To Whom It May Concern,

As a young and up-and-coming illustrator, I felt shocked and worried for my future when I read about the 2015 Orphan Works and Mass Digitization. I have been working hard to build my career and make a living as a visual artist, and very few people outside of the commercial art business actually know what that entails.

I received my BFA in 2013 and in the past two years have made work for major book publishers as well as editorial magazines. I was accepted into the Society of Illustrator's 57th annual exhibition and was recently accepted as a member.

In the age of the Internet, there are positives and negatives to being an illustrator. As soon as an artist begins to have an online presence with their work, it begins to be copied and pasted all over the Internet. This can be a positive thing, if the individual posting the image gives the artist credit or a link back to their website. However, I have found that is rarely the case. Most of the time, your image is floating around with the name a copy right information unlawfully removed. Countless times I've seen impostures post work that does not belong to them, as their own, with no compensation for the illustrator.

The authors of the Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Report seem to think that once work is published, the artist has no more use for it - That is a very dangerous inaccuracy. My income relies on making good work that people will want to purchase the rights to use. When I work for a book publisher, they hire me to make an illustration and pay me for the right to print in hardcover for a certain number of years. If that book does well enough, it is printed in paperback. The publisher than comes back to me to purchase further usage rights to include paperback printing. So, even though the work had been published once before, I still had use for it and it was still my right to sell rights to the image. This is how the business works and the current copyright law is what my business relies on to thrive.

The 2015 Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Report could potentially destroy illustration and other creative fields beyond repair. Please reconsider what it means for an artist to own their work.

Sincerely,

David Curtis