

Dear President Ramaphosa

Declaration of Support for the Copyright Amendment Bill

We are writers, filmmakers, producers, photographers, actors, teachers, professors, students, learners, librarians, journalists, artists, poets, software developers, technology entrepreneurs, freedom of expression activists, disability activists, game developers, producers of accessible format materials, educational content producers and many other diverse South Africans.

Amongst us, our organisations represent over half a million South Africans.

In South Africa the law has not protected our interests. We work in industries where many of us are systematically disempowered. We are working under apartheid-era legislation which favours historical and international monopolies which have control of money and power.

This power imbalance must end now.

We welcome the passing of the Copyright Amendment Bill by both the National Assembly and the National Council of the Provinces and encourage you to sign the Bill into law without delay. The Bill has undergone a lengthy consultative process at the various stages and is a good reflection of a transformative vision for a more equal and just society. The Bill also brings South African legislation in line with international treaties.

As filmmakers and photographers, we applaud the provisions which firstly make it easier for us to own our work, and secondly to critically engage with other creative works to tell our stories.

As fine artists, we welcome the introduction of a resale royalty, so that we the creators also benefit when our works become more valuable over time.

As educators, librarians and students, we commend the Bill for making it possible to access much-needed educational materials, and to produce decolonised learning materials in all South African languages. This will particularly benefit disadvantaged and excluded learners. Libraries will also finally be able to digitise and preserve our cultural heritage.

As disabled rights activists, this Bill will finally empower us and give us access to opportunities denied to us by the lack of works in accessible formats, such as Braille.

As actors, musicians and performers, after decades of exploitation, we look forward to having control over our work, the choice of how it is used, and the right to fair remuneration and royalties for the continued usage of our work.

As digital entrepreneurs, we welcome the modernisation of Fair Use in the Bill which allows us to compete on a global stage in fields ranging from artificial intelligence to game development.

As journalists and activists we believe the Bill makes a key contribution to the protection of free expression and access to information, which are essential components of a democratic and inclusive society.

As writers, authors and composers, we praise the Bill for redressing a historical imbalance by ensuring that assigned copyrights revert to the author and by introducing royalties for additional uses of our works.

And as creators across the board, we believe the regulation of collective management organisations is extremely urgent to prevent our income being mismanaged and to ensure that CMOs are accountable to the artists and creators they exist to serve.

When it comes to Fair Use of copyrighted materials we applaud the approach taken in the Bill, which increases access without substituting in the market of the original creator.

We look forward to playing our part in a dynamic, inclusive and decolonised creative economy with the support of the Copyright Amendment Bill and the Performers Protection Amendment Bill.

***#SignTheBills #EndExploitation #DecoloniseTheCreativeEconomy*
*#SupportCreatorsNotProfiteers #EducationForAll***

SIGNED

South African Democratic Teachers Union
National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
SAOU Teachers Union

South African Guild of Actors

WikiMedia ZA

Right2Know

ReCreateSA

Freedom of Expression Institute

SA Right to Read Coalition:

- Blind SA
- Daisy SA
- SA Library for the Blind
- SA Braille Authority
- SA National Council for the Blind
- SA Disability Alliance
- Tape Aids for the Blind

Media Monitoring Africa

Down Syndrome South Africa

UCT IP Unit

Section 27

Sout

African Union of Blind Marrakesh Treaty Committee

Library and Information Association of SA

The Safety Lab

LifeCo UnLtd

People Against Racism

Personal Managers Association

AfroLabs

Shifty Records

ADvTECH Schools Division