Dear U.S Copyright Office,

I am writing to you as a budding artist, someone who is just now trying to get their work recognized in the often-competitive market artists face in the beginning. I am also writing to you as someone who hopes to see other budding artists succeed, to see their work thrive and survive in the world. Please, please protect our copyright laws, which entitle us to the rights of our work.

Art is not simply a beautiful picture, or an amazing photograph, or an elaborate painting. Art is a fruit of labor, created by an artist, who had to spend hours, days, weeks, maybe even years, learning and applying the skills that were necessary to create that piece of work. Creating art is work, and artists are entitled to the fruits of their labor. After all, musicians are entitled to their music, an author their novel; the same is absolutely true for those who create art. It would be nothing less than criminal to deprive artists like myself ownership of works that we labored over, to force us to have to rely on private companies, private companies who have no part in the creation of the work, to protect our rights, and thus subject us to their mercy.

I will not lie, many beginning artists are not wealthy. Many of us rely on our art to make ends meet, supplementing existing income which is often not adequate enough to pay for living expenses. Art is not cheap to make, even photography, and it is unfair to allow others to profit from the labor of those who work to create such works. That is all a private copyright company would do; they would penalize the starving artist, who is trying to use their work to generate a profit, by charging large sums to protect their labor. In a competitive market, which is what the real world revolves around, artists would be forced to rely on such companies to protect their work, and would be forced to pay whatever these companies charge if they expect to keep the rights to their work. This is unnecessarily unfair; this would cripple artists such as myself, who need their work to be protected if they expect to breach the market at all.

Why is it fair for someone else to benefit from an artist's hard work, especially someone who had absolutely no part in the creation of that work? Why is it fair to essentially steal someone's work simply becuase they are unable to pay a private company to protect it? Why is it fair to tell an artist that what they have made, be it a sketch or commissioned piece, no longer belongs to them despite all of their hard work?

I am begging you, please do not allow this proposed law to pass. You are only depriving hard-working artists of their work, and allowing others to unfairly profit from it.

Sincerely,
Erica DiVergilio, age 23