December 3, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman, Committee on Rules and Administration  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
Ranking Member, Committee on Rules and Administration  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Klobuchar:

On behalf of the Section of Intellectual Property Law of the American Bar Association (the “Section”), I write to express the Section’s support for passage of S.1010, Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act of 2017, introduced by Senator Charles Grassley on May 2, 2017, and which was the subject of recent hearings in the Rules and Administration Committee. The views expressed in this letter have not been submitted to the American Bar Association’s House of Delegates or Board of Governors, and should not be considered as views of the Association.

As you may be aware, the ABA is the legal profession’s leading national voluntary bar organization, with more than 400,000 members hailing from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories, with an equally broad representation of the countless different areas of law. The Section is the world’s largest organization of intellectual property professionals, with over 17,000 members. The ABA-IPL Section membership includes lawyers and others representing all intellectual property law practices as well as a wide array of business and other interests. The Section’s views, therefore, reflect a broad perspective of the important issues our country faces in developing, improving, and enforcing intellectual property rights for the overall benefits of the United States economy. Critically, our members represent a diverse set of interests in the evolution of the copyright system, including outside counsel and in-house counsel from all types of companies.
The Section has been actively involved in the conversations across the country concerning the future of the U.S. Copyright Office, including through Congressional testimony. In 2015, the Section called for improvements to the Copyright Office’s budget, information technology resources, and rulemaking authority. It also expressed the view that modernizing the Copyright Office would require, among other things, a Register of Copyrights who is appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.

As a result, the Section supports the Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act of 2017. The Bill will help to realize the Section’s vision and provide the opportunity for the Copyright Office to have a truly independent voice that will balance the interests of multiple stakeholders and to advise both the President and Congress using the Copyright Office’s significant expertise.

Very truly yours,

Mark K. Dickson
Chair, ABA Section of Intellectual Property Law

cc: Senator Charles Grassley