

## **VRA Expressed Non-Endorsement of WIPO Implementation Act**

February 27, 1998

The Honorable Henry J. Hyde  
United States House of Representatives  
2110 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-1315

Dear Representative Hyde:

I am writing on behalf of the Visual Resources Association, an organization professionally involved with visual materials; their history, production, conservation, and accessibility. As an association, we strongly support the Boucher/Campbell Bill (H.R. 3048) the "Digital Era Copyright Enhancement Act." This bill presents a balanced approach to issues of digital intellectual property rights and public access to networked information. It is our firm belief that fair use, first sale, library/archives exemptions, and distance learning, all of which are addressed in a sensible manner in the Boucher/Campbell bill, are of utmost importance to the library, non-profit, educational, and public spheres.

It is of grave concern to us that all of these issues are missing in the alternative legislation proposed by the Clinton Administration. The VRA is horrified that the House Courts and Intellectual Property Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee yesterday approved the "World Intellectual Property Organization Treaty Implementation Act" (H.R. 2281) passing it on to the full House Judiciary Committee for its consideration. This bill does not address any educational exemptions and propose sweeping criminal penalties for activities which the VRA considers legitimate fair use. The subcommittee rejected numerous amendments that would have ensured the notion of fair use as described in the 1976 U.S. Copyright Act.

It is our sincere hope that, once those in Congress come to an understanding of the broad implications of the World Intellectual Property Organization Treaty Implementation Act (H.R. 2281) , that bipartisan Congressional co-sponsors of the Boucher/Campbell Bill will come forward. Evidently this is happening as can be seen from the growing support for the "Digital Era Copyright Enhancement Act" The issues addressed here are of utmost importance to members of a free, democratic society.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Romano, President  
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