



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **VISUAL ARTISTS APPLAUD THE RELEASE OF NEW SMALL CLAIMS LEGISLATION**

**Washington, D.C., October 3, 2017** – As a coalition of visual artists groups, representing hundreds of thousands of small businesses across America, we write in strong support of the introduction by Rep. Hakeem Jeffries’s (D-NY) and Rep. Tom Marino (R-PA) and original cosponsors, Representatives Doug Collins (R-GA), Lamar Smith (R-TX), Judy Chu (D-CA), and Ted Lieu (D-CA) of a bill entitled, “Copyright Alternative in Small-Claims Enforcement Act of 2017” (“the CASE Act of 2017”) establishing an alternative dispute resolution program for copyright small claims. We highly commend Mr. Jeffries, as well as Representatives Marino, Collins, Smith, Chu, and Lieu, for their dedication to supporting the creative community—including our members, most of whom are small business owners—and for their keen appreciation of the plight faced by creative professionals who are all too often left with rights but no remedies under current copyright law.

The proposed legislation addresses a decades-old inequity in America's copyright system: a copyright system that all too often denies individual creators and small businesses a viable means of protecting their creative efforts. If passed, the bill would give smaller individual creators the same kind of protections that larger scale creators have enjoyed for years.

Copyright infringement takes a direct economic toll on these often-one-person operations, who must shoulder the burden of policing infringements while at the same time seeking and fulfilling assignments, working on self-initiated projects and maintaining all the tasks of running a 24/7 business. For many, losses due to infringement are overwhelming.

Our coalition includes the American Photographic Artists (APA), American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP), Digital Media Licensing Association (DMLA), Graphic Artists Guild (GAG), National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) and Professional Photographers of America (PPA).

We pledge to work with Mr. Jeffries and his colleagues in ongoing efforts to continue to refine and strengthen this critical legislation to ensure that it provides long overdue, much-needed and meaningful legislative relief for photographers, photojournalists, videographers, illustrators, graphic designers, other visual artists and their licensing representatives. These artists, currently squeezed out of the legal system by the high cost of bringing suit in federal court for higher volume but relatively low value claims, have seen their licensing revenues decimated in recent years by the proliferation of copyright infringements, particularly in the online context. Enactment of the CASE Act of 2017 will provide an effective, affordable

alternative to prosecuting copyright infringement claims in federal court—an option that is all too often not economically affordable to individual small creators.

Copyright small claims reform is our top legislative priority. Coalition members believe the CASE Act is largely consistent with the legislative recommendations set forth in the “Copyright Small Claims” report released in late 2013 by the U.S. Copyright Office which deserves much credit for its groundbreaking effort in this area. We are grateful for the significant work already undertaken by Congress and the Copyright Office in drafting this bill and we look forward to continuing to work with all parties to properly and substantively help shield our works from copyright infringement; and allow us to earn a fair living.

For more information, please go to <http://copyrightdefense.com/action> or contact Sidra Safri [copyrightdefense@ppa.com](mailto:copyrightdefense@ppa.com)