



(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CLINE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee  
on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

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

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Visual Artists Copy-  
5 right Reform Act of 2026” or “VACRA”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEPOSITS IN CONNECTION WITH COPYRIGHT REG-**  
2 **ISTRATION.**

3 (a) EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN WORKS FROM BEST  
4 EDITION DEPOSIT REQUIREMENT.—Section 407 of title  
5 17, United States Code, is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (a), in the matter preceding  
7 paragraph (1), by striking “subsection (c)” and in-  
8 serting “subsections (e) and (f)”; and

9 (2) by adding at the end the following:

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

14 (b) COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION IN GENERAL.—Sec-  
15 tion 408(b) of title 17, United States Code, is amended—

16 (1) in paragraph (4), by striking the period at  
17 the end and inserting “; and”; and

18 (2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the fol-  
19 lowing:

20 “(5) in the case of a pictorial, graphic, or sculp-  
21 tural work, one complete electronic copy.”.

22 (c) THIRD-PARTY REGISTRIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS.—

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

1 **“§ 711. Third-party registries of photographs**

2 “(a) REGULATIONS.—

3 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Register of Copyrights  
4 shall establish regulations providing for the certifi-  
5 cation of third party registries of photographs.

6 “(2) CONDITIONS OF CERTIFICATION.—The  
7 regulations established under paragraph (1) shall re-  
8 quire that an entity, as a condition of being certified  
9 as a third party registry, commit to—

10 “(A) collecting and maintaining electronic  
11 copies of photographs and related information  
12 for the duration of the term of protection of  
13 copyright in each photograph;

14 “(B) collecting and maintaining, with re-  
15 spect to each photograph deposited in the reg-  
16 istry—

17 “(i) the name of each author;

18 “(ii) the name of each current copy-  
19 right owner;

20 “(iii) current contact information for  
21 each copyright owner;

22 “(iv) the date of creation;

23 “(v) the date on which the photograph  
24 was first uploaded to the registry; and

25 “(vi) the title;

1           “(C) providing a secure, searchable data-  
2           base of all photographs deposited in the registry  
3           at no charge to searchers;

4           “(D) providing for the timely transfer of  
5           copies of a photograph and all associated infor-  
6           mation to another third party registry at the re-  
7           quest of an author or copyright owner of the  
8           photograph; and

9           “(E) making the entirety of the third party  
10          registry available for interactive communication  
11          of data with systems of the Copyright Office  
12          without charge.

13          “(b) RELATION TO DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS.—De-  
14          posit of a photograph in a third party registry shall satisfy  
15          the deposit requirements of section 408.

16          “(c) APPLICABILITY.—Subsections (a) and (b) shall  
17          not apply if the Register of Copyright certifies that the  
18          Copyright Office is in compliance with subsection  
19          409(b).”.

20          (2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMEND-  
21          MENT.—The table of sections for chapter 7 of title  
22          17, United States Code, is amended by adding at  
23          the end the following:

“711. Third-party registries of photographs.”.

1 **SEC. 3. GROUP REGISTRATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.— Section 408(c) of title 17, United  
3 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
4 lowing:

5 “(4)(A) Without prejudice to the general au-  
6 thority provided under paragraph (1), the Register  
7 of Copyrights shall establish regulations specifically  
8 permitting a single registration for a group of photo-  
9 graphs by the same individual author on the basis  
10 of a single application and registration fee, under  
11 the following conditions:

12 “(i) The deposit is made in compliance  
13 with either this section or section 711 and con-  
14 sists only of photographs.

15 “(ii) The group consists of not more than  
16 3,000 works, subject to subparagraph (B)(iii).

17 “(iii) The application identifies each work.

18 “(iv) The applicant provides a title for the  
19 group as a whole.

20 “(B)(i) The Register of Copyrights shall estab-  
21 lish regulations under subparagraph (A) for the reg-  
22 istration of groups at quantity tiers that accommo-  
23 date practical creative workflows.

24 “(ii) The regulations established under subpara-  
25 graph (A) shall permit registration of groups with-

1 out regard to publication status, date of publication,  
2 or date of creation.

3 “(iii) The Register shall amend the regulations  
4 established under subparagraph (A) to increase the  
5 maximum number of photographs that may be in-  
6 cluded in a single registration above 3,000 as tech-  
7 nology develops in the marketplace that allows for  
8 more efficient registration.”.

9 (b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—  
10 Section 408(c)(2) of title 17, United States Code, is  
11 amended by striking “clause (1)” and inserting “para-  
12 graph (1)”.

13 **SEC. 4. DEFERRED REGISTRATION.**

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

16 “(g) DEFERRED REGISTRATION OF PICTORIAL,  
17 GRAPHIC, AND SCULPTURAL WORKS.—

18 “(1) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 180 days  
19 after the date of enactment of this subsection, the  
20 Register of Copyrights shall issue regulations to es-  
21 tablish procedures for deferred registration of pic-  
22 torial, graphic, and sculptural works.

23 “(2) APPLICATION FOR DEFERRED REGISTRA-  
24 TION.—An applicant for deferred registration under  
25 this subsection shall submit—

1 “(A) to the Copyright Office by electronic  
2 means—

3 “(i) an application for deferred reg-  
4 istration of the work or group of works;  
5 and

6 “(ii) the applicable fee; and

7 “(B) to the Copyright Office or a third  
8 party registry (as described in section 711),  
9 each corresponding deposit in accordance with  
10 this section or section 711, as applicable.

11 “(3) EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGISTRATION.—

12 The date on which materials are submitted under  
13 paragraph (2) shall be the effective date of registra-  
14 tion, as described in subsection 410(d).

15 “(4) ENFORCEMENT BY U.S. CUSTOMS AND  
16 BORDER PROTECTION OF WORKS FOR WHICH COPY-  
17 RIGHT REGISTRATION IS PENDING.—An application  
18 for deferred registration under this subsection shall  
19 be considered an application for registration under  
20 this title with the Copyright Office for purposes of  
21 section 304 of the Trade Facilitation and Trade En-  
22 forcement Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4343).

23 “(5) EXAMINATION FOR REGISTRATION.—At  
24 any time during the subsistence of copyright in a  
25 work that was the subject of a deferred registration

1 under this subsection, the owner of copyright or of  
2 any exclusive right in the work may request, upon  
3 payment of the applicable fee, the examination of  
4 that work for registration under subsection (a).”.

5 **SEC. 5. COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION APPLICATION.**

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

8 (1) by inserting “(a) IN GENERAL.—” before  
9 “The application”;

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

13 “(A) is a pictorial, graphic, or sculptural  
14 work;

15 “(B) is a United States work; and

16 “(C) was created after March 1, 1989;”;

17 and

18 (3) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(b) PUBLIC-FACING INTERFACE.—In order to facili-  
20 tate an efficient process for the submission of an applica-  
21 tion for copyright registration, the Register of Copyrights  
22 shall implement as expeditiously as practicable and main-  
23 tain a contemporary public-facing interface that is inter-  
24 operable with software commonly used by professional cre-  
25 ators such that the deposits and information required

1 under section 408 and this section can be automatically  
2 transmitted and populate an online registration applica-  
3 tion.”.

4 **SEC. 6. RETENTION OF DEPOSITS.**

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

9 **SEC. 7. FEES.**

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

12 (1) in subsection (a)—

13 (A) in paragraph (10), by striking “and”  
14 at the end;

15 (B) in paragraph (11), by striking the pe-  
16 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

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

19 “(12) on filing an application under section  
20 408(g) for deferred registration, which fee shall be  
21 not more than one-half of the fee for filing a stand-  
22 ard application under section 408.”;

23 (2) in subsection (b)—

1 (A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1),  
2 by inserting “and (11)” after “(1) through  
3 (9)”;

4 (B) in paragraph (4), by inserting before  
5 the period at the end the following: “, including  
6 ensuring that professional creators can afford  
7 to register all their works”; and

8 (C) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(6) The Register shall provide reduced fees for  
10 individual authors and small business entities.”; and

11 (3) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(f) REGISTRATION SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR PICTORIAL,  
13 GRAPHIC, AND SCULPTURAL WORKS.—

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

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

24 “(3) APPLICATIONS UNDER SECTION 408.—Not-  
25 withstanding paragraphs (1) and (12) of subsection

1       (a), the Register may not require a fee on filing an  
2       application under section 408 for registration of a  
3       copyright claim, supplementary registration, or de-  
4       ferred registration if the applicant has paid for a  
5       yearly or periodic subscription under this subsection  
6       and the application is submitted during the term of  
7       the subscription.”.