



May 14, 2025

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Chairman, Committee on Rules and
Administration
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman, Committee on House
Administration
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Alex Padilla
Ranking Member, Committee on Rules and
Administration
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joseph Morelle
Ranking Member, Committee on House
Administration
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

*Re: The Importance to American Music Creators of Maintaining Library of Congress/US
Copyright Office Autonomy Within the Legislative Branch*

Dear Chairman McConnell, Ranking Member Padilla, Chairman Steil, and Ranking Member
Morelle:

As organizational representatives of thousands of independent American songwriters and composers from every state in the union, working professionally across every musical genre,¹ we send this urgent letter of support in favor of maintaining the autonomy of the Library of Congress and the US Copyright Office under Legislative Branch oversight. The future not only of American creativity as an economic and cultural driver of US global power and prestige, but also of Congress as a co-equal branch of our tripartite government, are both seriously at stake in this matter.

To begin, we applaud the letter recently sent by members of the House Committee on Administration dated May 12, 2025 --led by Ranking Committee Member Joe Morelle (D-NY-25)-- requesting that the Inspector General of the Library of Congress investigate the recent, attempted discharges without just cause by the Executive Branch of the Librarian of Congress and the Register of Copyrights.² At roughly the same time that House of Representatives letter was being drafted and delivered to the Library of Congress IG, Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) was expressing concern over the need for greater consultation with the Executive Branch over the issue, hinting that the firings could potentially represent overreach by the Executive Branch into sacrosanct areas of Article I Congressional authority, duties and responsibilities.³ Respectfully, it is our belief that a matter that engenders this level of bi-partisan and bi-cameral Congressional concern over separation of powers also calls for timely hearings to examine the various, complex issues raised by these actions.

¹ Descriptions of the organizational signatories appear on page 4 to this letter.

² See, <https://democrats-cha.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-cha.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/5.12.25-letter-to-loc-ig-re-investigation.pdf>

³ See, <https://x.com/ktullymcmanus/status/1922302094452629569> and <https://rollcall.com/2025/05/13/as-library-of-congress-crisis-deepens-lawmakers-tread-carefully/>

Moreover, while the motivations for the firings remain unclear, the circumstances surrounding them are acutely troubling to the creative community. It has been widely and plausibly speculated, based upon the statements and actions of the principals involved, that the discharges of the Librarian and Register were orchestrated by the newly formed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), and seemingly designed to set the stage for weakening copyright protection in the era of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI).⁴ More specifically, DOGE's policies in this regard appear clearly to be an overreach of its intended authority, influenced by those who stand to financially benefit from the substantial elimination of copyright protections in the United States, starting with the debasement of the Library of Congress (LOC) and the US Copyright Office (USCO).⁵

By way of illustration, technology industry leader Jack Dorsey recently issued a statement urging that American and global IP protection laws be “deleted,” presumably in favor of free access to copyrighted works for GenAI uses such as preparing and distributing derivative musical compositions and recordings in direct competition with the original creators.⁶ Unfortunately for America's creators and copyright holders, DOGE's leadership actually appears sympathetic to Dorsey's calls,⁷ choosing to discount the facts that (i) private, multi-national tech companies would thereby stand to benefit to the tune of billions of dollars in windfall profits by avoiding fair market value licensing fees, and (ii) stripping copyrighted works of protections in GenAI contexts would make them freely available to all foreign GenAI competitors, not provide American tech firms with competitive advantages. In sum, such a strategy of copyright dilution pushed by anti-property tech privateers, including a take-over of American IP policy through the LOC and USCO, would cause catastrophic damage primarily to US culture and commerce *without benefit to anyone but multinational tech corporations seeking to evade royalty obligations*.

In evaluating whether such actions truly pose a significant danger to the American creative community and to the US economy, we ask on behalf of those most skeptical whether it is mere coincidence that the attempted firing at the USCO occurred almost immediately after a draft version of a USCO report was issued concluding that the unauthorized “training” of GenAI systems on existing copyrighted works will likely *not* qualify as “fair use.”⁸ We need not belabor the point that these events were almost certainly linked, and potentially intended to send a message that there will be negative ramifications for future, pro-copyright government policy and decision-makers.

One might also inquire under such circumstances what the total value of the music and entertainment industries is to the United States economy, and whether it is a sector worth protecting. In answer to that question, it should be noted that over the past century and a half, American composers, songwriters and recording artists have not just led the world in musical

⁴ See, e.g., <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/05/11/white-house-copyright-office-director-fired/>

⁵ Ibid.

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creativity. They have utterly dominated that space during a golden era of excellence that continues to this day.⁹

A recent recording industry study of global music distribution, in fact, found that American songs and recordings continue to comprise a huge percentage of the music charts throughout the world, often constituting upwards of 90% of the top numerical positions.¹⁰ The US music and related entertainment industries contribute well over an enormous \$200 billion annually to the American economy, supporting some 2.5 million jobs and over 250,000 music venues and establishments.¹¹ According to another recent study announced this week by Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA-28 and co-founder and co-chair of the House Creative Rights Caucus), the US entertainment community astonishingly accounts for a higher percentage of US GDP than the US pharmaceutical and agriculture sectors *combined*.¹²

But even these statistics tell only part of the story behind the economic and artistic engine that is American music. This level of sustained American cultural and commercial dominance around the world is no accident.

Rather, it stands as a living tribute to the unique quality of America's creative melting-pot, and the success of our leadership in the protection of intellectual property through Constitutionally mandated laws and governmental oversight by institutions including the LOC and the USCO. As a direct result of this unique incentivization system, the genius of American creativity in synthesizing musical influences from around the world into the creation of jazz, gospel, folk, blues, country and dozens of other musical art forms has flourished, and the US music creator community has --with Congress' help-- succeeded in fostering the advancement of the musical arts in America to the very highest levels of human achievement and commercial success.

The history of this system is not only a source of pride, but also of instruction. Adopting James Madison's analysis of the value of intellectual property protections laid out in Federalist 43, Congress enacted the first US Copyright Act in 1790. It did so pursuant to the revolutionary proviso set forth within Article I Section 8 of the US Constitution for Congress to provide laws pro-actively *promoting* the progress of science and art.¹³

Shortly thereafter, in 1800, the Library of Congress was established as a research service and resource for the US Senate and House of Representatives at the behest of American founders including Madison, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.¹⁴ The Founders saw great value in gathering not only existing works from around the world for reference and study by legislators, but also in collecting and preserving the new works of American creators who had been incentivized to create by the recently enacted, protective American IP laws. Since that time, the LOC has served secondarily as the de facto national library of the United States, making it the

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oldest federal cultural institution in the nation. It has remained under Congressional auspices for its entire existence, virtually free from politically motivated intrusion.¹⁵

Though another one hundred years transpired prior to the establishment of the US Copyright Office as a department within the LOC (during which time the LOC remained housed in the Capitol Building itself),¹⁶ the inauguration of the USCO in 1890 marked a milestone increase in the growing value placed on incentivizing American creators to make their mark upon the nation and the world. The USCO was specifically charged with administering US copyright law efficiently and effectively in order to promote the Constitutional promise of progress,¹⁷ and once again it was no accident that the global appeal and influence of American culture skyrocketed in the eras that followed.

Until this week, two hundred and thirty-five years after the enactment of the first US Copyright Act, two hundred and twenty-five years following the establishment of the Library of Congress, and one hundred and thirty-five years since the US Copyright Office began its important work, there has been neither upheaval nor even tension between the three branches of Government concerning the smooth operation of the LOC and the USCO. The two offices have admirably served the needs of the nation, the American creator community, members of Congress, and the entire federal government without interruption since their inception, helping to fuel a level of sustained cultural, political and commercial achievement and international influence never before realized by any nation at any time.

In closing, we urge all Members of Congress to take steps to preserve this unique and proven system of creative incentivization under the auspices of the Legislative Branch. Permitting the technology sector, through a new governmental agency over which it apparently holds some sway, to endanger one of America's most important streams of export income, to tear apart Congress' ability to rely on its own research arm, to gain access to millions of pages of documents and requests from Congressional members to the LOC for information past, present and future that might otherwise be regarded as private, and to denigrate the global influence of American culture by inviting reciprocal retaliation by foreign nations to lower IP protections abroad, makes no sense whatsoever. Ignoring these dangers would, in fact, set an unfortunate and even dangerous precedent.

We thank you for your kind consideration. Please feel free to call on us with any questions you may have. Set forth below for convenience is a description of the organizational signatories:

The Songwriters Guild of America (SGA) is the longest established and largest music creator advocacy and copyright administrative organization in the United States run solely by and for songwriters, composers, and their heirs. Its positions are reasoned and formulated independently and solely in the interests of music creators, without financial influence or other undue interference from parties whose interests vary from or conflict with those of songwriters, composers, and other authors of creative works. Established in 1931, SGA has for over 94 years successfully operated with a two-word mission statement: "Protect Songwriters," and continues

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to do so throughout the United States and the world. SGA's organizational membership stands at approximately 8000 members

The Society of Composers & Lyricists (SCL) is the premier US organization for music creators working in all forms of visual media (including film, television, video games, and musical theatre). It has a membership of over 4000 professional composers and lyricists, and is a founding co-member --along with SGA and other independent music creator groups-- of MCNA.

Music Creators North America (MCNA) is an alliance of independent songwriter and composer organizations that advocates and educates on behalf of North America's music creator community. As the only internationally recognized voice of North American songwriters and composers, MCNA, through its global affiliations, is part of a coalition that represents the professional interests and aspirations of more than half a million music creators across Africa, Asia, Australasia-Oceania, North and South America, and Europe.

Respectfully submitted,



Rick Carnes,
President, Songwriters Guild of America
Officer, Music Creators North America



Ashley Irwin
President, Society of Composers & Lyricists
Co-Chair, Music Creators North America

cc: Charles J. Sanders, Esq.
Mr. Eddie Schwartz, President, Music Creators North America
Members of the US Senate and House of Representatives

List of American MCNA Affiliated Organizations:

Alliance for Women Film Composers (AWFC). <https://theawfc.com>
Game Audio Network Guild (G.A.N.G.) <https://www.audiogang.org/>
Music Answers (M.A.), <https://www.musicianswers.org>
Fair Trade Music International (FTMI), <https://www.fairtrademusicinternational.org/> (non-MCNA member)



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Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member, Committee on the
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United States Senate
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Moreover, while the motivations for the firings remain unclear, the circumstances surrounding them are acutely troubling to the creative community. It has been widely and plausibly

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speculated, based upon the statements and actions of the principals involved, that the discharges of the Librarian and Register were orchestrated by the newly formed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), and seemingly designed to set the stage for weakening copyright protection in the era of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI).⁴ More specifically, DOGE's policies in this regard appear clearly to be an overreach of its intended authority, influenced by those who stand to financially benefit from the substantial elimination of copyright protections in the United States, starting with the debasement of the Library of Congress (LOC) and the US Copyright Office (USCO).⁵

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Respectfully submitted,



Rick Carnes,
President, Songwriters Guild of America
Officer, Music Creators North America



Ashley Irwin
President, Society of Composers & Lyricists
Co-Chair, Music Creators North America

cc: Charles J. Sanders, Esq.
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