLC, a New Jersey company that had its patent for speedometer displays in cars declared invalid. Cuozzo had argued that the board was using an overly broad legal standard. The Supreme Court disagreed.

Writing for the court, Justice Stephen Breyer said the patent office has the authority to construe patent claims "according to the broadest reasonable construction of its words."

Michelle Lee, director of the [patent office](#), praised the ruling and said it would allow the appeals board "to maintain its vital mission of effectively and efficiently resolving patentability disputes while providing faster, less expensive alternatives to district court litigation."

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Citation: High court upholds process for challenging patents (2016, June 20) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-06-high-court-patents.html>

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