

Press Coverage | January 2, 2026

Copyright & Trademark Policy and Trends to Watch in 2026

Michael Hobbs, a partner with Troutman Pepper Locke, was quoted in the January 2, 2026 *Law360* article, “Copyright & Trademark Policy and Trends to Watch in 2026.”

“The Copyright Office doesn’t get involved in litigation [and] they don’t get involved in [making the] law, but they are an administrative arm that does have probably a little bit of sway in terms of whether you get a copyright registration or not,” Hobbs said.

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Congress hasn’t voted on the bill in previous sessions despite this support. But Michael Hobbs of Troutman Pepper Locke told *Law360* that with next year being an election year, lawmakers might actually want to address deepfakes.

“If third parties are creating this [material], and it becomes an issue in a political race, I think that is going to get a ton of attention from politicians,” Hobbs said.

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While much of the USPTO leadership’s scrutiny has been focused on the patent side of the agency and the impact on the trademark side seems to be comparably limited — the Trump administration hasn’t ended the collective bargaining rights of the union for trademark examining attorneys, for instance — Hobbs said he’s concerned that the upheaval will lead to attrition.

“I think the concern as a practitioner is that you are going to lose a lot of really talented” staff, he said.

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