

From: [Travis Stephens](#)
To: [TM FR Notices](#)
Subject: \$100 public comment
Date: Monday, September 30, 2019 9:39:26 PM

I write in regards to [this](#) article's opening public comment for the \$100 fee proposal to file a letter of protest

Charging for the ability to dissent against a filer stifles public discourse and is antithetical to basic democracy in that our system is not set up that we, as both the citizenry and small business owners, must pay to have a voice. If someone else files to trademark my property and I can show, with evidence, that they do not have the right to that claim then it should be them, not I, who should pay for wasting the government's time.

This move strips what little power myself and others have and gives it to larger companies who can afford to take on these costs.

Furthermore, the need for funding because of a recent influx of letters of protest is apparent. This needs to be a carefully strategized legislation issue because the Trademark Office's proposal is a financial band-aid to a much larger problem, being that individuals have become wise as to how to game your very own system.

Putting a fee on letters of protest, in effect, erodes our freedom of expression - especially those of us who create and design in the Class 25. When trademarks like "Hot sauce" slip by without protest then Mrs. Everyperson can't profit off of shirts celebrating hot sauce. Yes, that really happened. It sounds menial but it happens time and time again. Another noteworthy one: "I served."

If this goes through I will be scheduling a meeting with my Senator's office. The public must be a part of our democracy's checks and balances.

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Wm Travis Stephens