



(43) International Publication Date
5 February 2015 (05.02.2015)

- (51) **International Patent Classification:**
H01R 12/71 (2011.01) *H01R 13/514* (2006.01)
H01R 27/02 (2006.01)
- (21) **International Application Number:**
PCT/US2014/047354
- (22) **International Filing Date:**
21 July 2014 (21.07.2014)
- (25) **Filing Language:** English
- (26) **Publication Language:** English
- (30) **Priority Data:**
61/861,059 1 August 2013 (01.08.2013) US
- (71) **Applicant:** 3M INNOVATIVE PROPERTIES COMPANY [US/US]; 3M Center, Post Office Box 33427, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55133-3427 (US).
- (72) **Inventors:** TAN, Vincent; 1 Yishun Avenue 7, Singapore 768923 (SG). LEE, Kok Hoe; 1 Yishun Avenue 7, Singapore 768923 (SG). VITTAPALLI, Rao L.; 1 Yishun Avenue 7, Singapore 768923 (SG). QIAO, YunLong; 1 Yishun Avenue 7, Singapore 768923 (SG). BANDHU, Saujit; 1 Yishun Avenue 7, Singapore 768923 (SG).
- (74) **Agents:** MOSHREFZADEH, Robert S., et al.; 3M Center Office of Intellectual Property Counsel Post Office Box 33427, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55133-3427 (US).
- (81) **Designated States** (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available*): AE, AG, AL, AM,

AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IR, IS, JP, KE, KG, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

- (84) **Designated States** (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available*): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

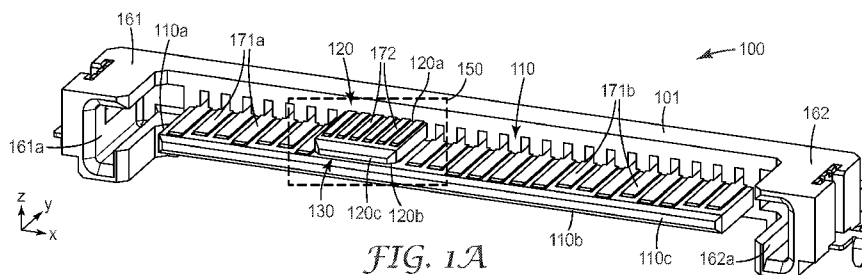
Declarations under Rule 4.17:

- *as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii))*
- *as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii))*

Published:

- *with international search report (Art. 21(3))*

(54) **Title:** MULTIFUNCTION CONNECTOR



(57) **Abstract:** An electrical connector includes a unitary base elongated along a longitudinal direction. A first tongue extends forwardly from the base and has a uniform thickness along the longitudinal direction. The first tongue comprises a plurality of spaced apart first contacts. A second tongue extends forwardly from the base and comprises a plurality of spaced apart second contacts. The first and second tongues define a gap therebetween that extends from a front edge of one of the first and second tongues toward the unitary base.

MULTIFUNCTION CONNECTOR

TECHNICAL FIELD

5 This disclosure relates generally to connectors suitable for data transmission between various devices including computer peripherals.

BACKGROUND

Electrical cables facilitate transmission of electrical signals between devices. Cable connectors
10 can be designed to provide interconnection between devices having a particular type of communications protocol, such as serially attached small computer interface system (SAS) and peripheral component interconnect express (PCIe). In view of the need for high speed interconnection between computers and peripheral devices, a continuing need exists for electrical cables that are capable of transmitting high speed signals, are mechanically robust, cost-effective, and can be used in a variety of applications.

BRIEF SUMMARY

Some embodiments involve an elongated electrical connector for mounting on a printed circuit board and mating with a mating connector along a mating direction. The connector includes an elongated base extending along a longitudinal direction perpendicular to the mating direction. First and second end
20 walls extend forwardly along the mating direction from opposite longitudinal ends of the base. A bottom tongue extends forwardly along the mating direction from the base and disposed between and spaced apart from the first and second end walls. The bottom tongue has a uniform thickness along its length along the longitudinal direction and comprising first and second bottom tongue portions separated by a third bottom tongue portion. A top tongue extends forwardly along the mating direction from the base
25 and disposed between and spaced apart from the first and second end walls. The top tongue has a uniform thickness along its length along the longitudinal direction and is spaced apart from the bottom tongue along a thickness direction perpendicular to the mating and longitudinal directions. A bottom surface of the top tongue faces a top face of the third bottom tongue portion. A plurality of spaced apart first contacts is disposed on a top surface of the first bottom tongue portion. A plurality of spaced apart
30 second contacts is disposed on a top surface of the second bottom tongue portion. A plurality of spaced apart third contacts is disposed on a bottom surface of the bottom tongue. A plurality of spaced apart fourth contacts is disposed on a top surface of the top tongue.

Another embodiment is directed to an electrical connector. The electrical connector includes a unitary base elongated along a longitudinal direction. A first tongue extends forwardly from the base and
35 has a uniform thickness along the longitudinal direction. The first tongue comprises a plurality of spaced apart first contacts. A second tongue extends forwardly from the base and comprises a plurality of spaced apart second contacts. The first and second tongues define a gap therebetween that extends from a front edge of one of the first and second tongues toward the unitary base.

Yet another embodiment involves an electrical (socket) connector. The connector includes a unitary housing elongated along a longitudinal direction perpendicular to a mating direction of the connector. The unitary housing defines a central slot extending along the longitudinal direction. The central slot includes first and second slot portions separated by a third slot portion. Each slot portion comprises opposing top and bottom surfaces and a separation between the top of bottom surfaces of each slot portion along a thickness direction orthogonal to the longitudinal and mating directions defines a height of the slot. The first and second slot portions have a same smaller height and the third slot portion has a greater height. The unitary housing includes a blade extending forwardly along the mating direction from a back surface of the third slot portion. The blade is disposed between and spaced apart from the top and bottom surfaces of the third slot portion. A plurality of spaced apart first contacts is disposed on a top surface of the first slot portion. A plurality of spaced apart second contacts is disposed on a top surface of the second slot portion. A plurality of spaced apart third contacts is disposed on bottom surfaces of the first, second and third slot portions. A plurality of spaced apart fourth contacts is disposed on a top surface of the third slot portion.

In some embodiments, an electrical connector includes a unitary insulative housing defining an elongated slot bound by opposing first and second major surfaces. The housing includes a blade extending from a back surface of the slot toward a front of the slot and disposed between and spaced apart from the first and second major surfaces. A first plurality of contacts is disposed on the first major surface and facing the blade. A second plurality of contacts is disposed on the second major surface and facing the blade.

Yet other embodiments involve an electrical connector adapted to mate with a mating connector that includes overlapping planar top and bottom tongues defining a gap therebetween. Each tongue carries a plurality of contacts. The electrical connector includes an insulative planar blade, such that when the electrical connector mates with the mating connector, the insulative planar blade is inserted in the gap to provide support to at least one of the top and bottom tongues.

These and other aspects of the present application will be apparent from the detailed description below. In no event, however, should the above summaries be construed as limitations on the claimed subject matter, which subject matter is defined solely by the attached claims, as may be amended during prosecution.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1A shows a perspective view of a connector in accordance with some embodiments;

FIG. 1B shows a close-up perspective view of a portion of the connector of FIG. 1A;

FIG. 1C shows a top view of the connector of FIG. 1A;

FIG. 1D shows a front view of the connector of FIG. 1A;

FIG. 2A depicts a side-cross-sectional view of the connector of FIG. 1A taken through the first and second tongues;

FIG. 2B provides a back view of a portion of the connector of FIG. 1A;

FIG. 3A illustrates a side cross-sectional view of a connector that includes a base extension in the region of the gap;

FIG. 3B is a schematic front view showing a portion of connector of FIG. 3A looking through the gap from the tongue edges towards the base;

5 FIG. 4A a side-cross-sectional view of a connector that includes a removable insert in the region of the gap;

FIG. 4B is a schematic front view showing a portion of connector of FIG. 4A looking through the gap from the tongue edges towards the base;

10 FIG. 5 is a side-cross sectional view a connector that includes a base extension used in conjunction with a removable insert;

FIGS. 6A – 6D are perspective views of a multi-piece connector in accordance with some embodiments;

FIGS. 7A – 7C are perspective, front, and top views, respectively, of a connector that includes multiple second tongues in accordance with some embodiments;

15 FIG. 8 is a perspective view a portion of a second tongue including through slots that enhance signal integrity (SI) performance of the connector;

FIG. 9A shows a perspective view of a mating socket connector in accordance with some embodiments;

FIG. 9B shows a close-up perspective view of a portion of the connector of FIG. 9A;

20 FIG. 9C shows a schematic depiction of a front view of the connector of FIG. 9A;

FIGS. 10A – 10C are perspective views of a multi-piece socket connector in accordance with some embodiments; and

FIG. 11 is a front view of a stacked plug connector in accordance with some embodiments.

In the figures, like reference numerals designate like elements.

25

DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

Embodiments disclosed herein involve connectors that are suitable for providing data transmission between devices such as computer peripherals. The connectors disclosed herein include mating multi-contact connectors that can be terminated to a printed circuit board or cable.

30 FIGS. 1A shows a perspective view, FIG. 1C shows a top view, and FIG. 1D shows a front view of a connector **100** in accordance with some embodiments. FIG. 1B shows a close up perspective view of a portion **150** of connector **100**. Connector **100** is also referred to herein as a “plug” or “plug connector.” The connector **100** includes a base **101** that is elongated along a longitudinal direction (the x –direction as indicated in FIG. 1A) that is perpendicular to a mating direction (the y-direction as indicated in FIG. 1A).
 35 End walls **161**, **162** extend forwardly along the mating axis from opposite longitudinal ends of the base **101**. In some embodiments, the base **101** is formed as a unitary, one-piece construction. In some embodiments the base **101** and the end walls **161**, **162** are formed as a unitary, one-piece construction.

The connector **100** includes a first tongue **110** and a second tongue **120**. Each of the first and second tongues **110**, **120** extends from the base **101** forwardly along the mating axis. In some embodiments, the base **101**, the first and second tongues **110**, **120**, and the first and second end walls **161**, **162** form a unitary construction. Unitary constructions are one-piece constructions that may be formed of a polymeric material, plastic or any insulating material by molding, machining, and/or extruding, for example.

The first tongue **110** is disposed between the end walls **161**, **162** and in some embodiments the first tongue **110** is spaced apart from the end walls **161**, **162**. The first tongue **110** has a first surface **110a** and a second surface **110b**, and may have a plurality of electrical contacts **171a**, **171b** spaced apart and disposed on the first surface **110a**. The first tongue **110** may have a plurality of electrical contacts **173** disposed on the second surface **110b**.

The connector **100** includes a second tongue **120** that extends from the base **101** forwardly along the mating axis. The second tongue **120** is disposed between the first and second end walls **161**, **162** and may be spaced apart from the end walls **161**, **162**. The second tongue **120** has a first surface **120a** and a second surface **120b**. A plurality of electrical contacts **172** may be spaced apart and disposed on the first surface **120a**. The first surface **110a** of the first tongue **110** and the second surface **120b** of the second tongue **120** are separated by a gap **130**. In the orientation illustrated in FIG. 1D, the first tongue **110** is oriented below the second tongue **120**. Thus, the first tongue **110** may be referred to herein as the “bottom tongue” and the second tongue **120** may be referred to as the “top tongue,” although the reader will understand that the terms “top” and “bottom” are merely used for identification of the first and second tongues **110**, **120** and not meant to limit the embodiments to any particular connector orientation.

Electrical contacts may be disposed on the second surface **120b** of the second tongue **120** if the separation distance between the first surface **110a** of the first tongue **110** and the second surface **120b** of the second tongue **120** is sufficient to support electrical contacts on both surfaces **110a**, **120b**. However, in many cases, as shown in FIGS. 1A – 1D, there are no electrical contacts on the second surface **120b** of the second tongue **120** and there are also no electrical contacts on the first surface **110a** of the first tongue **110** in the region of the gap **130** where the second tongue **120** overlaps the first tongue **110**.

FIG. 1B is a close-up view of the portion **150** of connector **100** that shows the region of the gap **130** where the second tongue **120** overlaps the first tongue **110**.

As best seen in FIG. 1C, the first tongue **110** has a length, L_1 , extending along the longitudinal direction (x-direction) of the connector **100** and the second tongue **120** has a length, L_2 , extending along the longitudinal direction. In general, the lengths L_1 and L_2 may be related to the number of electrical contacts needed for the connector, and may be any lengths suitable for the connector **100**. In some embodiments, the top surface of the first tongue carries about 22 contacts, the bottom surface of the first tongue carries about 40 contacts and the top surface of the second tongue carries about 6 contacts, although the number of contacts can vary according to the implementation for which the connector is used. Lengths L_1 and L_2 may be equal to each other, $L_1 = L_2$, or may be different from each other, e.g., L_2

$< L_1$. For example, L_1 may be several times larger than L_2 , e.g., L_1 may be about 30 mm to 37 mm and L_2 may be about 7 mm to 12 mm.

In some embodiments, the first tongue **110** has uniform thickness along the longitudinal x-direction and the mating y-direction. For example, the first tongue **110** can have a thickness of about 0.7 mm to 1.70 mm, or about 1.0 mm to 2.35 mm. In some embodiments, the first tongue has a uniform thickness along the longitudinal direction (x-direction) and the mating direction (y-direction). For example, the second tongue **120** can have a thickness of about 0.5 mm to 3.0 mm, or about 1.2 mm to 5.5 mm.

The thicknesses, t_1 , t_2 , of the first and second tongues **110**, **120** can be equal to each other, $t_1 = t_2$, or they can be different from each other, $t_1 > t_2$, or $t_1 < t_2$. In some embodiments, the first tongue **110** is uniformly thicker than the second tongue **120** along the longitudinal axis (x-axis in FIG. 1A). In some embodiments, the first tongue **110** is uniformly thinner than the second tongue **120** along one or more of the longitudinal axis (x-axis in FIG. 1A). The first and/or second tongues **110**, **120** may have an edge **110c**, **120c** that is beveled, rounded, chamfered, or blunt.

The thickness, t_1 , of the first tongue **110** may or may not be uniform along the mating axis. For example, the thickness, t_1 , of the first tongue **110** may taper (increase or decrease) from a first thickness, t_{1b} , at the base **101** to a second thickness, t_{1e} , at the edge **110c**. The first thickness, t_{1b} , may be greater than t_{1e} , $t_{1b} > t_{1e}$, or t_{1b} may be less than t_{1e} , $t_{1b} < t_{1e}$. The thickness, t_2 , of the second tongue **120** may or may not be uniform along the mating axis. For example, the thickness, t_2 , of the second tongue **120** may taper from a first thickness, t_{2b} , at the base **101** to a second thickness, t_{2e} , at the edge **120c**. The first thickness, t_{2b} , may be greater than t_{2e} , $t_{2b} > t_{2e}$, or t_{2b} may be less than t_{2e} , $t_{2b} < t_{2e}$. The thicknesses of the first and/or second tongues may increase or decrease linearly, non-linearly, or piece-wise linearly, for example.

In some embodiments, the connector **100** includes end walls **161**, **162** disposed at one or both ends of the base **101** and extending from the base **101** forwardly along the mating direction. The end walls **161**, **162** may comprise optional channels **161a** **162a**. The channels **161a**, **162a**, shown as U-shaped in FIGS. 1A, 1C, and 1D, can be any convenient shape and are configured to slidably engage with compatible protrusions of a mating connector (not shown in FIG. 1A).

As best seen in FIG. 1D, the first tongue **110** can comprise a first portion **191** and a second portion **192** separated by a third portion **193**. The connector **100** includes a plurality of spaced apart first electrical contacts **171a** disposed on the first surface **110a** of the first tongue **110** in the first portion **191**; a plurality of spaced apart second electrical contacts **171b** disposed on the first surface **110a** of the first tongue **110** in the second portion **192**, and a plurality of third electrical contacts **173** disposed on the second surface **110b** of the first tongue **110** in the first, second, and/or third portions **191**, **192**, **193**.

The connector **100** includes a second tongue **120** that includes plurality of spaced apart electrical contacts **172** disposed on the first surface **120a** of the second tongue **120**. In some embodiments, there are no electrical contacts on the first surface **110a** of the first tongue **110** in the third portion **193**. In some embodiments, there are no electrical contacts disposed on the second surface **120b** of the second tongue **120**.

FIG. 2A depicts a side cross sectional view of the connector **100** taken through the first and second tongues **110**, **120**. The first tongue **110** extends forwardly from the base **101** and has a width, W_1 , extending from the base **101** to the edge **110c**. The second tongue **120** extends forwardly from the base **101** and has a width, W_2 , extending from the base **101** to the edge **120c**. In some embodiments, as shown in FIG. 2A, $W_1 = W_2$. However, in other embodiments, W_1 may be greater or less than W_2 . In some implementations, and with reference to FIG. 1D, the widths of the first tongue **110** in first portion **191**, second portion **192**, and third portion **193** may not be equal. For example, in some configurations the width of the third portion **193** is smaller than the widths of the first and/or second portions **191**, **192**.

As depicted in FIG. 2A, the first tongue **110** can include a first major region **111** at or nearest to the base **101** and a beveled region **112** near the edge **110c** where one or both surfaces **110a**, **110b** are beveled. The second tongue **120** can include a first major region **121** at or nearest to the base **101** and beveled region **122** at the edge **120c** where one or both surfaces **120a**, **120b** are beveled. In the implementation depicted in FIG. 2A, both surfaces **110a**, **110b** of the first tongue **110** are beveled, the first surface **120a** of the second tongue is beveled, and the second surface **120b** of the second tongue **120** is not beveled.

FIG. 2A shows the gap **130** between the tongues **110**, **120** and other structures of connector **100** in accordance with some embodiments. The gap **130** is formed between the first surface **110a** of the first tongue **110** and the second surface **120b** of the second tongue **120**. In many embodiments, the first surfaces **110a**, **120a** and second surfaces **110b**, **120b** are substantially planar. The gap **130** has a thickness, t_g , along the z axis that may be uniform, or may vary along the mating y or longitudinal x-axes. In some embodiments, t_g is in a range of about 0.1 mm to about 5 mm, or about 0.1 mm to about 2 mm, or about 0.1 to about 1 mm. In some cases, t_g is uniform with respect to the mating y and longitudinal x-axes.

In some cases, t_g may vary with respect to the y and/or x axes. FIG. 2 indicates the thickness, t_{gb} , of the gap **130** at or nearest to the base **101** of the connector **100**. FIG. 2A indicates the thickness, t_{ge} , of the gap **130** near an edge **110c**, **120c** of the first or second tongues **110**, **120** taken between an unbeveled region of the first surface **110a** and unbeveled region of the second surface **120b**. In various implementations, t_{gb} may be equal to t_{ge} , and the thickness of the gap along the mating axis is uniform. Alternatively, the thickness of the gap **130** may be tapered toward the base along the mating axis, wherein $t_{ge} > t_{gb}$ and the gap **130** linearly decreases along the mating axis from t_{ge} to t_{gb} . Alternatively, the gap **130** may be tapered toward the edge, wherein $t_{gb} > t_{ge}$ and the gap **130** linearly decreases along the mating axis from t_{gb} to t_{ge} .

The cross-sectional view of FIG. 2A shows electrical contacts **171a** disposed on the first surface **110a** of the first tongue **110**, electrical contacts **173** disposed on the second surface **110b** of the first tongue **110**, and electrical contacts **172** disposed on the first surface **120a** of the second tongue **120**. In many embodiments, such as the one depicted in FIG. 2A, the second tongue **120** does not include electrical contacts on its second surface **120b** and the first tongue **110** does not include electrical contacts on its first surface **110a** in the region of the gap **130**.

As shown in FIG. 2A, the electrical contacts **171a**, **173**, **172** have leads **181a**, **183**, **182**, respectively, extending backwardly along the mating axis beyond the base **101**. In this particular embodiment, leads **181a**, **183**, **182** are configured for surface mounting on a printed circuit board. In other embodiments, the leads may be configured for through-hole mounting.

The connector **100** shown in FIG. 2A and some other connectors shown herein are the right-angle mount connectors. It will be appreciated that approaches disclosed herein are also applicable to connectors that are configured to mount vertically on a printed circuit board. FIG. 2A depicts an alignment peg **199** oriented for right angle mounting and configured to align the connector on the printed circuit board. Alignment pegs may also be used in vertical mount embodiments. In embodiments that involve stacked connectors, alignment pegs may be used to align adjacent stacked connectors.

FIG. 2B provides a back perspective view of a portion of connector **100**, showing the base **101**, electrical contacts **172**, and electrical leads **181a**, **181b**, **182**, and **183**.

FIG. 3A illustrates a connector **300** that includes some features similar to those of connector **100**. Additionally, connector **300** includes a base extension **302** in the region of the gap **330**. The base extension **302** extends forwardly from the base **301** along the mating y-axis. In many embodiments, the base extension **302** has a width, W_{be} , that is less than the width, W_1 , of the first tongue **310**, and/or less than the width, W_2 , of the second tongue **320**. For example, the width, W_{be} , of the base extension **302** may be about 50% or less than the width, W_1 , of the first tongue **310** and/or may be about 50% or less than the width, W_2 , of the second tongue **320**. The base extension **302** can be configured to provide additional structural support to the first and/or second tongues **310**, **320**.

The gap **330** has a thickness, t_g , that, in some embodiments, may be uniform along the longitudinal x-axis and/or may be uniform along the mating y-axis. In some embodiments, the gap may taper along the mating y-axis. FIG. 3A indicates the thickness, t_{gbe} , of the gap **330** at or nearest to the base extension **302** and the thickness of the gap, t_{ge} , located near an edge **310c**, **320c** of the first or second tongues **310**, **320**. Thickness, t_{ge} , is the distance between an unbeveled region of the first surface **310a** of the first tongue **310** and unbeveled region of the second surface **320b** of the second tongue **320**. In some embodiments, t_{gbe} may be equal to t_{ge} , providing a gap that is uniform along the mating y axis. In some embodiments, the gap **330** may be tapered toward the base extension **302**, wherein $t_{ge} > t_{gbe}$ and the thickness of the gap **330** decreases linearly from t_{ge} to t_{gbe} . In some embodiments, the gap **330** may be tapered toward the edge, wherein $t_{gbe} > t_{ge}$ and the thickness of the gap **330** decreases linearly from t_{gbe} to t_{ge} .

FIG. 3B is a schematic front view showing a portion of connector **300** looking through the gap **330** from the edges **320c**, **330c** towards the base **301**. FIG. 3B shows a portion of the first tongue **310** and the second tongue **320** and the gap **330** between the first and second tongues **310**, **320**. The base extension **302** extends from the base **301** towards the front edges **310c**, **320c**. The base extension **302** has a length, L_{be} , that in many cases is the same as the length, L_2 , of the second tongue **320**. In some embodiments, such as the illustrated embodiment of FIG. 3B, the length of the base extension, L_{be} , is less than the length, L_2 , of the second tongue. It is also possible for L_{be} to be larger than L_2 .

FIG. 4A illustrates a connector **400** that is similar in some respects to connector **100**. Connector **400** includes a removable insert **431** in the region of the gap **430**. The removable insert **431** may be made of plastic or other material and can have structural characteristics capable of providing additional load support to the first and/or second tongues **410**, **420**. The removable insert **431** has a width, W_{ri} , that can be equal to or less than the width, W_1 , of the first tongue **410**, and/or equal to or less than the width, W_2 , of the second tongue **420**. For example, the width, W_{ri} , of the removable insert **431** may be about 50% or less than the width, W_1 , of the first tongue **410** and/or may be about 50% or less than the width, W_2 , of the second tongue **420**.

The removable insert **431** may be placed at any location in the gap **430** along the x and y-axes. For example, the removable insert **431** can be placed proximate to the base **401**, at a location within the gap that is substantially centered along the mating y axis, or at a location proximate to the front edges **410c**, **420c**. Arrow **499** indicates that the removable insert **431** can be inserted and removed from the gap **430**, e.g., from the front of connector **400**. In some implementations, the removable insert is removed before the connector **400** mates with a mating connector.

FIG. 4B is a schematic front view showing a portion of connector **400** looking through the gap **430** from the edges **420c**, **430c** towards the base **401**. FIG. 4B shows a portion of the first tongue **410**, and shows the second tongue **420** with the gap **430** between the first and second tongues **410**, **420**. The removable insert **431** is shown disposed within the gap **430**. The removable insert **431** has a length, L_{ri} , that in many cases is the same as the length, L_2 , of the second tongue **420**. In some embodiments, such as the illustrated embodiment of FIG. 4B, the length, L_{ri} , of the removable insert **431** is less than the length, L_2 , of the second tongue **420**. It is also possible for L_{ri} to be larger than L_2 .

Connector **500** shown in FIG. 5 is similar in many respects to connector **300**. Connector **500** shows that a base extension **302** may be used in conjunction with a removable insert **531** in some embodiments.

FIGS. 6A – 6D illustrate a multi-piece connector in accordance with some embodiments. FIGS. 6A and 6B show first and second connector pieces **600a**, **600b**, respectively, of a connector that can be assembled so that the assembled connector (**600**, FIG. 6D) has a first tongue **610** and a second tongue **620** with a gap **630** disposed therebetween. In this embodiment, the second connector piece **600b** is reversibly attachable to and removable from the first connector piece **600a**. The first connector piece **600a** includes mating features that are configured to mate with compatible mating features of the second connector piece **600b**, e.g., by snap-fit, friction-fit, or other mechanism.

As depicted in FIGS 6A – 6D, the first connector piece **600a** includes a base **601** that is elongated along a longitudinal direction (the x –direction as indicated in FIG. 6A) that is perpendicular to a mating direction (the y-direction as indicated in FIG. 6A). The first connector piece **600a** can include end walls **661**, **662** that extend forwardly along the mating y axis from opposite longitudinal ends of the base **601**.

In this embodiment, the base **601** includes mating features comprising a slot **602** configured to engage with mating features of the second connector piece **600b**. Channels **602a** may be disposed on opposing sides of the slot **602** in the base **601**. The channels **602a** are configured to mate with compatible

protrusions **603b** of the second piece **600b**. In at least one configuration, the channels **602a** and compatible protrusions **603b** may have a dovetail shape.

The second connector piece **600b**, is sometimes referred to as a sliding portion because, in some embodiments, the second piece **600b** is slidably attachable to the first connector piece **600a**. The second connector piece **600b** includes a tab **603** dimensioned to fit at least partially within the slot **602**. Protrusions **603b** extend on either side of the tab **603** along the longitudinal x-axis. The protrusions **603b** of the second connector piece **600b** can be configured to slidably engage with the channels **603a** of the first connector piece **600a**.

FIG. 6C illustrates the first and second connector pieces, **600a**, **600b** during the assembly process. FIG. 6C shows the first and second connector pieces **600a**, **600b** aligned for assembly before the channels **602a** have completely engaged the protrusions **603b**. FIG. 6D shows the assembled connector **600** after the channels **602a** are completely engaged with the protrusions **603b**. The assembled connector **600** shown in FIG. 6D includes a first tongue **610** and a second tongue **620** with a gap **630** between the first and second tongues **610**, **620**. After assembly, connector **600** can have electrical contacts and other features similar to the configuration of connector **100**, for example.

In some embodiments, the first connector piece or the second connector piece may include a base extension, so that the assembled connector has a configuration similar to the configuration of connector **300**. In yet other embodiments, a removable insert may be placed between the first and second tongues before the second piece is assembled to the first piece. In this embodiment, the assembled connector has a configuration similar to the configuration of connector **400**.

Some embodiments involve connectors that include multiple second tongues, as shown in FIGS. 7A – 7C. FIGS. 7A, 7B, and 7C, show a perspective view, a front view, and a top view, respectively, of a connector **700** that includes a first tongue **710** and three second tongues **721**, **722**, **723**. The connector **700** includes a base **701** that is elongated along a longitudinal x-axis. End walls **761**, **762** extend forwardly along the mating y-axis from opposite longitudinal ends of the base **701**. In some embodiments, the base **701** comprises a unitary, one-piece construction. In some embodiments the base **701** and the end walls **761**, **762** are formed as a unitary, one-piece construction.

The connector **700** includes a first tongue **710** and a second tongues **721**, **722**, **723**. Each of the tongues **710**, **721**, **722**, **723** extends from the base **701** forwardly along the mating y-axis. In some embodiments, the base **701**, the first and second tongues **710**, **721**, **722**, **723**, and the first and second end walls **761**, **762** form a unitary construction.

The first tongue **710** is disposed between the end walls **761**, **762** and may be spaced apart from the end walls **761**, **762**. The first tongue **710** has a first surface **710a** and a second surface **710b**, and may have a plurality of electrical contacts **775** spaced apart and disposed on the first surface **710a**. The first tongue **710** may have a plurality of electrical contacts disposed on the second surface **710b**.

The connector **700** includes a multiple second tongues **721**, **722**, **723** that extend from the base **701** forwardly along the mating y-axis. The second tongues **721**, **722**, **723** are disposed between the first and second end walls **761**, **762** and may be spaced apart from the end walls **761**, **762**. The second

tongues **721**, **722**, **723** have first surfaces **721a**, **722a**, **723a** and second surfaces **721b**, **722b**, **723b**. A plurality of electrical contacts **771**, **772**, **773** may be spaced apart and disposed on the first surfaces **721a**, **722a**, **723a** of the tongues **721**, **722**, **723**. The first surface **710a** of the first tongue **710** and the second surfaces **721b**, **722b**, **723b** of the second tongue **721**, **722**, **723** are separated by gaps **731**, **732**, **733**.

5 In many cases, as shown in FIGS. 7A – 7D, there are no electrical contacts on the second surface of the second tongue and there are also no electrical contacts on the first surface of the first tongue in the regions of the gaps **731**, **732**, **733** where the second tongues **721**, **722**, **723** overlap the first tongue **710**.

In some embodiments, one or more of the second tongues **721**, **722**, **723** may be disposed on a second connector piece that is reversibly attachable to and removable from a first connector piece that includes the first tongue **710**, as previously discussed for a single second tongue in connection with FIGS. 6A – 6D. In these embodiments, the connector can be adaptable to achieve a variety of second tongue configurations depending on application.

FIG. 8 illustrates a portion of a second tongue **820** configured to facilitate impedance matching and to enhance signal integrity (SI) performance of the connector. FIG. 8 shows a top perspective view of a second tongue **820** without electrical contacts. In this view, the second tongue **820** includes through slots **888** spaced apart along the second tongue **820**. The through slots **888** extend from the first surface **820a** of the second tongue through the second surface **820b** of the second tongue **820**. The through slots **888** form air gaps under the electrical contacts after the electrical contacts are installed on the second tongue **820**. The air gaps enhance impedance matching and signal integrity (SI) performance of the connector.

Some embodiments are directed to mating socket connectors configured to mate to the plug connectors described, for example, in connection with FIGS. 1 – 8. FIG. 9A shows a perspective view of a mating socket connector **900** in accordance with some embodiments and FIG. 9B shows a close-up perspective view of a portion of connector **900**. FIG. 9C shows a schematic depiction of a front view of the connector **900**. The connector **900** includes a housing **901** that is elongated along a longitudinal direction (the x-direction in FIGS. 9A – 9C) perpendicular to a mating direction (the y-direction in FIGS. 9A – 9C) of the connector **900**. In some embodiments, the housing may be a multi-piece housing. In some embodiments, the housing, including the blade **950**, may be formed as a unitary housing. Whether unitary or multi-piece, the housing **901** can be made of an insulative material such as plastic. The housing **901** comprises a central slot **930** extending along the longitudinal x direction. The central slot **930** includes a first slot portion **931** and second slot portion **932** separated by a third slot portion **933**.

Each slot portion **931**, **932**, **933** includes opposing top and bottom surfaces. As best seen in FIG. 9C, the first slot portion **931** includes opposing top and bottom surfaces **931a**, **931b**; the second slot portion **932** includes opposing top and bottom surfaces **932a**, **932b**; and the third slot portion **933** includes opposing top and bottom surfaces **933a**, **933b**. A separation between the top of bottom surfaces of each slot portion along a thickness direction (z-direction in FIGS. 9A – 9C) orthogonal to the longitudinal and mating directions defines a height of the slot **930**. The first slot portion **931** has a height, h_{s1} ; the second slot portion **932** has a height, h_{s2} ; and the third slot portion **933** has a height, h_{s3} . In some embodiments

$h_{s1} = h_{s2}$ and h_{s1} and h_{s2} are less than h_{s3} . In some implementations, one or more of the heights h_{s1} , h_{s2} , h_{s3} , are uniform along the mating y axis. In some embodiments one or more of the heights h_{s1} , h_{s2} , h_{s3} may vary along the mating y axis between the mating surface **901a** and the back surface **901b**.

The housing **901** comprises a blade **950** that extends forwardly along the mating y-axis from a back surface **901b** of the third slot portion **933**. The blade **950** may have a planar configuration and is disposed between and spaced apart from the top and bottom surfaces **933a**, **933b** of the third slot portion **933**. The blade **950** may not extend into the first and second slot portions **931**, **932**. In some embodiments, the blade **950** can be made of insulative material. In some embodiments, the blade **950** does not carry any contacts.

In some embodiments, the bottom surfaces **931b**, **932b**, **933b** of the first, second and third slot portions **931**, **932**, **933** lie in the same plane. In some embodiments, the top surfaces **931a**, **932a** of the first and second slot portions **931**, **932** lie in the same plane and the top surface **933a** of the third slot portion **933** lies in a different plane from the top surfaces **931a**, **932a** of the first and second slot portions **931**, **932**, e.g., a plane that is higher along the z-direction as depicted in FIG. 9A.

As best seen in FIGS. 9A and 9B, the connector **900** includes a plurality of spaced apart electrical contacts including a plurality of first contacts **971** disposed on a top surface **931a** of the first slot portion **931**; a plurality of spaced apart second contacts **972** disposed on a top surface **932a** of the second slot portion **932**; a plurality of spaced apart third contacts **973** disposed on bottom surfaces **931b**, **932b**, **933b** of the first, second and third slot portions **931**, **932**, **933**; and a plurality of spaced apart fourth contacts **974** disposed on a top surface **933a** of the third slot portion **933**.

The electrical connector **900** shown in FIGS. 9A – 9C is configured to mate with a mating connector having spaced apart top and bottom tongues defining a gap therebetween, as illustrated, for example, by FIGS. 1 – 8. The first and second slot portions **931**, **932** mate with the first (bottom) tongue, the third slot portion **933** mates with the second (top) tongue, and the blade **950** is inserted in the gap.

The blade **950** provides support to at least one of the top and bottom tongues.

In some embodiments, the housing **901** includes end tabs **961**, **962** that extend along the longitudinal x-axis. The tabs **961**, **962** can include protrusions **961a**, **962a** that extend forwardly along the mating y-axis and are configured to slidably engage with the U-shaped channels disposed in the end walls of a mating connector.

FIGS. 10A – 10C illustrate a multi-piece socket connector in accordance with some embodiments. FIGS. 10A and 10B shows first and second connector pieces **1000a**, **1000b**, respectively, of a socket connector that can be assembled to form connector **1000** shown in FIG. 10C. In this embodiment, the second connector piece **1000b** is reversibly attachable to and removable from the first connector piece **1000a**. The first connector piece **1000a** includes mating features that are configured to mate with compatible mating features of the second connector piece **1000b**, e.g., by snap-fit, friction-fit, or other mechanism.

As depicted in FIGS. 10A – 10C, the first connector piece **1000a** includes a housing **1001** that is elongated along a longitudinal direction (the x – direction as indicated in FIG. 10A) and that is

perpendicular to a mating direction (the y-direction as indicated in FIG. 10A). The first connector piece **1000a** can include end tabs **1061**, **1062** that extend longitudinally along the longitudinal x-axis at opposite longitudinal ends of the housing **1001**.

The housing **1001** comprises a central slot **1030** extending along the longitudinal direction. The central slot **1030** comprises a first slot portion **1031** and second slot portion **1032** separated by a third slot portion **1033**. As shown in FIG. 10A, the first connector piece **1000a** includes an opening **1055** (or slot) in the back surface **1001b** of the housing **1001** in the third slot portion **1033**. The opening **1055** is dimensioned to accept the second connector piece **1000b**. The opening **1055** can include channels **1055a** configured to mate with compatible protrusions **1054a** of the second connector piece **1000b**. In at least one aspect, the channels **1055a** and compatible protrusions **1054a** may have a dovetail shape.

The second connector piece **1000b** shown in FIG. 10B is dimensioned to be slidably attachable to the first connector piece **1000a**. The second connector piece **1000b** includes a tab portion **1054** and a blade **1050**. The tab portion **1054** is dimensioned to fit within the opening **1055** of the first connector piece **1000a**. In some configurations, the edges of the tab portion **1054** are configured to engage the side walls of the opening **1055**. In some configurations, one or more protrusions **1054a** extend from a bottom surface of the tab portion **1054** along the z axis as shown in FIG. 10B. The protrusions **1054a** are dimensioned to slidably engage with the channels **1055a**. When the tab portion **1054** is inserted in the opening **1055**, the blade **1050** extends forwardly along the mating y-axis in the third slot portion **1033** of the assembled connector **1000**.

FIG. 10C shows the assembled connector **1000** after the channels **1055a** are engaged with the protrusions **1054a**. The assembled connector **1000** shown in FIG. 10C can have electrical contacts and other features similar to the configuration of connector **900**, for example.

In some embodiments, the plug or socket connectors as described herein can be stacked to form stacked plug connectors or stacked socket connectors. FIG. 11 provides an illustration of a stacked plug connector **1100** including a first connector section **1100a** and a second connector section **1100b**. Each connector section **1100a**, **1100b** includes an elongated housing **1101a**, **1101b** from which a first (bottom) tongue and one or more second (top) tongues extend forwardly along the mating direction. In this embodiment, each connector section **1100a**, **1100b** includes a first tongue **1110a**, **1110b** and three second tongues **1121a**, **1122a**, **1123a**, **1121b**, **1122b**, **1123b**, although in other configurations the connector sections can include one second tongue, two second tongues, or more than three second tongues. The gaps **1131a**, **1132a**, **1133a**, **1131b**, **1132b**, **1133b** between the top surface **1111a**, **1111b** of the first tongue **1110a**, **1110b** and the bottom surfaces **1141a**, **1142a**, **1143a**, **1141b**, **1142b**, **1143b** of the second tongues **1121a**, **1122a**, **1123a**, **1121b**, **1122b**, **1123b** of the first and/or second connector sections **1100a**, **1100b** may be in a range of about 0.1 mm to about 5 mm. The distance between the bottom surface **1160a** of the first tongue **1110a** of the first connector section **1100a** and the top surfaces **1151b**, **1152b**, **1153b** of the second tongues **1121b**, **1122b**, **1123b** of the second connector section **1100b** are separated by about 1.66 mm.

The first and second connector sections **1100a**, **1100b** include electrical contacts arranged on the first and second tongues as previously discussed. For example, for the first connector section **1100a**, electrical contacts may be arranged on the top and bottom surfaces **1111a**, **1160a** of the first tongue **1110a** and on the top surface **1151a**, **1152a**, **1153a** of the second tongues **1121a**, **1122a**, **1123a**. There may be no electrical contacts on the bottom surfaces **1141a**, **1142a**, **1143a** of the second tongues **1121a**, **1122a**, **1123a** and no electrical contacts on the top surface **1111a** of the first tongue **1110a** in the regions of the gaps **1131a**, **1132a**, **1133a** where the second tongues **1121a**, **1122a**, **1123a** overlap the first tongue **1110a**.

Similarly, for the second connector section **1100b**, electrical contacts may be arranged on the top and bottom surfaces **1111b**, **1160b** of the first tongue **1110b** and on the top surface **1151b**, **1152b**, **1153b** of the second tongues **1121b**, **1122b**, **1123b**. There may be no electrical contacts on the bottom surfaces **1141b**, **1142b**, **1143b** of the second tongues **1121b**, **1122b**, **1123b** and no electrical contacts on the top surface **1111b** of the first tongue **1110b** in the regions of the gaps **1131b**, **1132b**, **1133b** where the second tongues **1121b**, **1122b**, **1123b** overlap the first tongue **1110b**.

Embodiments disclosed herein include:

Item 1. An elongated electrical connector for mounting on a printed circuit board and mating with a mating connector along a mating direction, the connector comprising:

an elongated base extending along a longitudinal direction perpendicular to the mating direction; first and second end walls extending forwardly along the mating direction from opposite longitudinal ends of the base;

a bottom tongue extending forwardly along the mating direction from the base and disposed between and spaced apart from the first and second end walls, the bottom tongue having a uniform thickness along its length along the longitudinal direction and comprising first and second bottom tongue portions separated by a third bottom tongue portion;

a top tongue extending forwardly along the mating direction from the base and disposed between and spaced apart from the first and second end walls, the top tongue having a uniform thickness along its length along the longitudinal direction and being spaced apart from the bottom tongue along a thickness direction perpendicular to the mating and longitudinal directions, a bottom surface of the top tongue facing a top face of the third bottom tongue portion;

a plurality of spaced apart first contacts disposed on a top surface of the first bottom tongue portion;

a plurality of spaced apart second contacts disposed on a top surface of the second bottom tongue portion;

a plurality of spaced apart third contacts disposed on a bottom surface of the bottom tongue; and a plurality of spaced apart fourth contacts disposed on a top surface of the top tongue.

Item 2. The elongated electrical connector of item 1, wherein the top and bottom tongues have the same thickness.

Item 3. The elongated electrical connector of item 1, wherein the top tongue is thicker than the
5 bottom tongue.

Item 4. The elongated electrical connector of item 1, wherein the top tongue is thinner than the bottom tongue.

10 Item 5. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 4, wherein a length of the top tongue along the longitudinal direction is smaller than a length of the bottom tongue along the longitudinal direction.

Item 6. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 5, wherein a separation
15 between the top and bottom tongues along the thickness direction is in a range from 0.1 mm to 5 mm.

Item 7. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 6, wherein there are no contacts on a bottom surface of the top tongue.

20 Item 8. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 7, wherein there are contacts on a bottom, but not top, surface of the third bottom tongue portion.

Item 9. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 8, wherein the bottom tongue has a width along the mating direction measured from a front edge of the bottom tongue to the
25 base, the first and second bottom tongue portions having a larger width, the third bottom tongue portion having a smaller width.

Item 10. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 9, wherein the base, the top and bottom tongues, and the first and second end walls form a unitary construction.
30

Item 11. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 10, wherein a separation distance between the top and bottom tongues along the thickness direction is variable.

Item 12. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 11, wherein the top
35 tongue is reversibly attachable to and removable from the connector.

Item 13. The elongated electrical connector of item 12, wherein the base comprises a sliding portion, the top tongue extending forwardly along the mating direction from the sliding portion of

the base, the base comprising a groove along the thickness direction, the top tongue being reversibly attachable to and removable from the connector by the sliding portion of the base sliding along the groove.

5 Item 14. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 13, wherein the top tongue comprises a plurality of spaced apart slots, each slot extending from the top surface to a bottom surface of the top tongue, each contact in the plurality of fourth contacts being disposed on a corresponding slot.

10 Item 15. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 14, further comprising an insert removably inserted in a gap defined between the spaced apart top and bottom tongues, the insert providing support to the top tongue.

15 Item 16. The elongated electrical connector of item 15, wherein the insert is removed before the connector mates with a mating connector.

20 Item 17. The elongated electrical connector of any of items 1 through 16, wherein each of the first and second end walls includes a U-shaped channel configured to slidably engage with a mating connector.

25 Item 18. An electrical connector comprising:
a unitary base elongated along a longitudinal direction;
a first tongue extending forwardly from the base and having a uniform thickness along the longitudinal direction, the first tongue comprising a plurality of spaced apart first contacts;
a second tongue extending forwardly from the base and comprising a plurality of spaced apart second contacts, the first and second tongues defining a gap therebetween that extends from a front edge of one of the first and second tongues toward the unitary base.

30 Item 19. The electrical connector of item 18, wherein the gap extends from the front edge of one of the first and second tongues to the unitary base.

35 Item 20. The electrical connector of any of items 18 through 19, wherein the first tongue has a width measured from a front edge of the first tongue to the unitary base, the width being substantially the same across the length of the first tongue.

 Item 21. The electrical connector of any of items 18 through 20, wherein each of the first and second tongues has a length along the longitudinal direction, the length of the first tongue being greater than the length of the second tongue.

Item 22. The electrical connector of any of items 18 through 21, wherein each of the first and second tongues has a length along the longitudinal direction and a width measured from a front edge of the tongue to the base, each of the first and second tongues having a uniform thickness across the width and length of the tongue.

Item 23. The electrical connector of any of items 18 through 22, wherein the first and second tongues define an overlap region between the two tongues, wherein in the overlap region, each tongue comprises contacts only on one major surface of the tongue.

Item 24. The electrical connector of any of items 18 through 23, wherein the first and second tongues define an overlap region between the two tongues, wherein in the overlap region, neither tongue comprises contacts on a major surface of the tongue that faces the other tongue.

Item 25. The electrical connector of any of items 18 through 24, wherein the first and second tongues define an overlap region between the two tongues, wherein in the overlap region, each tongue comprises contacts only on a major surface of the tongue that faces away from the other tongue.

Item 26. An electrical connector comprising:
a unitary housing elongated along a longitudinal direction perpendicular to a mating direction of the connector, the unitary housing defining a central slot extending along the longitudinal direction, the central slot comprising first and second slot portions separated by a third slot portion, each slot portion comprising opposing top and bottom surfaces, a separation between the top of bottom surfaces of each slot portion along a thickness direction orthogonal to the longitudinal and mating directions defining a height of the slot, the first and second slot portions having a same smaller height, the third slot portion having a greater height, the unitary housing comprising a blade extending forwardly along the mating direction from a back surface of the third slot portion and disposed between and spaced apart from the top and bottom surfaces of the third slot portion;

a plurality of spaced apart first contacts disposed on a top surface of the first slot portion;
a plurality of spaced apart second contacts disposed on a top surface of the second slot portion;
a plurality of spaced apart third contacts disposed on bottom surfaces of the first, second and third slot portions; and
a plurality of spaced apart fourth contacts disposed on a top surface of the third slot portion.

Item 27. The electrical connector of item 26, wherein the bottom surfaces of the first, second and third slot portions lie in a sample plane.

Item 28. The electrical connector of any of items 26 through 27, wherein the top surfaces of the first and second slot portions lie in a same plane and the top surface of the third slot portion lies in a higher plane.

5 Item 29. The electrical connector of any of items 26 through 28, wherein the blade does not extend into the first and second slot portions.

Item 30. The electrical connector of any of items 26 through 29, wherein when the connector mates with a mating connector having spaced apart top and bottom tongues defining a gap
10 therebetween, the first and second slot portions mate with the bottom tongue, the third slot portion mates with the top tongue, and the blade is inserted in the gap.

Item 31. An electrical connector comprising a unitary insulative housing defining an elongated slot bound by opposing first and second major surfaces and comprising a blade extending from
15 a back surface of the slot toward a front of the slot and disposed between and spaced apart from the first and second major surfaces, a first plurality of contacts disposed on the first major surface and facing the blade, a second plurality of contacts disposed on the second major surface and facing the blade.

Item 32. The electrical connector of item 31, wherein the blade does not carry any
20 contacts.

Item 33. An electrical connector adapted to mate with a mating connector that includes overlapping planar top and bottom tongues defining a gap therebetween with each tongue carrying a plurality of contacts, the electrical connector comprising an insulative planar blade, such that when the
25 electrical connector mates with the mating connector, the insulative planar blade is inserted in the gap to provide support to at least one of the top and bottom tongues.

Item 34. The electrical connector of item 33, wherein the blade does not carry any
30 contacts.

Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers expressing feature sizes, amounts, and physical properties used in the specification and claims are to be understood as being modified in all instances by the term “about.” Accordingly, unless indicated to the contrary, the numerical parameters set forth in the foregoing specification and attached claims are approximations that can vary depending upon the desired
35 properties sought to be obtained by those skilled in the art utilizing the teachings disclosed herein. The use of numerical ranges by endpoints includes all numbers within that range (e.g. 1 to 5 includes 1, 1.5, 2, 2.75, 3, 3.80, 4, and 5) and any range within that range.

Various modifications and alterations of this invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art and it should be understood that this scope of this disclosure is not limited to the illustrative embodiments set forth herein. For example, the reader should assume that features of one disclosed embodiment can also be applied to all other disclosed embodiments unless otherwise indicated. It should also be
5 understood that all U.S. patents, patent application publications, and other patent and non-patent documents referred to herein are incorporated by reference, to the extent they do not contradict the foregoing disclosure.

CLAIMS

1. An elongated electrical connector for mounting on a printed circuit board and mating with a mating connector along a mating direction, the connector comprising:

an elongated base extending along a longitudinal direction perpendicular to the mating direction;

5 first and second end walls extending forwardly along the mating direction from opposite longitudinal ends of the base;

a bottom tongue extending forwardly along the mating direction from the base and disposed between and spaced apart from the first and second end walls, the bottom tongue having a uniform thickness along its length along the longitudinal direction and comprising first and second bottom tongue portions separated by a third bottom tongue portion;

10 a top tongue extending forwardly along the mating direction from the base and disposed between and spaced apart from the first and second end walls, the top tongue having a uniform thickness along its length along the longitudinal direction and being spaced apart from the bottom tongue along a thickness direction perpendicular to the mating and longitudinal directions, a bottom surface of the top tongue facing a top face of the third bottom tongue portion;

15 a plurality of spaced apart first contacts disposed on a top surface of the first bottom tongue portion;

a plurality of spaced apart second contacts disposed on a top surface of the second bottom tongue portion;

20 a plurality of spaced apart third contacts disposed on a bottom surface of the bottom tongue; and a plurality of spaced apart fourth contacts disposed on a top surface of the top tongue.

2. The elongated electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the top tongue is reversibly attachable to and removable from the connector.

25 3. The elongated electrical connector of claim 2, wherein the base comprises a sliding portion, the top tongue extending forwardly along the mating direction from the sliding portion of the base, the base comprising a groove along the thickness direction, the top tongue being reversibly attachable to and removable from the connector by the sliding portion of the base sliding along the groove.

30 4. The elongated electrical connector of claim 1 further comprising an insert removably inserted in a gap defined between the spaced apart top and bottom tongues, the insert providing support to the top tongue.

35 5. An electrical connector comprising:
a unitary base elongated along a longitudinal direction;

a first tongue extending forwardly from the base and having a uniform thickness along the longitudinal direction, the first tongue comprising a plurality of spaced apart first contacts;

a second tongue extending forwardly from the base and comprising a plurality of spaced apart second contacts, the first and second tongues defining a gap therebetween that extends from a front edge of one of the first and second tongues toward the unitary base.

6. An electrical connector comprising:

a unitary housing elongated along a longitudinal direction perpendicular to a mating direction of the connector, the unitary housing defining a central slot extending along the longitudinal direction, the central slot comprising first and second slot portions separated by a third slot portion, each slot portion comprising opposing top and bottom surfaces, a separation between the top of bottom surfaces of each slot portion along a thickness direction orthogonal to the longitudinal and mating directions defining a height of the slot, the first and second slot portions having a same smaller height, the third slot portion having a greater height, the unitary housing comprising a blade extending forwardly along the mating direction from a back surface of the third slot portion and disposed between and spaced apart from the top and bottom surfaces of the third slot portion;

a plurality of spaced apart first contacts disposed on a top surface of the first slot portion;

a plurality of spaced apart second contacts disposed on a top surface of the second slot portion;

a plurality of spaced apart third contacts disposed on bottom surfaces of the first, second and third slot portions; and

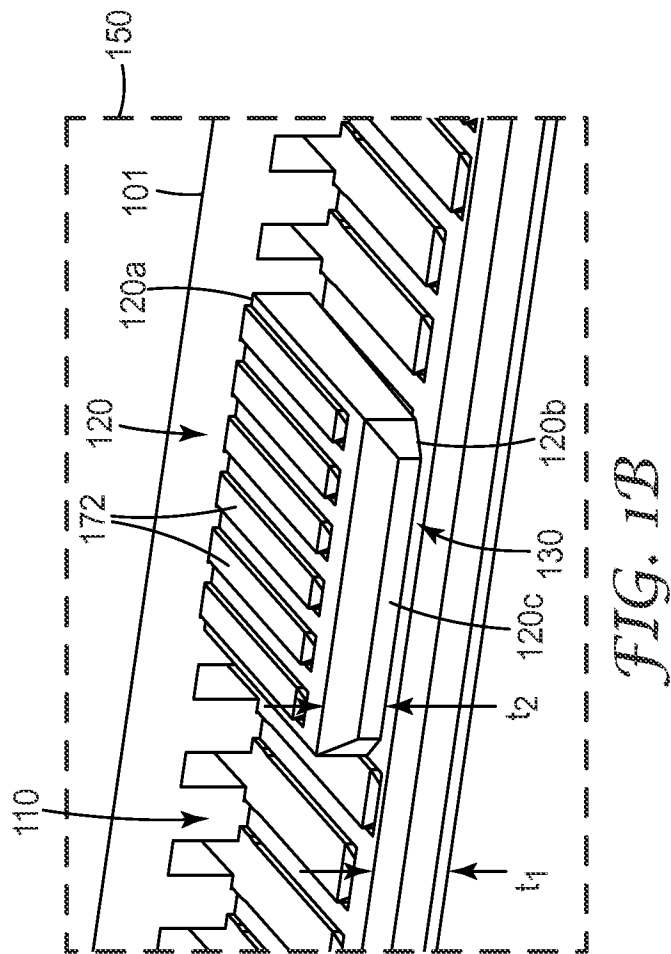
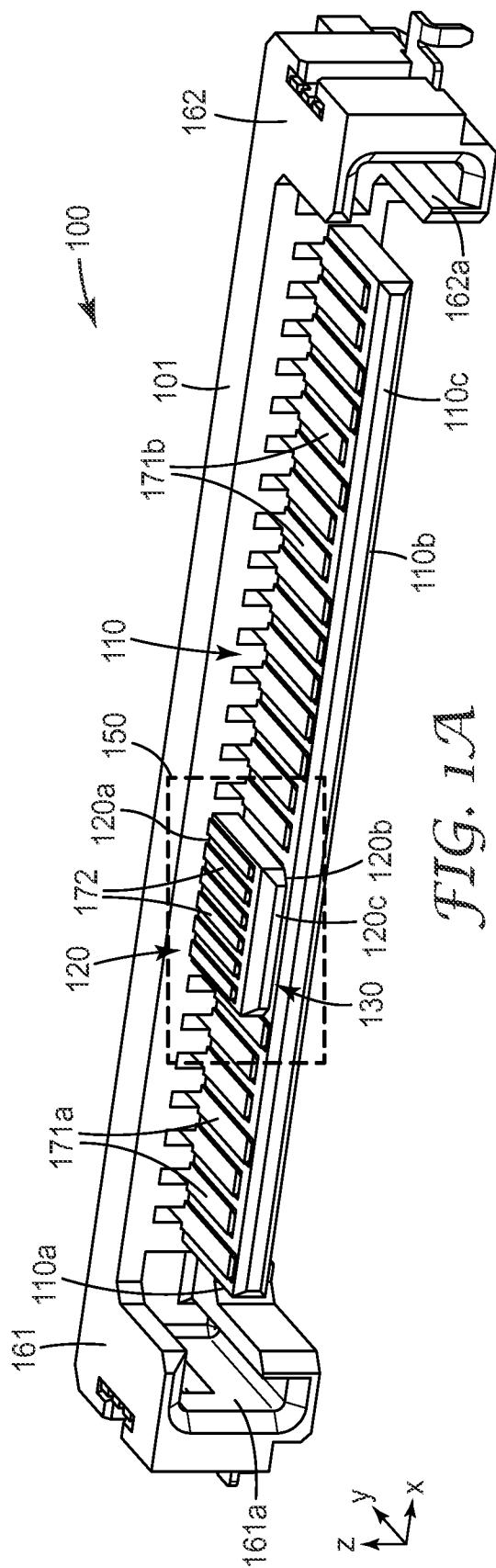
a plurality of spaced apart fourth contacts disposed on a top surface of the third slot portion.

7. The electrical connector of claim 6, wherein the blade does not extend into the first and second slot portions.

8. The electrical connector of claim 6, wherein when the connector mates with a mating connector having spaced apart top and bottom tongues defining a gap therebetween, the first and second slot portions mate with the bottom tongue, the third slot portion mates with the top tongue, and the blade is inserted in the gap.

9. An electrical connector comprising a unitary insulative housing defining an elongated slot bound by opposing first and second major surfaces and comprising a blade extending from a back surface of the slot toward a front of the slot and disposed between and spaced apart from the first and second major surfaces, a first plurality of contacts disposed on the first major surface and facing the blade, a second plurality of contacts disposed on the second major surface and facing the blade.

10. The electrical connector of claim 9, wherein the blade does not carry any contacts.



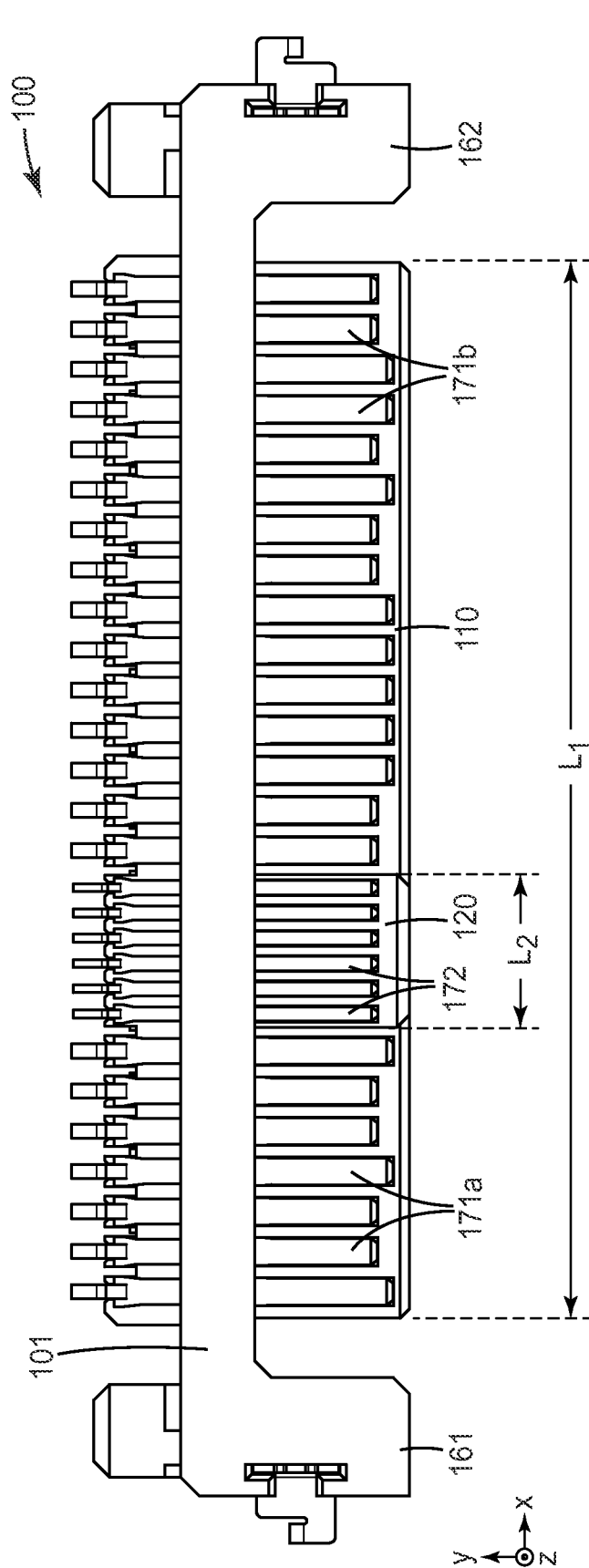


FIG. 1C

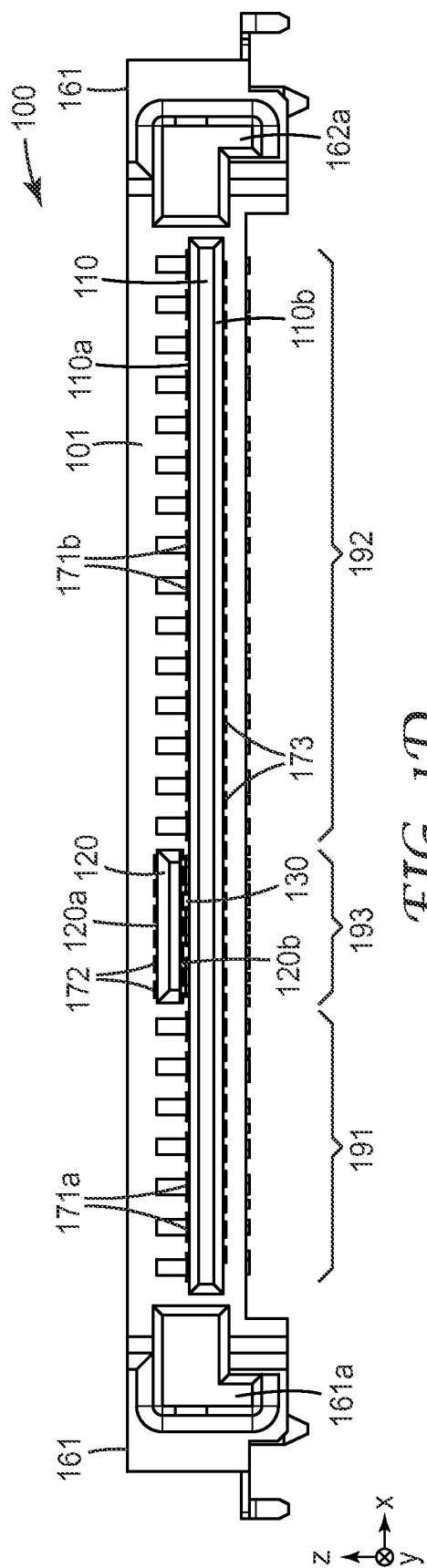


FIG. 1D

3/15

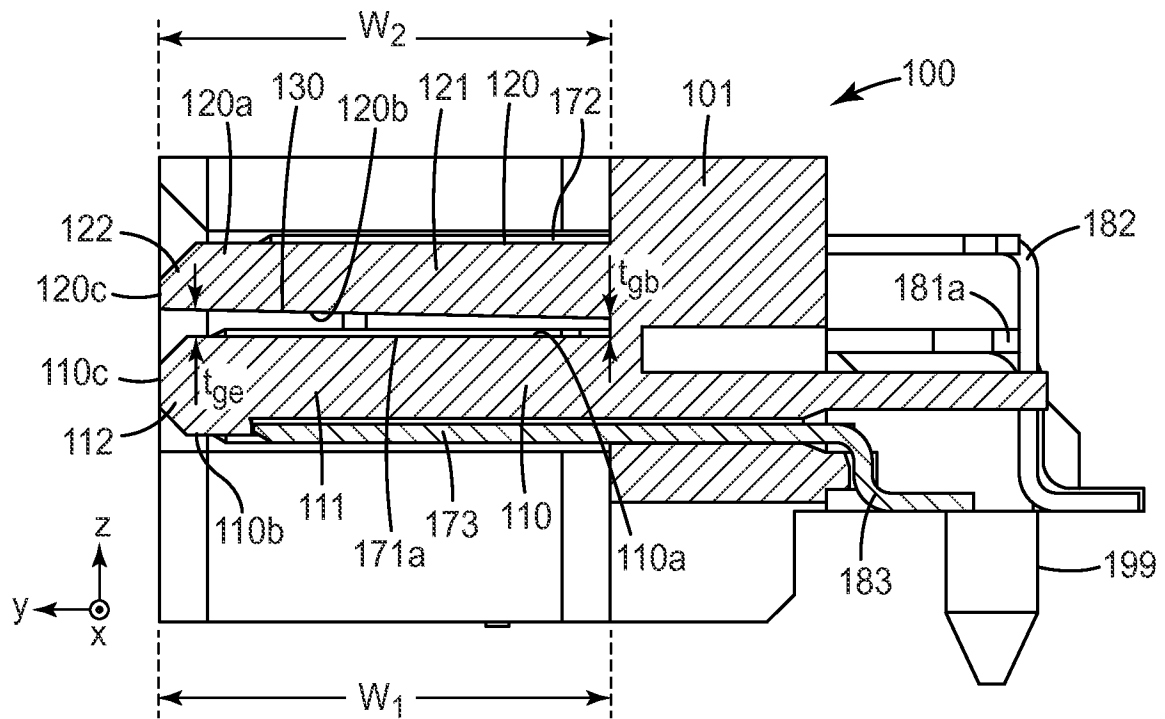


FIG. 2A

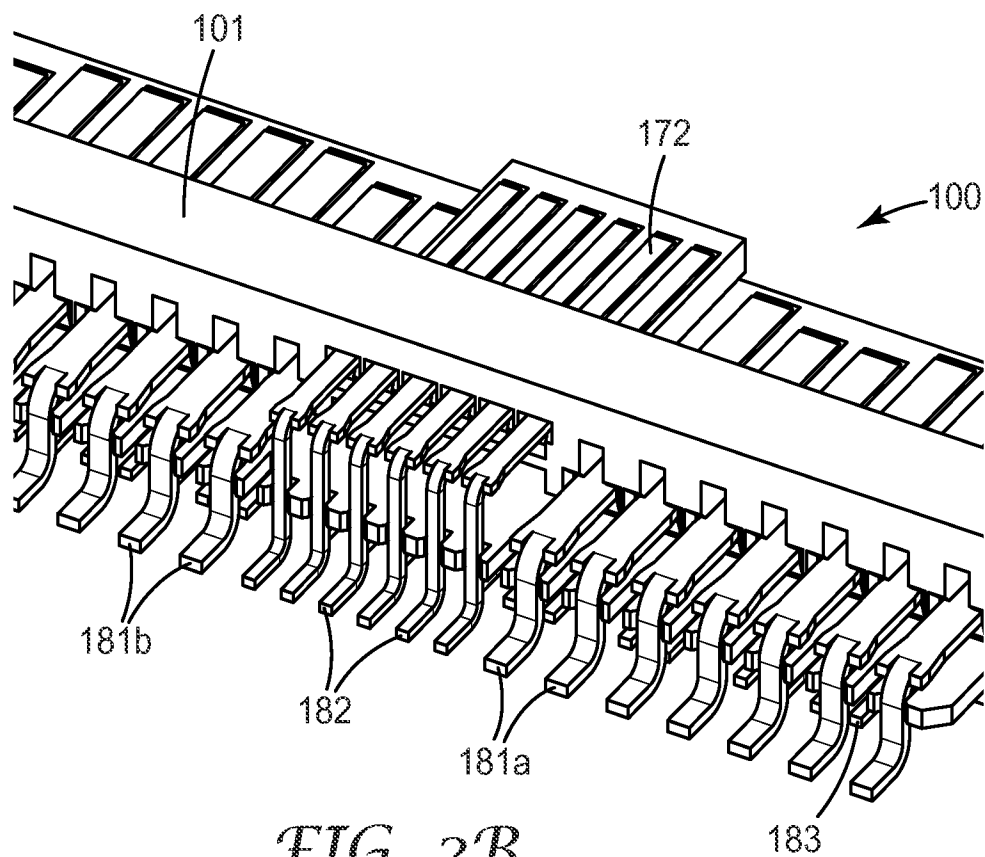
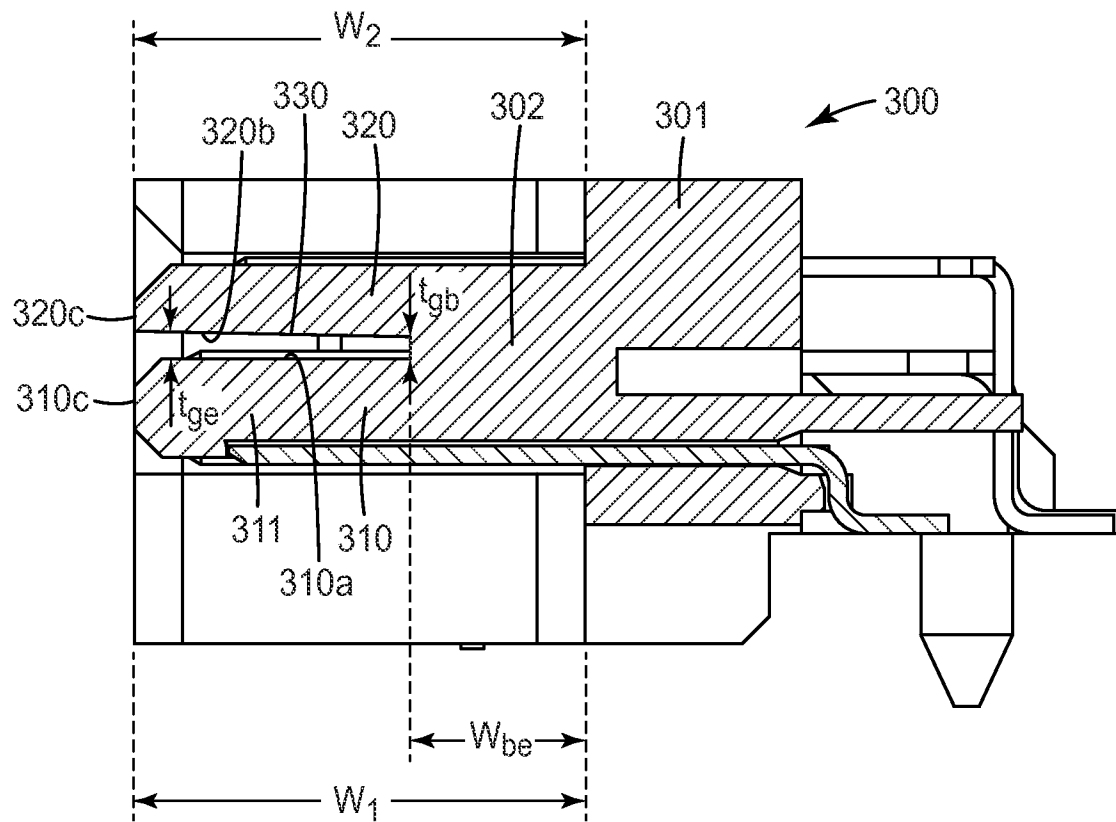
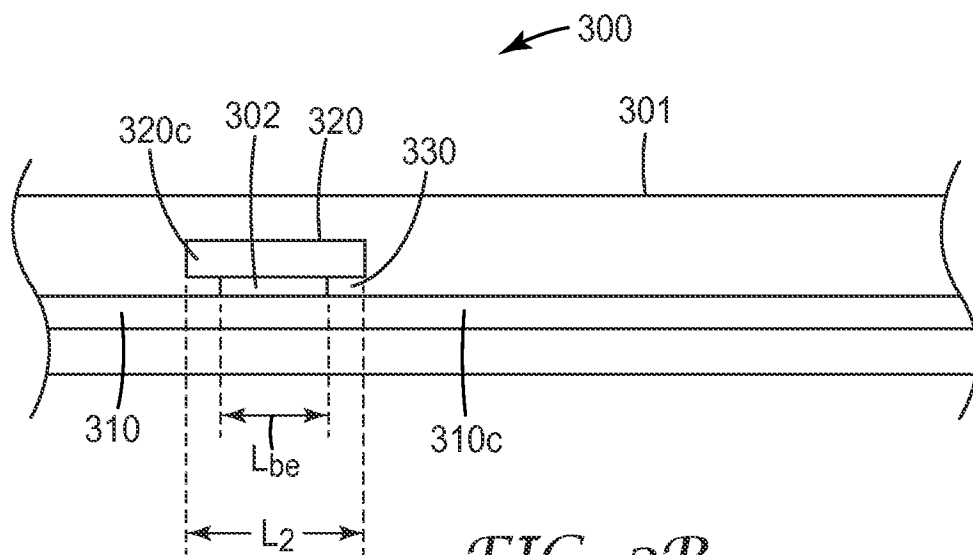


FIG. 2B

4/15

*FIG. 3A**FIG. 3B*

5/15

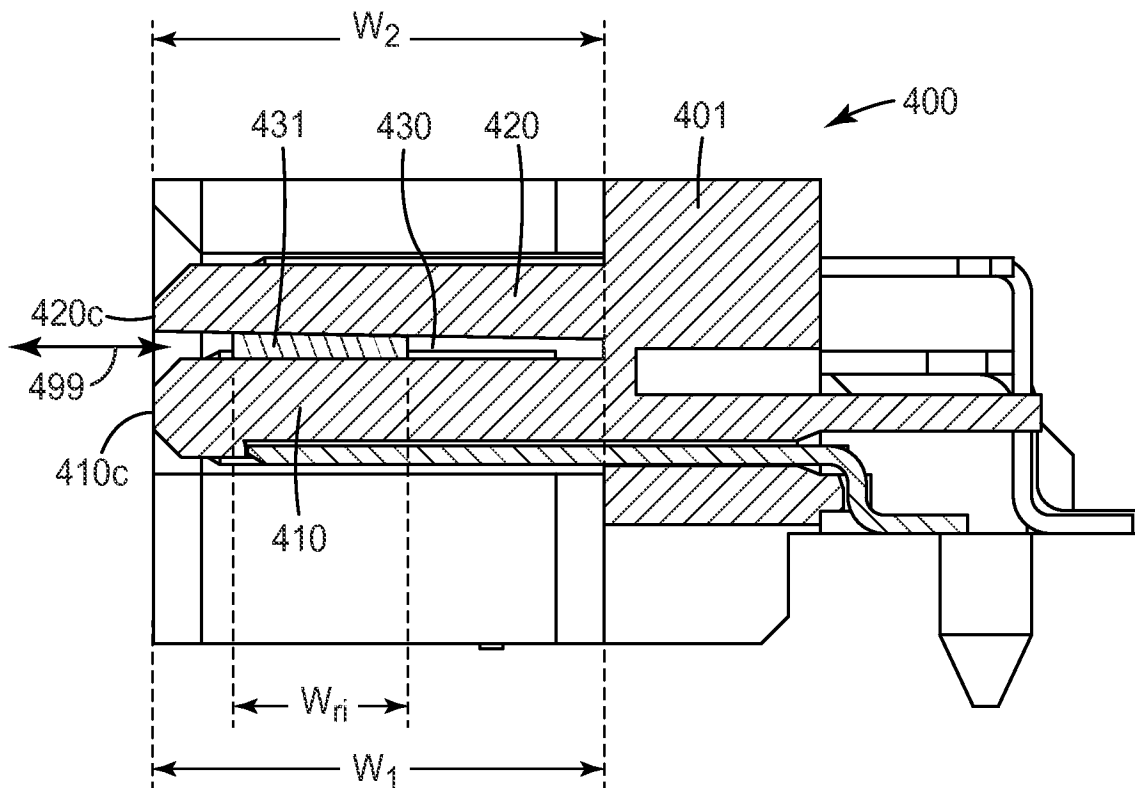


FIG. 4A

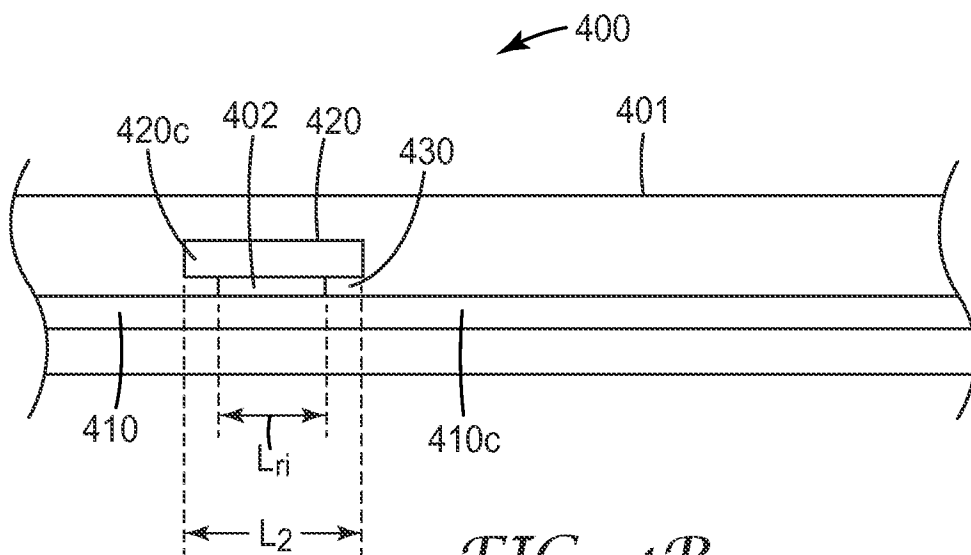
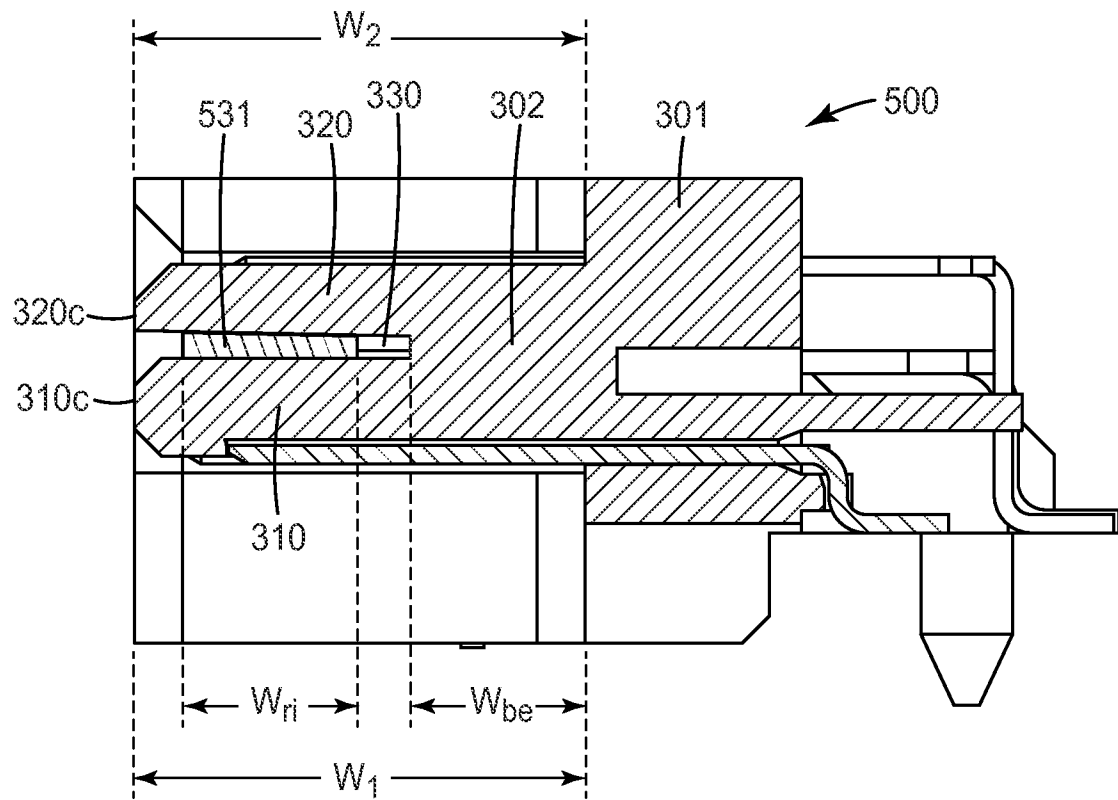
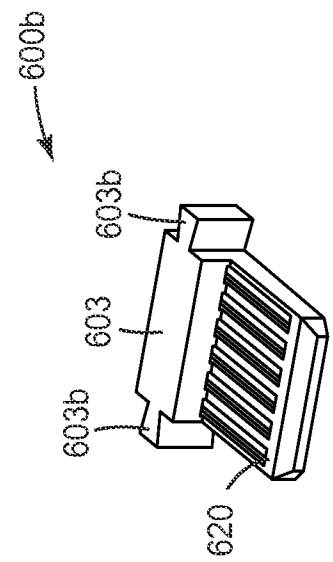
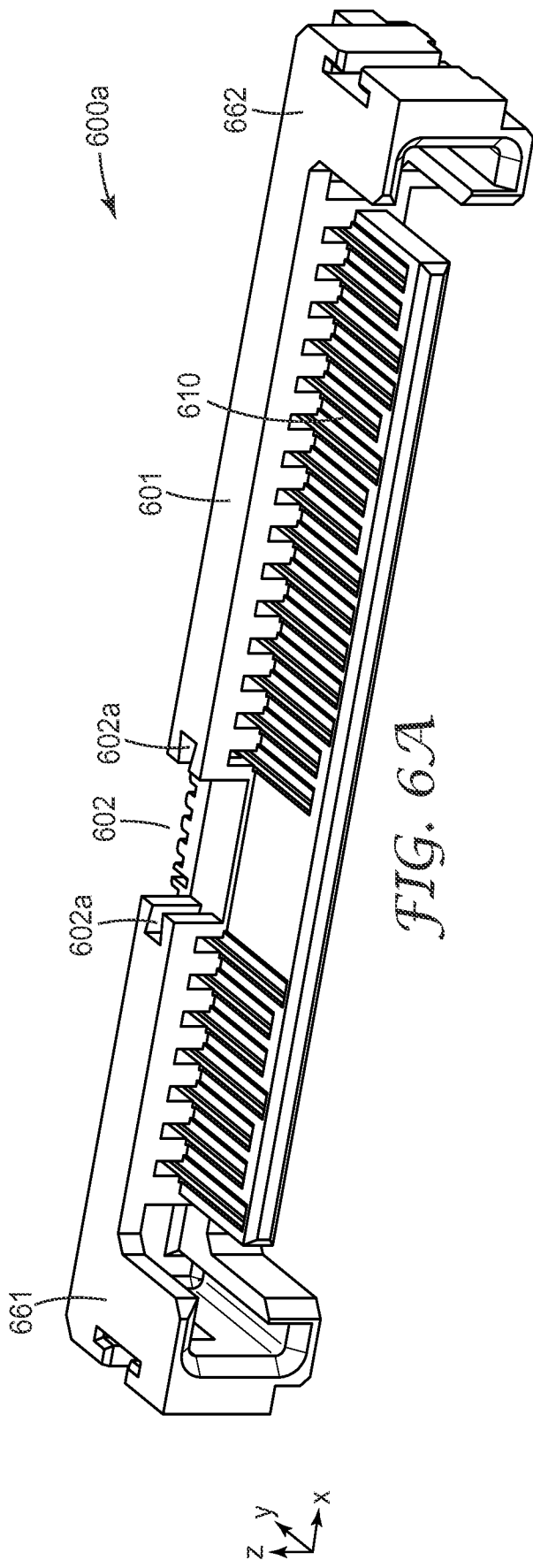
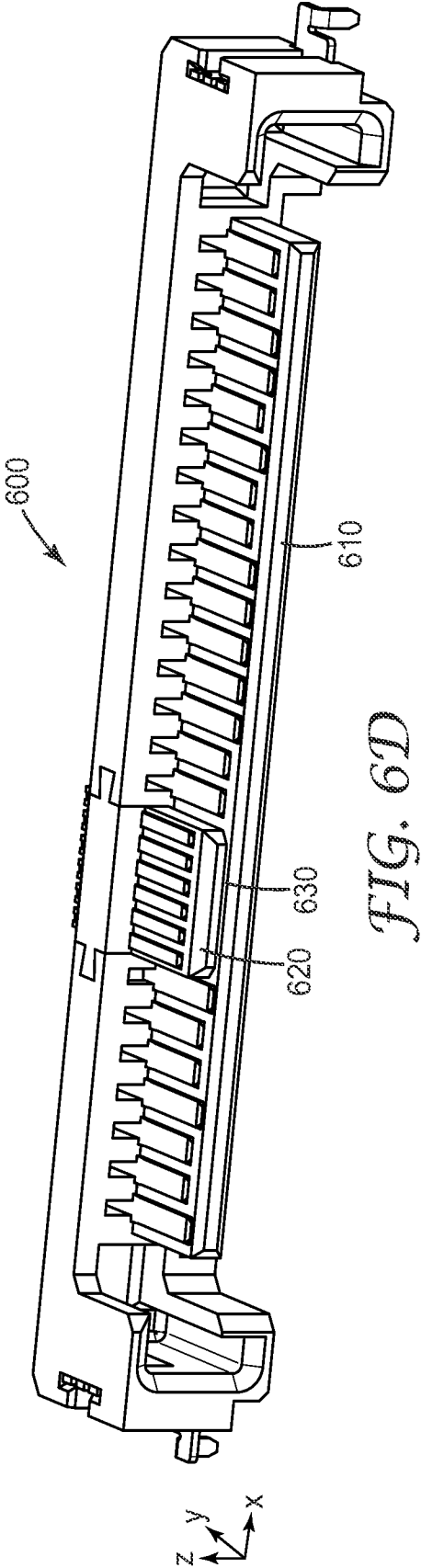
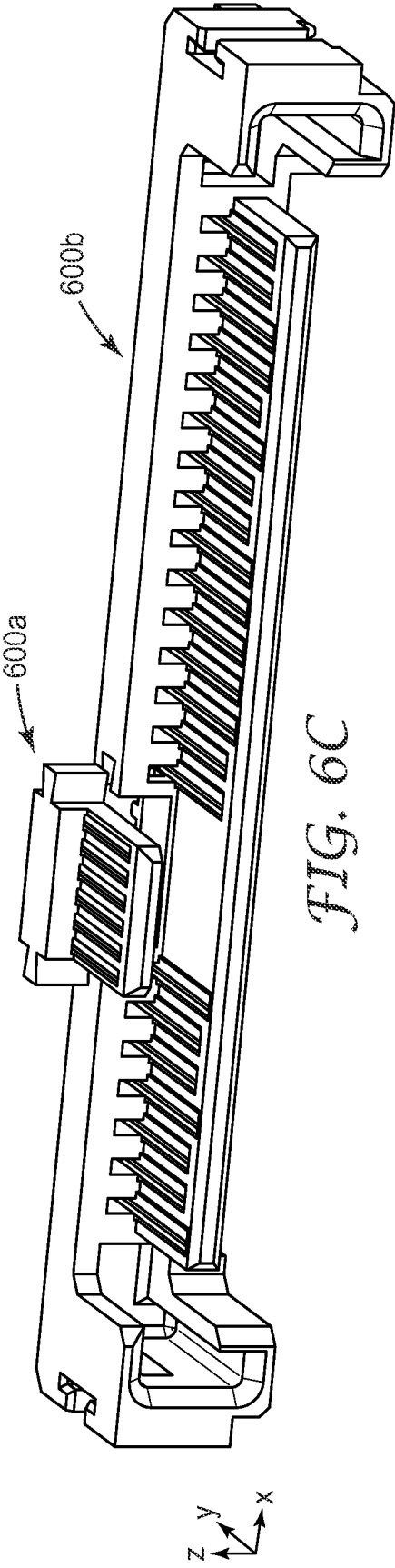


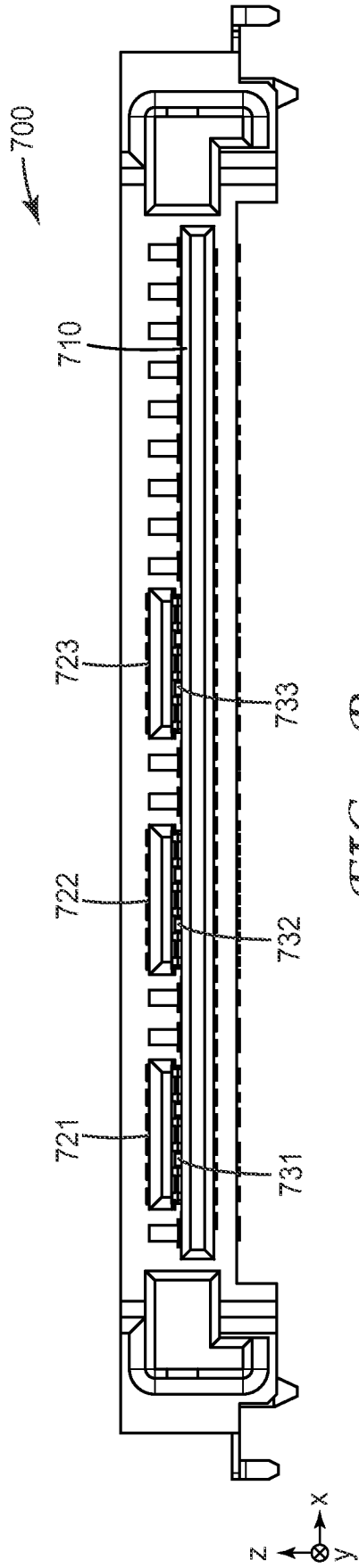
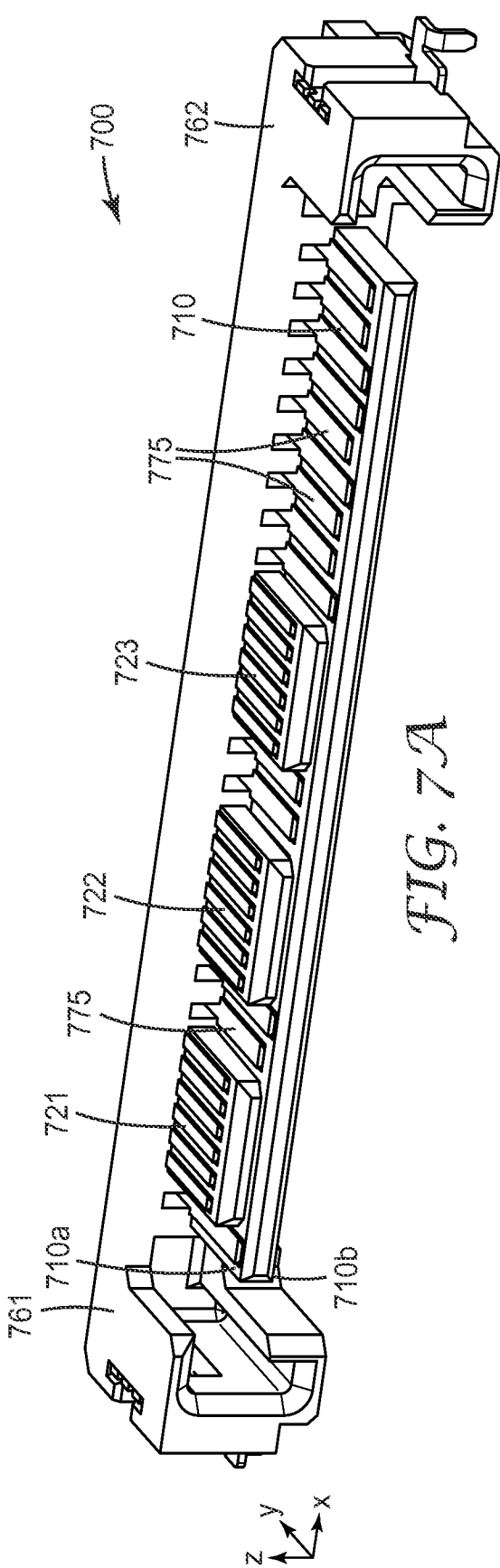
FIG. 4B

6/15

*FIG. 5*







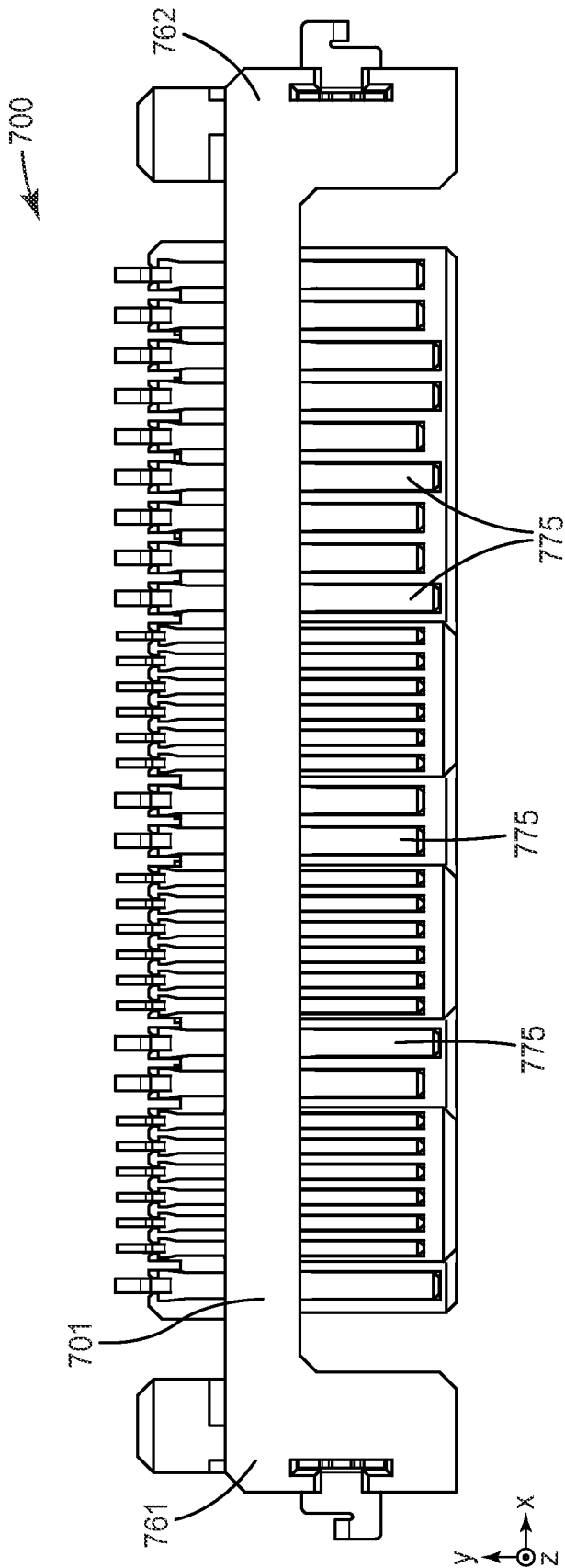
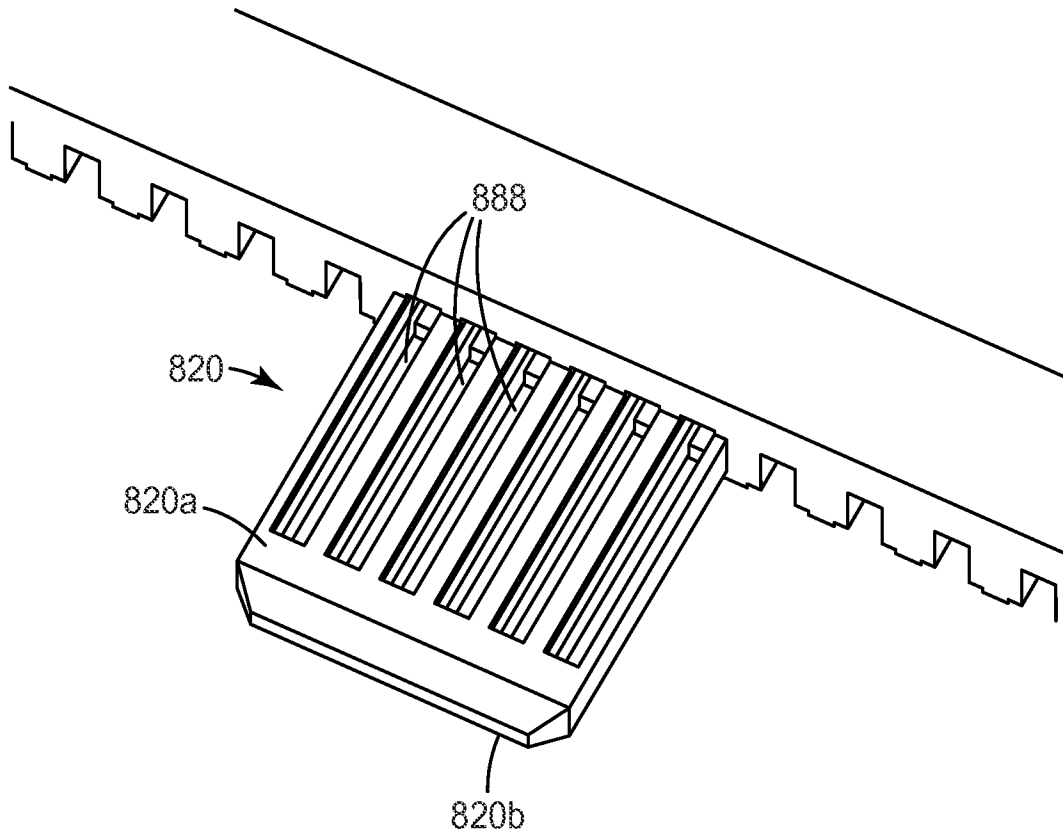
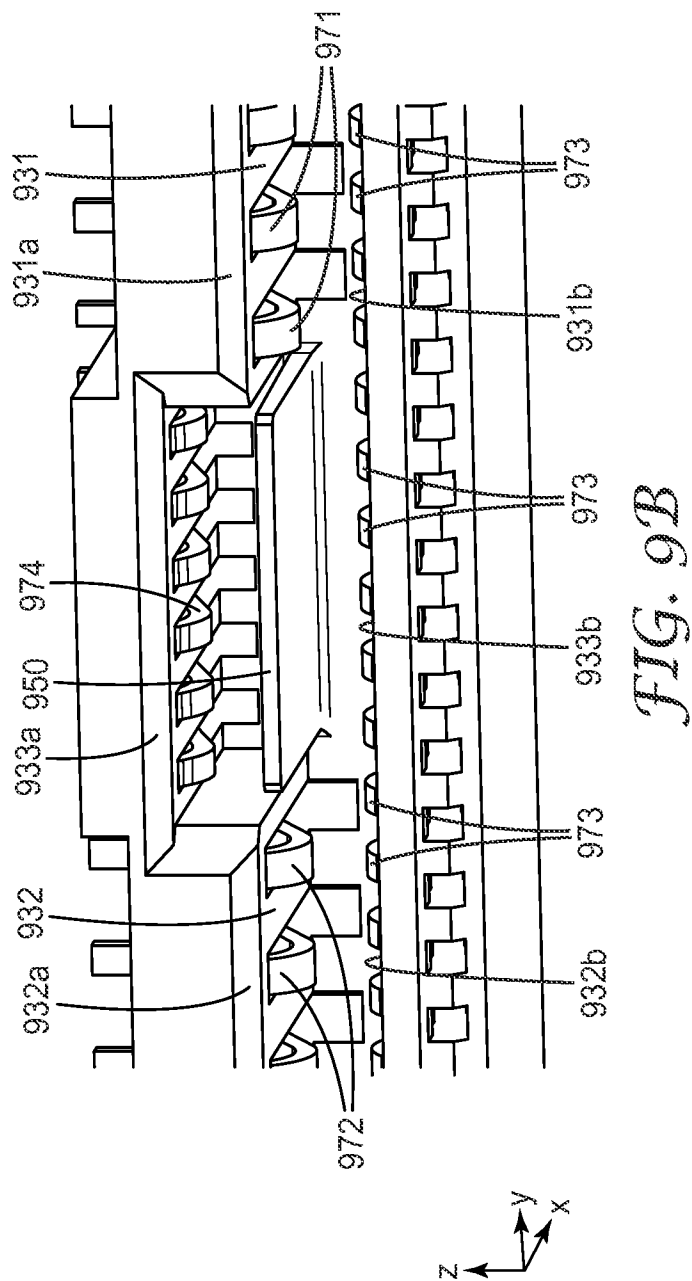
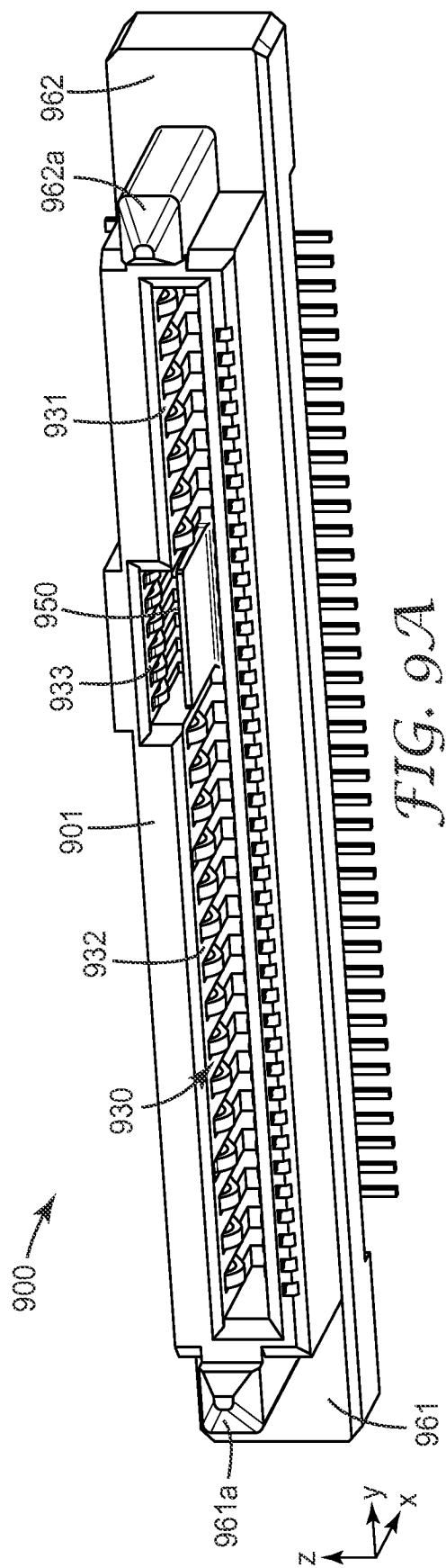


FIG. 7C

11/15

*FIG. 8*



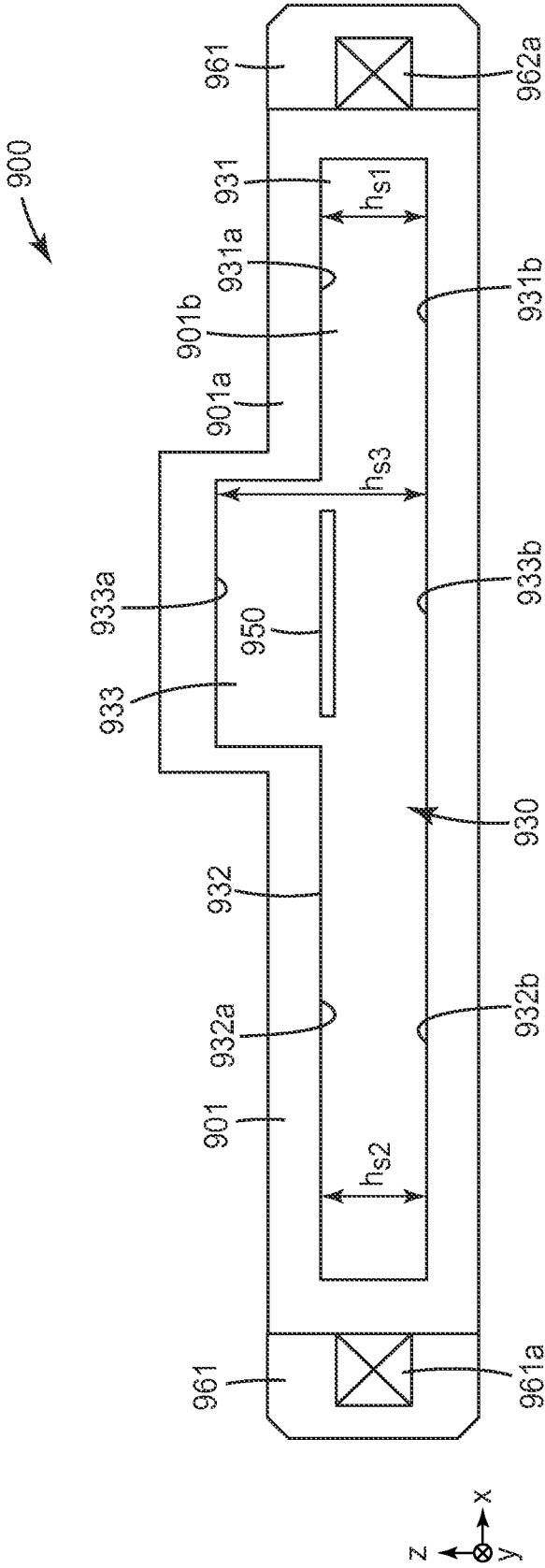
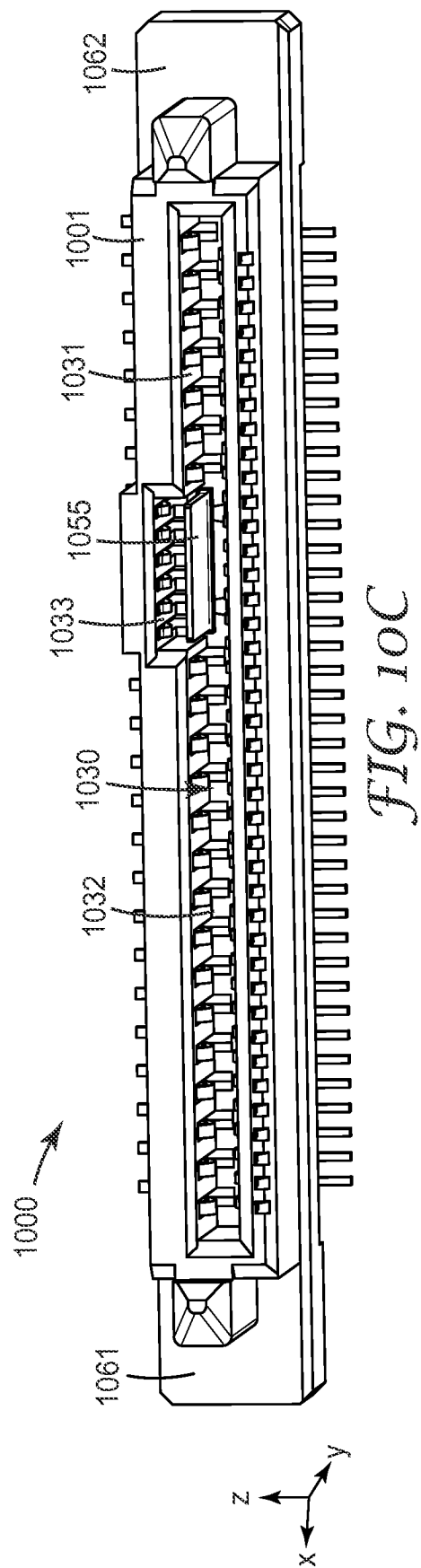
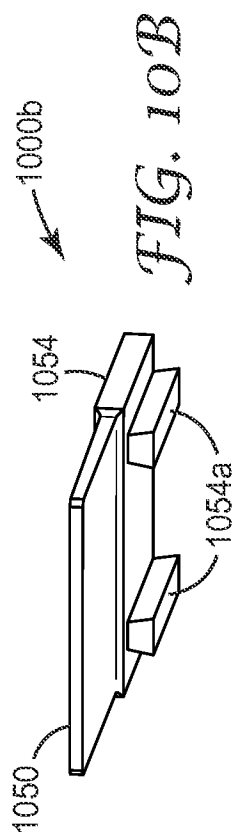
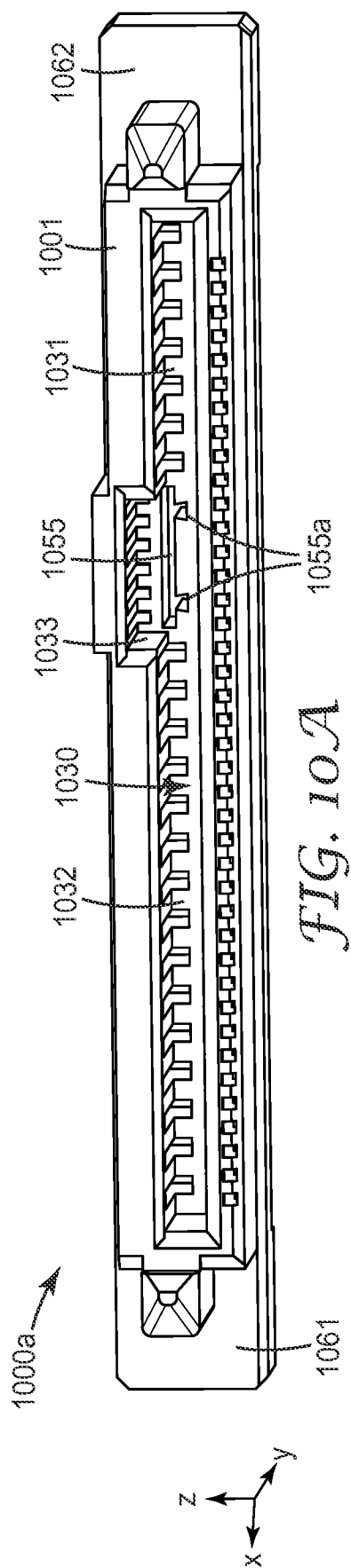


FIG. 9C



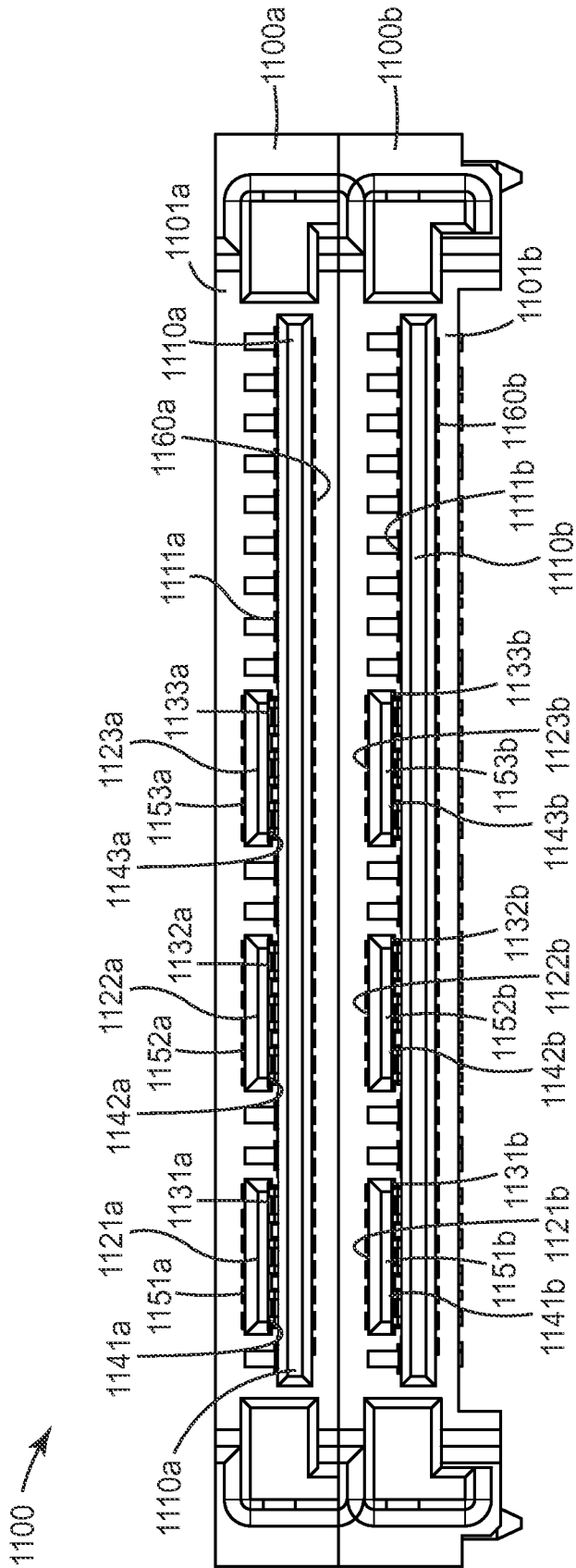


FIG. 11

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/US2014/047354

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

INV. H01R12/71 H01R27/02
 ADD. H01R13/514

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 H01R

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2010/075538 A1 (OHSHIDA TADASHI [JP]) 25 March 2010 (2010-03-25) figures 1a,2a	5
A	----- WO 2010/141307 A2 (3M INNOVATIVE PROPERTIES CO [US]; QIAO YUN LONG [SG]) 9 December 2010 (2010-12-09) abstract; figures 1-3	1,5,6,9
A	----- WO 2011/130465 A2 (MOLEX INC [US]; LIM KIAN HENG [SG]; CHEAH YOKE WAI [SG]) 20 October 2011 (2011-10-20) figure 3	6
X	----- US 2004/123458 A1 (KORSUNSKY IOSIF R [US] ET AL) 1 July 2004 (2004-07-01) figure 2	5



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

29 September 2014

Date of mailing of the international search report

07/10/2014

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
 Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040,
 Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Corrales, Daniel

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/US2014/047354

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date	
US 2010075538	A1	25-03-2010	CN 101685912 A	31-03-2010
			JP 4629133 B2	09-02-2011
			JP 2010073641 A	02-04-2010
			TW 201014060 A	01-04-2010
			US 2010075538 A1	25-03-2010

WO 2010141307	A2	09-12-2010	SG 166707 A1	29-12-2010
			TW 201106542 A	16-02-2011
			US 2012077385 A1	29-03-2012
			WO 2010141307 A2	09-12-2010

WO 2011130465	A2	20-10-2011	JP 5502233 B2	28-05-2014
			JP 2013524479 A	17-06-2013
			US 2013115815 A1	09-05-2013
			WO 2011130465 A2	20-10-2011

US 2004123458	A1	01-07-2004	NONE	
