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119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 10843

To amend title 17, United States Code, to reform copyright laws relating to visual artists.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 19, 2026

Mr. CLINE (for himself and Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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A BILL

To amend title 17, United States Code, to reform copyright laws relating to visual artists.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Visual Artists Copyright Reform Act of 2026" or "VACRA".

SEC. 2. DEPOSITS IN CONNECTION WITH COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION.

(a) EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN WORKS FROM BEST EDITION DEPOSIT REQUIREMENT.—Section 407 of title 17, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''subsection (c)'' and inserting ''subsections (c) and (f)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(f) EXEMPTION FOR PICTORIAL, GRAPHIC, AND SCULPTURAL WORKS.—The deposit requirements under subsection (a) shall not apply to a pictorial, graphic, or sculptural work.''.

(b) COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION IN GENERAL.—Section 408(b) of title 17, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) in the case of a pictorial, graphic, or sculptural work, one complete electronic copy.''.

(c) THIRD-PARTY REGISTRIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 7 of title 17, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 711. Third-party registries of photographs

''(a) REGULATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Register of Copyrights shall establish regulations providing for the certification of third party registries of photographs.

"(2) CONDITIONS OF CERTIFICATION.—The regulations established under paragraph (1) shall require that an entity, as a condition of being certified as a third-party registry, commit to—

"(A) collecting and maintaining electronic copies of photographs and related information for the duration of the term of protection of copyright in each photograph;

"(B) collecting and maintaining, with respect to each photograph deposited in the registry—

"(i) the name of each author;

"(ii) the name of each current copyright owner;

"(iii) current contact information for each copyright owner;

"(iv) the date of creation;

"(v) the date on which the photograph was first uploaded to the registry; and

"(vi) the title;

"(C) providing a secure, searchable database of all photographs deposited in the registry at no charge to searchers;

"(D) providing for the timely transfer of copies of a photograph and all associated infor-

mation to another third-party registry at the request of an author or copyright owner of the photograph; and

"(E) making the entirety of the third-party registry available for interactive communication of data with systems of the Copyright Office without charge.

"(b) RELATION TO DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS.—Deposit of a photograph in a third-party registry shall satisfy the deposit requirements of section 408.

"(c) APPLICABILITY.—Subsections (a) and (b) shall not apply if the Register of Copyright certifies that the Copyright Office is in compliance with subsection 409(b).".

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 7 of title 17, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"711. Third-party registries of photographs.".

SEC. 3. GROUP REGISTRATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 408(c) of title 17, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(4)(A) Without prejudice to the general authority provided under paragraph (1), the Register of Copyrights shall establish regulations specifically

permitting a single registration for a group of photographs by the same individual author on the basis of a single application and registration fee, under the following conditions:

"(i) The deposit is made in compliance with either this section or section 711 and consists only of photographs.

"(ii) The group consists of not more than 3,000 works, subject to subparagraph (B)(iii).

"(iii) The application identifies each work.

"(iv) The applicant provides a title for the group as a whole.

"(B)(i) The Register of Copyrights shall establish regulations under subparagraph (A) for the registration of groups at quantity tiers that accommodate practical creative workflows.

"(ii) The regulations established under subparagraph (A) shall permit registration of groups without regard to publication status, date of publication, or date of creation.

"(iii) The Register shall amend the regulations established under subparagraph (A) to increase the maximum number of photographs that may be included in a single registration above 3,000 as tech-

nology develops in the marketplace that allows for more efficient registration.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 408(c)(2) of title 17, United States Code, is amended by striking ''clause (1)'' and inserting ''paragraph (1)''.

SEC. 4. DEFERRED REGISTRATION.

Section 408 of title 17, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) DEFERRED REGISTRATION OF PICTORIAL, GRAPHIC, AND SCULPTURAL WORKS.—

''(1) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Register of Copyrights shall issue regulations to establish procedures for deferred registration of pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works.

''(2) APPLICATION FOR DEFERRED REGISTRATION.—An applicant for deferred registration under this subsection shall submit—

''(A) to the Copyright Office by electronic means—

''(i) an application for deferred registration of the work or group of works; and

''(ii) the applicable fee; and

"(B) to the Copyright Office or a third-party registry (as described in section 711), each corresponding deposit in accordance with this section or section 711, as applicable.

"(3) EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGISTRATION.—The date on which materials are submitted under paragraph (2) shall be the effective date of registration, as described in subsection 410(d).

"(4) ENFORCEMENT BY U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION OF WORKS FOR WHICH COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION IS PENDING.—An application for deferred registration under this subsection shall be considered an application for registration under this title with the Copyright Office for purposes of section 304 of the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4343).

"(5) EXAMINATION FOR REGISTRATION.—At any time during the subsistence of copyright in a work that was the subject of a deferred registration under this subsection, the owner of copyright or of any exclusive right in the work may request, upon payment of the applicable fee, the examination of that work for registration under subsection (a).".

SEC. 5. COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION APPLICATION.

Section 409 of title 17, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(a) IN GENERAL.—'' before ''The application'';

(2) in subsection (a)(8), as so designated, by striking the semicolon and inserting the following: '', unless the work—

''(A) is a pictorial, graphic, or sculptural work;

''(B) is a United States work; and

''(C) was created after March 1, 1989;''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) PUBLIC-FACING INTERFACE.—In order to facilitate an efficient process for the submission of an application for copyright registration, the Register of Copyrights shall implement as expeditiously as practicable and maintain a contemporary public-facing interface that is interoperable with software commonly used by professional creators such that the deposits and information required under section 408 and this section can be automatically transmitted and populate an online registration application.''.

SEC. 6. RETENTION OF DEPOSITS.

Subsection 704(d) of title 17, United States Code, is amended, in the second sentence, by inserting ''and works deposited in electronic format'' after ''but, in the case of unpublished works''.

SEC. 7. FEES.

Section 708 of title 17, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (10), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (11), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (11) the following:

''(12) on filing an application under section 408(g) for deferred registration, which fee shall be not more than one-half of the fee for filing a standard application under section 408.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''and (11)'' after ''(1) through (9)'';

(B) in paragraph (4), by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', including

ensuring that professional creators can afford to register all their works''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(6) The Register shall provide reduced fees for individual authors and small business entities.''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(f) REGISTRATION SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR PICTORIAL, GRAPHIC, AND SCULPTURAL WORKS.—

''(1) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Visual Artists Copyright Reform Act of 2026, the Register of Copyrights shall establish regulations providing for yearly and periodic registration subscriptions for the registration of pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works.

''(2) SUBSCRIPTION FEES.—The Register shall set and adjust fees for subscriptions described in paragraph (1) in accordance with subsection (b).

''(3) APPLICATIONS UNDER SECTION 408.—Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) and (12) of subsection (a), the Register may not require a fee on filing an application under section 408 for registration of a copyright claim, supplementary registration, or deferred registration if the applicant has paid for a yearly or periodic subscription under this subsection

1 and the application is submitted during the term of
2 the subscription.''.

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