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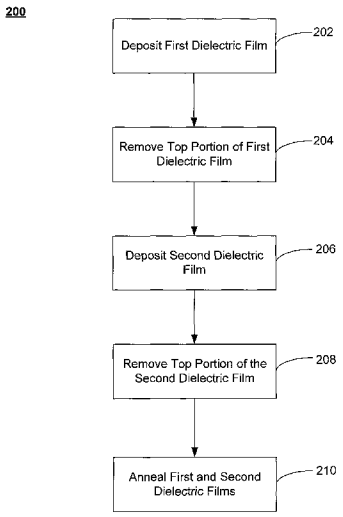

(57) Abstract: Methods to reduce film cracking in a dielectric layer are described. The methods may include the steps of depositing a first dielectric film on a substrate and removing a top portion of the first dielectric film by performing an etch on the film. The methods may also include depositing a second dielectric film over the etched first film, and removing a top portion of the second dielectric film. In addition, the methods may include annealing the first and second dielectric films to form the dielectric layer, where the removal of the top portions from the first and the second dielectric films reduces a stress level in the dielectric layer.

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