I am writing to express my views on the “The Next Great Copyright Act” and why I believe it is a detrimental concept to any and all artists such as myself.

I have been an artist all my life. From the time I could first hold a pencil, I was drawn to art, and I have spent my life and countless thousands of dollars studying and perfecting my craft. I went to college to study art, majored in illustration and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts. My dream has always been to illustrate children’s books, and while it is a long road to success, fraught with rejection and disappointment, I have never once doubted that this is what I am meant to do.

I have been working as an artist for three years now, and as an illustrator, that consists of freelance work. The majority of work available in the arts is through freelance. This is not a job where you go to a company, punch a time card, and receive a regular salary and benefits. This is career that is full of uncertainties. This is a career worked from home, from coffee shops, from studios, a career of solitude where our socialization is done through the Internet and the phone, and where we are not always certain of where our next job will be, or of how we will pay our bills. This is the sacrifice we make to live a life we love, a life of creativity where we have the privilege of making the world a more beautiful place.

As an artist, and especially as a freelance artist, the issues of copyright law are extremely important and the basis on which my business rests. It is imperative to my success as an artist that I am in control of my work, that I am the one to determine voluntarily where my work is used, how it is used and by whom. The value of the work I create is not diminished upon publication as long as I have those rights, because every image I create becomes part of my inventory and can be used and reused, each time for a profit. I can benefit repeatedly from the sale and resale of a single image for various uses, and this is where I am able to find some stability in my career, and allow me the time to create new and better images, while profiting from those I already have in existence.

If this new law goes into effect, it will be robbing me of my rights to retain the copyrights to my own works of art. Works of art that I have quite literally put my blood, sweat and tears into creating. Works of art that I have spent my life and my life savings learning how to create. It would be making it nearly impossible for me to continue to support myself in a career that I love. It would deplete my time and resources by forcing me to go through the process of registering every single work I create, and it would be actually stealing any works that I neglect to register to be used for someone else’s profit. You can put a spin on it by calling it “harvesting” but it would be no different than having someone invade my home and forcibly take property that belongs to me. It would be allowing other people, rather than myself, to profit from my time and my skill, and it would be robbing me of the chance to profit from it myself. It would be asking me to do my job for free, so that other people can gain. If I consult a doctor, or a lawyer, or a dentist – I expect to pay for their services. I know how much time and money they have put into obtaining knowledge and skill in their field and I would not belittle that by asking them to allow me to use their services free of charge. All I ask is to be afforded the same right. Artists put no less time or money into our craft. More often than not in fact,

we put in more. We work day jobs, have families, and only after everyone else's needs are met, do we have time to pursue our true passions. We work into the night, into the wee hours of the morning, sacrificing sleep and health in order to grasp what little time we can for ourselves. Is it really so unfair to ask that we have the same rights as others when it comes to the control of our own work? That we and we alone be able to profit from our skill, and that we be fairly compensated for what we work so tirelessly and passionately to create?

I hope that you will strongly consider that opinions of myself, and my peers when it comes to these issues. It is we who are affected most and it is we who have the most to lose. If corporations must pay fairly for the use of our artwork, they will not suffer. However if laws like these allow corporations to steal our artwork for profit, we the artists will suffer. We will not be able to sustain our passions and the world will become a much duller place.

Sincerely,

Emily R. Wayne