

OCTOBER 5, 2018

CAUT NEWS ARTICLE

Copyright balance needed in wake of United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement

(Ottawa – October 5, 2018) The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) is calling on the federal Liberal government to reassess its approach to the current review of the *Copyright Act* in light of concessions made in the new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

Article 20.H.7 of the USMCA trade agreement extends the term of copyright protection in Canada by 20 years, from 50 years after the death of the author of a work to 70 years. The change is the result of pressure from the US entertainment industry.

“The provision means that works that would have been freely available to all to be copied, shared, altered and republished will be locked down for another twenty years,” says CAUT executive director David Robinson. “Term extension will cost the education sector and inhibit authors, artists, students, teachers, researchers, and ordinary Canadians in their pursuit of creativity, free expression and learning opportunities.”

Long identified as a giveaway to large corporations at the expense of the public interest, term extension had been resisted by successive Canadian governments. Even the most vocal Canadian proponents for more restrictive copyright law have been reluctant to advocate for it.

“With term extension now imposed as a by-product of an international trade deal, the careful balance in Canadian copyright law has been upended in favour of corporate content owners,” states Robinson. “To correct this, the current review of the *Copyright Act* should advance expanded user rights within the

legislation – including broader fair dealing provisions, stronger educational exceptions, better access to orphan works, and reformed Crown Copyright. The United States has forcefully imposed the interests of its corporations on the Canadian public. Canada must push back.”