AMENDMENTS

1998—Subsec. (h)(1)(A) to (E). Pub. L. 105–304, §102(c)(1), added subpars. (A) to (E) and struck out former subpars. (A) and (B) which read as follows:

''(A) a nation adhering to the Berne Convention or a WTO member country; or

''(B) subject to a Presidential proclamation under subsection (g).''

Subsec. (h)(3). Pub. L. 105–304, §102(c)(2), amended par. (3) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (3) read as follows: ''The term 'eligible country' means a nation, other than the United States, that—

''(A) becomes a WTO member country after the date of the enactment of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act;

''(B) on such date of enactment is, or after such date of enactment becomes, a member of the Berne Convention; or

''(C) after such date of enactment becomes subject to a proclamation under subsection (g).

For purposes of this section, a nation that is a member of the Berne Convention on the date of the enactment of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act shall be construed to become an eligible country on such date of enactment.''

Subsec. (h)(6)(E). Pub. L. 105–304, §102(c)(3), added subpar. (E).

Subsec. (h)(8)(B)(i). Pub. L. 105–304, §102(c)(4), inserted ''of which'' before ''the majority'' and struck out ''of eligible countries'' after ''domiciliaries''.

Subsec. (h)(9). Pub. L. 105–304, §102(c)(5), struck out par. (9) which read as follows: ''The terms 'WTO Agreement' and 'WTO member country' have the meanings given those terms in paragraphs (9) and (10), respectively, of section 2 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act.''

1997—Subsec. (d)(3)(A). Pub. L. 105–80, §2(1), amended subpar. (A) generally. Prior to amendment, subpar. (A) read as follows: ''In the case of a derivative work that is based upon a restored work and is created—

''(i) before the date of the enactment of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act, if the source country of the derivative work is an eligible country on such date, or

''(ii) before the date of adherence or proclamation, if the source country of the derivative work is not an eligible country on such date of enactment,

a reliance party may continue to exploit that work for the duration of the restored copyright if the reliance party pays to the owner of the restored copyright reasonable compensation for conduct which would be subject to a remedy for infringement but for the provisions of this paragraph.''

Subsec. (e)(1)(B)(ii). Pub. L. 105–80, §2(2), struck out at end ''Such list shall also be published in the Federal Register on an annual basis for the first 2 years after the applicable date of restoration.''

Subsec. (h)(2), (3). Pub. L. 105–80, §2(3), (4), amended pars. (2) and (3) generally. Prior to amendment, pars. (2) and (3) read as follows:

''(2) The 'date of restoration' of a restored copyright is the later of—

''(A) the date on which the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property referred to in section 101(d)(15) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act enters into force with respect to the United States, if the source country of the restored work is a nation adhering to the Berne Convention or a WTO member country on such date; or

''(B) the date of adherence or proclamation, in the case of any other source country of the restored work.

''(3) The term 'eligible country' means a nation, other than the United States, that is a WTO member country, adheres to the Berne Convention, or is subject to a proclamation under subsection (g).''

1996—Subsec. (h)(3). Pub. L. 104–295 substituted ''subsection (g)'' for ''section 104A(g)''.

1994—Pub. L. 103–465 substituted ''Copyright in restored works'' for ''Copyright in certain motion pictures'' as section catchline and amended text generally, substituting present provisions for provisions restoring copyright in certain motion pictures and providing for effective date of protection as well as use of previously owned copies.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1998 AMENDMENT

Subsec. (h)(1)(A), (B), (E), (3)(A), (B), (E) of this section and amendment by section 102(c)(4), (5) of Pub. L. 105–304 effective Oct. 28, 1998, except as otherwise provided, subsec. (h)(1)(C), (3)(C) of this section effective Mar. 6, 2002, and subsec. (h)(1)(D), (3)(D) of this section and amendment by section 102(c)(3) of Pub. L. 105–304 effective May 20, 2002, see section 105(a), (b)(1)(C), (D), (2)(D)–(F) of Pub. L. 105–304, set out as a note under section 101 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective on the date the North American Free Trade Agreement enters into force with respect to the United States (Jan. 1, 1994), see section 335(a) of Pub. L. 103–182, formerly set out in an Effective Date of 1993 Amendment note under section 1052 of Title 15, Commerce and Trade.

URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENTS: ENTRY INTO FORCE

The Uruguay Round Agreements, including the World Trade Organization Agreement and agreements annexed to that Agreement, as referred to in section 3511(d) of Title 19, Customs Duties, entered into force with respect to the United States on Jan. 1, 1995. See note set out under section 3511 of Title 19.

§ 105. Subject matter of copyright: United States Government works

(a) IN GENERAL.—Copyright protection under this title is not available for any work of the United States Government, but the United States Government is not precluded from receiving and holding copyrights transferred to it by assignment, bequest, or otherwise.

(b) COPYRIGHT PROTECTION OF CERTAIN OF[1] WORKS.—Subject to subsection (c),[2] the covered author of a covered work owns the copyright to that covered work.

(c)[2] USE BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.—The Secretary of Defense may direct the covered author of a covered work to provide the Federal Government with an irrevocable, royalty-free, world-wide, nonexclusive license to reproduce, distribute, perform, or display such covered work for purposes of the United States Government.

(c)[2] DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''covered author'' means a civilian member of the faculty of a covered institution.

(2) The term ''covered institution'' means the following:

(A) National Defense University.

(B) United States Military Academy.

(C) Army War College.

(D) United States Army Command and General Staff College.

(E) United States Naval Academy.

(F) Naval War College.

(G) Naval Post Graduate School.

(H) Marine Corps University.

(I) United States Air Force Academy.

[1] So in original.

[2] So in original. There are two subsecs. designated (c).

(J) Air University.
(K) Defense Language Institute.
(L) United States Coast Guard Academy.

(3) The term ''covered work'' means a literary work produced by a covered author in the course of employment at a covered institution for publication by a scholarly press or journal.

(Pub. L. 94–553, title I, § 101, Oct. 19, 1976, 90 Stat. 2546; Pub. L. 116–92, div. A, title V, § 544, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1376.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

HOUSE REPORT NO. 94–1476

Scope of the Prohibition. The basic premise of section 105 of the bill is the same as that of section 8 of the present law [section 8 of former title 17]—that works produced for the U.S. Government by its officers and employees should not be subject to copyright. The provision applies the principle equally to unpublished and published works.

The general prohibition against copyright in section 105 applies to ''any work of the United States Government,'' which is defined in section 101 as ''a work prepared by an officer or employee of the United States Government as part of that person's official duties.'' Under this definition a Government official or employee would not be prevented from securing copyright in a work written at that person's own volition and outside his or her duties, even though the subject matter involves the Government work or professional field of the official or employee. Although the wording of the definition of ''work of the United States Government'' differs somewhat from that of the definition of ''work made for hire,'' the concepts are intended to be construed in the same way.

A more difficult and far-reaching problem is whether the definition should be broadened to prohibit copyright in works prepared under U.S. Government contract or grant. As the bill is written, the Government agency concerned could determine in each case whether to allow an independent contractor or grantee, to secure copyright in works prepared in whole or in part with the use of Government funds. The argument that has been made against allowing copyright in this situation is that the public should not be required to pay a ''double subsidy,'' and that it is inconsistent to prohibit copyright in works by Government employees while permitting private copyrights in a growing body of works created by persons who are paid with Government funds. Those arguing in favor of potential copyright protection have stressed the importance of copyright as an incentive to creation and dissemination in this situation, and the basically different policy considerations, applicable to works written by Government employees and those applicable to works prepared by private organizations with the use of Federal funds.

The bill deliberately avoids making any sort of outright, unqualified prohibition against copyright in works prepared under Government contract or grant. There may well be cases where it would be in the public interest to deny copyright in the writings generated by Government research contracts and the like; it can be assumed that, where a Government agency commissions a work for its own use merely as an alternative to having one of its own employees prepare the work, the right to secure a private copyright would be withheld. However, there are almost certainly many other cases where the denial of copyright protection would be unfair or would hamper the production and publication of important works. Where, under the particular circumstances, Congress or the agency involved finds that the need to have a work freely available outweighs the need of the private author to secure copyright, the problem can be dealt with by specific legislation, agency regulations, or contractual restrictions.

The prohibition on copyright protection for United States Government works is not intended to have any effect on protection of these works abroad. Works of the governments of most other countries are copyrighted. There are no valid policy reasons for denying such protection to United States Government works in foreign countries, or for precluding the Government from making licenses for the use of its works abroad.

The effect of section 105 is intended to place all works of the United States Government, published or unpublished, in the public domain. This means that the individual Government official or employee who wrote the work could not secure copyright in it or restrain its dissemination by the Government or anyone else, but it also means that, as far as the copyright law is concerned, the Government could not restrain the employee or official from disseminating the work if he or she chooses to do so. The use of the term ''work of the United States Government'' does not mean that a work falling within the definition of that term is the property of the U.S. Government.

LIMITED EXCEPTION FOR NATIONAL TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE

At the House hearings in 1975 the U.S. Department of Commerce called attention to its National Technical Information Service (NTIS), which has a statutory mandate, under Chapter 23 [§ 1151 et seq.] of Title 15 of the U.S. Code, to operate a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of scientific, technical and engineering information. Under its statute, NTIS is required to be as self-sustaining as possible, and not to force the general public to bear publishing costs that are for private benefit. The Department urged an amendment to section 105 that would allow it to secure copyright in NTIS publications both in the United States and abroad, noting that a precedent exists in the Standard Reference Data Act (15 U.S.C. § 290(e) [§ 290e]).

In response to this request the Committee adopted a limited exception to the general prohibition in section 105, permitting the Secretary of Commerce to ''secure copyright for a limited term not to exceed five years, on behalf of the United States as author or copyright owner'' in any NTIS publication disseminated pursuant to 15 U.S.C. Chapter 23 [§ 1151 et seq.]. In order to ''secure copyright'' in a work under this amendment the Secretary would be required to publish the work with a copyright notice, and the five-year term would begin upon the date of first publication.

Proposed Saving Clause. Section 8 of the statute now in effect [section 8 of former title 17] includes a saving clause intended to make clear that the copyright protection of a private work is not affected if the work is published by the Government. This provision serves a real purpose in the present law because of the ambiguity of the undefined term ''any publication of the United States Government.'' Section 105 of the bill, however, uses the operative term ''work of the United States Government'' and defines it in such a way that privately written works are clearly excluded from the prohibition; accordingly, a saving clause becomes superfluous.

Retention of a saving clause has been urged on the ground that the present statutory provision is frequently cited, and that having the provision expressly stated in the law would avoid questions and explanations. The committee here observes: (1) there is nothing in section 105 that would relieve the Government of its obligation to secure permission in order to publish a copyrighted work; and (2) publication or other use by the Government of a private work would not affect its copyright protection in any way. The question of use of copyrighted material in documents published by the Congress and its Committees is discussed below in connection with section 107.

Works of the United States Postal Service. The intent of section 105 [this section] is to restrict the prohibition against Government copyright to works written by employees of the United States Government within the scope of their official duties. In accordance with

the objectives of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 [Pub. L. 91–375, which enacted title 39, Postal Service], this section does not apply to works created by employees of the United States Postal Service. In addition to enforcing the criminal statutes proscribing the forgery or counterfeiting of postage stamps, the Postal Service could, if it chooses, use the copyright law to prevent the reproduction of postage stamp designs for private or commercial non-postal services (for example, in philatelic publications and catalogs, in general advertising, in art reproductions, in textile designs, and so forth). However, any copyright claimed by the Postal Service in its works, including postage stamp designs, would be subject to the same conditions, formalities, and time limits as other copyrightable works.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2019—Pub. L. 116–92 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), inserted heading, and added subsec. (b) and two subsecs. (c). Heading of subsec. (a) was conformed to the style used in this title.

§ 106. Exclusive rights in copyrighted works

Subject to sections 107 through 122, the owner of copyright under this title has the exclusive rights to do and to authorize any of the following:

(1) to reproduce the copyrighted work in copies or phonorecords;

(2) to prepare derivative works based upon the copyrighted work;

(3) to distribute copies or phonorecords of the copyrighted work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership, or by rental, lease, or lending;

(4) in the case of literary, musical, dramatic, and choreographic works, pantomimes, and motion pictures and other audiovisual works, to perform the copyrighted work publicly;

(5) in the case of literary, musical, dramatic, and choreographic works, pantomimes, and pictorial, graphic, or sculptural works, including the individual images of a motion picture or other audiovisual work, to display the copyrighted work publicly; and

(6) in the case of sound recordings, to perform the copyrighted work publicly by means of a digital audio transmission.

(Pub. L. 94–553, title I, § 101, Oct. 19, 1976, 90 Stat. 2546; Pub. L. 101–318, § 3(d), July 3, 1990, 104 Stat. 288; Pub. L. 101–650, title VII, § 704(b)(2), Dec. 1, 1990, 104 Stat. 5134; Pub. L. 104–39, § 2, Nov. 1, 1995, 109 Stat. 336; Pub. L. 106–44, § 1(g)(2), Aug. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 222; Pub. L. 107–273, div. C, title III, § 13210(4)(A), Nov. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 1909.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

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General Scope of Copyright. The five fundamental rights that the bill gives to copyright owners—the exclusive rights of reproduction, adaptation, publication, performance, and display—are stated generally in section 106. These exclusive rights, which comprise the so-called ''bundle of rights'' that is a copyright, are cumulative and may overlap in some cases. Each of the five enumerated rights may be subdivided indefinitely and, as discussed below in connection with section 201, each subdivision of an exclusive right may be owned and enforced separately.

The approach of the bill is to set forth the copyright owner's exclusive rights in broad terms in section 106, and then to provide various limitations, qualifications, or exemptions in the 12 sections that follow. Thus, everything in section 106 is made ''subject to sections 107 through 118'', and must be read in conjunction with those provisions.

The exclusive rights accorded to a copyright owner under section 106 are ''to do and to authorize'' any of the activities specified in the five numbered clauses. Use of the phrase ''to authorize'' is intended to avoid any questions as to the liability of contributory infringers. For example, a person who lawfully acquires an authorized copy of a motion picture would be an infringer if he or she engages in the business of renting it to others for purposes of unauthorized public performance.

Rights of Reproduction, Adaptation, and Publication. The first three clauses of section 106, which cover all rights under a copyright except those of performance and display, extend to every kind of copyrighted work. The exclusive rights encompassed by these clauses, though closely related, are independent; they can generally be characterized as rights of copying, recording, adaptation, and publishing. A single act of infringement may violate all of these rights at once, as where a publisher reproduces, adapts, and sells copies of a person's copyrighted work as part of a publishing venture. Infringement takes place when any one of the rights is violated: where, for example, a printer reproduces copies without selling them or a retailer sells copies without having anything to do with their reproduction. The references to ''copies or phonorecords,'' although in the plural, are intended here and throughout the bill to include the singular (1 U.S.C. § 1).

Reproduction.—Read together with the relevant definitions in section 101, the right ''to reproduce the copyrighted work in copies or phonorecords'' means the right to produce a material object in which the work is duplicated, transcribed, imitated, or simulated in a fixed form from which it can be ''perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated, either directly or with the aid of a machine or device.'' As under the present law, a copyrighted work would be infringed by reproducing it in whole or in any substantial part, and by duplicating it exactly or by imitation or simulation. Wide departures or variations from the copyrighted work would still be an infringement as long as the author's ''expression'' rather than merely the author's ''ideas'' are taken. An exception to this general principle, applicable to the reproduction of copyrighted sound recordings, is specified in section 114.

''Reproduction'' under clause (1) of section 106 is to be distinguished from ''display'' under clause (5). For a work to be ''reproduced,'' its fixation in tangible form must be ''sufficiently permanent or stable to permit it to be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated for a period of more than transitory duration.'' Thus, the showing of images on a screen or tube would not be a violation of clause (1), although it might come within the scope of clause (5).

Preparation of Derivative Works.—The exclusive right to prepare derivative works, specified separately in clause (2) of section 106, overlaps the exclusive right of reproduction to some extent. It is broader than that right, however, in the sense that reproduction requires fixation in copies or phonorecords, whereas the preparation of a derivative work, such as a ballet, pantomime, or improvised performance, may be an infringement even though nothing is ever fixed in tangible form.

To be an infringement the ''derivative work'' must be ''based upon the copyrighted work,'' and the definition in section 101 refers to ''a translation, musical arrangement, dramatization, fictionalization, motion picture version, sound recording, art reproduction, abridgment, condensation, or any other form in which a work may be recast, transformed, or adapted.'' Thus, to constitute a violation of section 106(2), the infringing work must incorporate a portion of the copyrighted work in some form; for example, a detailed commentary on a work or a programmatic musical composition inspired