



September 5, 2023



The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510



The Honorable Lindsay Graham
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510



Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham,

On behalf of the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE), I write in strong support of Deborah Robinson's nomination to serve as the Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator (IPEC). Ms. Robinson's more than two-decade legal career, including real world enforcement experience, makes her well-qualified to serve in this critical role.



Within DPE are 12 unions that represent people who work in the arts, entertainment, and media industries. These unions' members are actors, stagehands, craftspeople, choreographers, dancers, directors, musicians, stunt performers, instrumentalists, writers, singers, stage managers, recording artists, broadcasters, audio engineers, photographers, editors, and other creative professionals. They power a sector of the economy that regularly generates over four percent of the United States' GDP, creates a positive trade balance, and is responsible for more than five million jobs.



Union creative professionals depend on strong intellectual property protections for their economic livelihoods. Many earn collectively bargained pay and contributions to their health insurance and retirement plans from the sales and licensing of the creative content they help create. Revenue from authorized sales and licensing also funds the projects of tomorrow that these unions' members count on for future jobs. That's why, while not typically the copyright holders, the theft and unlicensed use of copyrighted content threatens these middle-class professionals' economic security. Union creative professionals also are harmed when their voices, images, and likenesses are used without consent. Public figures, including prominent union professionals, are at heightened risk of image-based sexual abuse (deepfake or revenge porn), privacy violations, defamation, and commercial misappropriation.



The IPEC is the only position within the Executive Office of the President that has specific statutory authority to engage in and coordinate the Administration's actions on copyright policy issues. With Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration right now confronting the rapid emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), there is an even more urgent need for the Senate to confirm Ms. Robinson as IPEC so she can participate fully in these important policy discussions. What gets decided in the coming months with regard to AI will directly affect the ability of union creative professionals to continue earning family-supporting pay in their chosen careers.

In closing, I believe Ms. Robinson meets the mark both in terms of technical qualifications and understanding the importance of intellectual property rights for middle-class creative professionals. For this reason, I urge the Judiciary Committee, and the Senate as a whole, to move swiftly on Ms. Robinson's confirmation. Previously, the Senate has confirmed IPEC nominees in both Democratic and Republican administrations with overwhelming bipartisan support, and Ms. Robinson should be no different.

If you have any questions, please contact me or DPE Assistant to the President/Legislative Director, Michael Wasser at mwasser@dpeaflcio.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JDorning", is centered on the page.

Jennifer Dorning, President