



14 Apr 2012

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Library of Congress

RE: Proposed fee increases for copyright registration

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a photographer who often registers my images with the Library of Congress. The current process is difficult and time consuming, which causes many photographers not to take the time to complete the registration process. I have been on websites such as LinkedIn where photographers have complained about the current fees, and have suggested they can't afford to register every image at that rate. The whole process and the fees are what is currently holding many photographers I know from registering all of their images. To increase the fees from \$35 to \$65, I fear would be a huge road block and would prevent many more photographers from registering their images.

The photography world has undergone a tremendous shakeup over the past 10 years. With the availability of digital cameras we now see millions of new photographers every day offering their skills to the public at little or no cost. The result of this digital assault has been many fold, upon the world of professional photography. We have seen our customer base shrink and shrivel to almost nothing. The remaining customer base has seen the pricing offered by these new camera owners and is wanting / demanding we match the prices. As a result the price we could charge for an image has dropped anywhere from 30-70 percent in the market. People are now accepting poor quality images as a fact of life. The once thriving professional photography market is now just a shell of it's former self. We are seeing many established photographers leaving the profession to go work for an hourly job in another industry. The ones who remain are having to cut costs, lay off employees, and slash their budgets, in order to survive. They are earning 70% less than they did 10 years ago. Yet the cost of doing business has increased dramatically. New cameras and lenses are hitting the market every year and the manufacturers of the equipment have now introduced an "end of life" date to their equipment. Meaning we now have to continuously upgrade to newer and more expensive equipment, or face the

possibility of not being about to have our existing equipment repaired by the makers. Pricing on the equipment is increasing because of inflation and the weak dollar. For example the price of the Canon 300 mm F2.8 IS lens increased from \$4,200.00 to \$7,300.00 last August. Unreal, yet we have to purchase the equipment if we want to stay in business.

As a rodeo photographer, I travel between 20,000-25,000 miles a year. With the increases in fuel prices, I have no additional monies to throw towards anything. Increasing the registration fees would mean I would have to consider going to registering my images twice a year instead of once every quarter. This wouldn't lessen the amount of images is submit, it would just lessen the frequency with which I register my images. This could put me in a bad spot, because I would face having unregistered images on my website for up to 90 additional days. As often as people steal images now, it would inhibit my ability to use the registration as a tool to threaten violators.

Please do not add to the current cost of doing business for the starving artists and photographers. Especially not in this current down economy. Please find other ways of covering the cost increases if they are truly needed.

Sincerely,

Albert Berger  
Owner  
Pro Rodeo Pix ®  
Cunningham Studio