



September 6, 2017



Ambassador Robert E. Lighthizer
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508



VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION



Dear Ambassador Lighthizer,



The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) is a coalition of national unions representing more than four million professional and technical workers. Included in DPE are 12 national unions that represent people who work in the arts, entertainment, and media industries. Our unions' members are actors, craftspeople, choreographers, dancers, directors, musicians, stunt performers, instrumentalists, writers, singers, stage managers, and many other creative professionals.



We write to you with the understanding that the modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) may include discussions about NAFTA's copyright and intellectual property provisions. As our unions' members depend on the sale of legitimate content to earn fair wages and benefits, we urge you to prioritize the protection and enforcement of copyright provisions in any such discussions.



In today's internet era, creative content can be transmitted across borders at speeds and in quantities few could imagine when NAFTA was originally negotiated. Strong copyright protections appropriate for today's digital age are needed to help ensure fair compensation for the professionals who imagine, develop, design, and give life to creative works that are responsible for over \$1 trillion in annual economic activity and regularly generate a positive trade balance for the United States.



Any weakening of copyright protections for creative professionals in NAFTA modernization could upend the economic security of middle-class Americans who work in copyright-reliant industries. Stolen or otherwise illegitimate content undermines the value of creative professionals' work and threatens their hard-won pay and benefits.



We therefore ask that you prioritize the protection and enforcement of copyright provisions in the modernization of NAFTA for our unions' members, part of the 5.5 million people working in core copyright industries.



Sincerely,

Kate Shindle
President, Actors' Equity Association

Ray Hair
International President, American Federation of Musicians

James Odom
President, American Guild of Musical Artists

Judy Little
Acting President, American Guild of Variety Artists

Paul E. Almeida
President, Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO

Thomas Schlamme
President, Directors Guild of America

Carlo Fiorletta
President, Guild of Italian American Artists

Matthew D. Loeb
International President, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts

Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Richard Lanigan
President, Office and Professional Employees International Union

Gabrielle Carteris
President, SAG-AFTRA

Pam MacKinnon
President, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

Michael Winship
President, Writers Guild of America, East