

Dear Rep. Goodlatte & Rep. Conyers:

Thank you very much for this exciting announcement of moving forward. It was also nice to see the video – by the way – and I can tell you both are excited about this as well.

First, I would ask that the Judiciary Committee issue stern warning or, some sort of communication if it feels that a “warning” might be too strong, to the Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden, not to take any further independent actions. Her abrupt and sudden removal of Ms. Maria Pallante was totally uncalled for. Now she is independently doing a survey to the general public to replace Ms. Pallante. Copyrights and its creators are far more important than to be treated like this. The very Library of Congress, of which she is the custodian, is filled with the fruits of creators.

We definitely applaud your First Policy Proposal as being totally on the mark for what Congress needs to get done and done as the first actions for the revision of the copyright laws. We have a few further comments that we hope will be useful to in getting this done.

The legislation current for the Copyright Office introduced as HR 4241 Copyright Office for the Digital Economy Act (CODE) is not in line with your First Policy Proposal and it should be revised or a new bill drafted that is. Additionally, limiting the term of the Registrar of Copyrights to 10 years is fine and it should not be less than since it takes time to really get grooved into this area and make an effect and make progress in this area especially with the issues confronting this position today. Additionally, there should be an option to renew the term for the same reasons. The limit to 10 years in HR 4241 CODE Act is wrong on this point.

With regards to the Small Claims, we feel that this should follow and be done in line with the recommendations of the Copyright Office (report entitled Copyright Small Claims Septmeber 2013). The current legislation introduced, Fairness for American Small Creators Act introduced by Rep Chu, does not and this should be corrected or new legislation drafted and introduced. Additionally, the Librarian of Congress should choose and appoint the Claims Officers, these should be appointed by the Registrar of Copyrights.

Congress should not attempt with the first Small Claim legislation to make it perfect and satisfy everyone’s concerns. The recommended arrangement from the Copyright Office should be followed and as it will be voluntary, it will give everyone a chance use it and work through it. I would recommend that Congress include that after 2 years, a follow up study by the Copyright Office to see how it worked and then tweak it to make it better and more useful.

Last, I would only add that despite what else is happening, that we move this forward even if a little bit each day there is some movement to get legislation for these First Policy issues approved and signed as soon as possible.

Please let me know if you need anything further from me or whether you have any questions that I can answer.

Best regards,

Ryland Hawkins
Director of Legal Affairs
Author Services, Inc./Galaxy Press, Inc.
7051 Hollywood Blvd.
Hollywood, CA 90028
Phone: (323) 466-3310
Fax: (323) 466-6474