

Support H.R. 1695, the “Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act”

Bipartisan Legislation Passed the Judiciary Committee 27-1

Dear Democratic Colleague:

We write to you as strong supporters of H.R. 1695, the “Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act.” H.R. 1695 elevates the stature of the Register of Copyrights and makes the position – which is central to the \$1.2 trillion creative industry and is responsible for more than 5 million U.S. jobs – directly accountable to Congress. Please consider the following:

Democratic Supported Legislation – Rep. Conyers is the lead Cosponsor of H.R. 1695. The bill *passed the Judiciary Committee by a vote of 27-1* and was supported at markup by Democratic Reps. Conyers, Nadler, Jackson Lee, Cohen, Deutch, Bass, Jeffries, Swalwell, Lieu, Raskin, Jayapal, and Schneider. The legislation is also supported by the leading Senate Judiciary Democrats, Ranking Member Feinstein and former Chairman Leahy.

Union and Stakeholder Endorsed – H.R. 1695 is supported by a wide range of stakeholders, including *the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), the Directors Guild, and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), the American Federation of Musicians (AFM)*, as well as organizations such as the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), the Recording Academy (The GRAMMYS), the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), Software and Information Industry Association (SIIA), American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA), Intellectual Property Owners Association (IPO), coalitions of creators that include CreativeFuture and the Copyright Alliance as well as individual creators like Jeff Friday, the Founder and CEO of Film Life and the Producer of the American Black Film Festival.

Limits Presidential Authority and Increases Congressional Input – *An amendment offered by Rep. Jackson Lee in the Judiciary Committee limited presidential authority* by creating a panel including the House and Senate Leadership in order to develop a consensus list of recommended candidates that the President is required to select from prior to Senate confirmation. This is far preferable to current law which would allow the President to terminate the Librarian at will and install whomever he wanted as Copyright Register without any Senate confirmation process or any other input from Congress. This procedure and the Senate confirmation process *will improve transparency* by giving all Americans a voice in the selection of the Register through their elected representatives.

Enhances Librarian – *H.R. 1695 does not undermine the Librarian of Congress*, whom we all strongly support. In 2013, long before Dr. Hayden was appointed to be Librarian of Congress, the Judiciary Committee began a comprehensive review of the Copyright Act and the Copyright Office. This four-year long process led to a broad consensus that the stature of the Register of Copyrights should be elevated and the position should be directly accountable to Congress. Out of deference to the Librarian, the bill was further amended in Committee to ensure that she would be part of the panel that develops the consensus list of candidates.

We hope this corrects any misunderstanding, and you will join us in supporting this legislation. For more information, or if you would like to cosponsor, please contact Jason Everett with the Judiciary Committee Democratic Staff at 225-6906 or jason.everett@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

*John Conyers Jr.
John Lewis
Maxine Waters
Rosa L. DeLauro
Richard E. Neal
Jerrold Nadler
Nydia M. Velazquez*

*Sheila Jackson Lee
Brad Sherman
Adam B. Schiff
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Yvette D. Clarke
Judy Chu
Steve Cohen*

*Karen R. Bass
Ted Deutch
David N. Cicilline
Tony Cárdenas
Hakeem Jeffries
Ted Lieu*