I am a freelance designer, illustrator, and letterer. My designs are unique and I hope to continue in this profession, but I'm not seeing how that is possible with the new US Copyright Act that is being suggested.

Each and every piece of an artists' work should be protected from the moment it is created and continue to be protected whether it is published or unpublished for a set amount of time. I currently do not license my artwork, but offer each project as custom work to my clients. It is a challenge to protect your work as an artist, but it shouldn't be such a hardship for working, growing, or future artists.

In the age of the Internet, it's extremely difficult to enforce copyright of works, and replacing the current Copyright Act could make it impossible, or even kill the livelihood of many artists, designers, illustrators, and writers. We need to have our work protected, so that we can have the freedom to create and invent new ideas. Without protection, our ideas will be just that, ideas.

In my last eight years as an illustrator, I've had works stolen and used for monetary gain in international situations where I had no ground to pursue legal action. I've also had others copy my style of work with no hope for action against this type of abuse. Artists already have many hardships in their choice of career, and shouldn't face losing rights of their works due to mass digitization, social licensing, or reforms in copyright law.

This work is my life, and like many other artists, we use our skills through self-teaching or formal training to pay bills, raise families, and to live our lives. In seeking avenues around compensating us for our work, it is stealing from the mouths that we have to feed. This copyright law reform will eliminate any hope for budding artists, or children who dream of becoming artists, like I once did. While it's already difficult to pursue a career in the arts, this law reform will make it not just an obstacle, but a way to kill the arts as a career.

I hope that you rethink passing the new Copyright Act, and truly have artists best interests at heart. However, I am not completely against having access to work, as I think that's extremely important - but do not allow anyone but the original artist or those who are licensed by the artist to do so to be compensated for that work.

Please carefully consider who you are passing these new laws for.

An independent artist,
Diane Faye Zerr
Reading, PA