



ROY BLUNT *of* MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN

**Chairman Blunt's Opening Statement
Hearing on Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act
September 26, 2018**

Good afternoon. I welcome my colleagues and our witnesses to today's hearing on the Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act.

HR 1695, which passed the House on April 26, 2017 by a vote of 378-48, and its Senate companion, S. 1010—sponsored by Senators Grassley, Hatch, Feinstein, and Leahy—would change the way the Register of Copyrights is selected and appointed. Currently, the Register of Copyrights is appointed by the Librarian of Congress. The proposed legislation would give Congress a greater role in selecting the Register and make the position a presidential appointment subject to confirmation by the Senate.

During the nomination hearing for Dr. Hayden, many on this committee asked questions and raised issues surrounding the Copyright Office, and rightly so. Every day, people across the world enjoy the creations of our authors, photographers, bloggers, artists, and others. These creations have significant impacts to our economy, to our trade balance, and to our culture. The Copyright Office plays a crucial role serving both users and creators.

I think all would agree that the Copyright Office needed to be modernized. Since being sworn in a few years ago, Dr. Hayden, her CIO Bud Barton, and the Acting Register of Copyrights Karyn Temple Claggett, have taken steps to improve the Copyright Office, especially its information technology systems. This is a long-term project that will take many years to accomplish, but Dr. Hayden and her team are continuing to head in the right direction.

The legislative branch agencies this committee oversees—the Library of Congress, the Architect of the Capitol, and the Government Printing Office—serve Congress and the nation. They are led by agency heads who exercise significant authority pursuant to the laws of the United States. These agency heads are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The legislation we are considering today would treat the Register of Copyrights in a similar manner, while maintaining the Copyright Office within the Library of Congress—which I believe is exactly where it should be and should remain.

When it comes to legislative branch agencies, Congress should play a significant role, beyond the Senate's traditional advice and consent role, in the selection process of those who will head agencies and those who will serve in other significant positions. The Register of Copyrights is one of those positions. Ensuring that legislative branch officials have been selected via a transparent, bicameral, and bipartisan process, like what has been proposed in the Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act, is important from an institutional perspective and something we should seriously consider.

###