



Artists-Bill-of-Rights.org

May 14, 2012

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

Dear Register of Copyrights Pallante,

As you know, copyright is recognized as a basic right in our Constitution. The United Nations similarly recognizes copyright as a basic human right. However, it is only under the protection and remedies of the Copyright Act that copyright provides any real and effective deterrent for those determined to infringe.

To nearly double basic registration fees, or to introduce a new “reduced” fee for single author/single work (\$45), will only serve to deny the protection of that basic right to the vast majority of artists, most of whom live at or near the poverty line. We cannot understand why your office would want to put copyright registration, and thus the effective enforcement of a basic constitutional right, out of reach of the majority.

“...pricing that is unaffordable or which exceeds the reasonable expectation of a copyright owner will discourage or prevent participation in the system—to the public’s detriment.” p. 18744 Federal Register/Vol. 77, No. 60 / Proposed Rules, Col. 1.

We are in the midst of the largest economic calamity since the Great Depression. It should follow that this is certainly **not** the time for the Office to recover fees from those least able to afford it. The thought is staggering.

On the contrary, the Office should be **reducing fees** from their current level, **revising the registration system** to make registration easier and more understandable, and **undergoing a public education effort** to encourage the public to be aware of the benefits, and to take advantage, of registration.

Charging the creative sector an unreasonably high fee for constitution protections available to every citizen cannot be defensible under a cost-recovery exercise. The role of government is to serve and protect the people, not just the interests of those who can afford it. We fervently hope the Office will reconsider their proposed fee restructuring with regard to registration and consider making the remedies of the Copyright Act much more accessible to the realities of the creators’ livelihoods they are pledged to protect.

Respectfully,

Don Schaefer
Director
Artists Bill of Rights
we focus on issues of copyright and ethical standards for every creator

<http://artists-bill-of-rights.org>