Dear Copyright Office Decision-Makers,

I've been an illustrator for over 30 years, working primarily in the field of editorial illustrations, providing art for books, magazines, videos, and web sites.

I feel, as many illustrators do, that the "Next Great Copyright Act," is actually a thinly veiled attempt by large interests headed by leaders like Lawrence Lessig to circumvent a perfectly fine existing copyright law by reinventing it to their benefit. Yes, it would be fun for internet profiteers to appropriate images they had no hand in creating and yes, I am sure it would be delightful to rework those images, some of which took years of training and effort and, with a few hours' of their time in a digital program, claim that work as their own.

I'm sure someone somewhere is also trying to think of a way to charge us for the air we breathe as well, but it doesn't make it legal, nor does it make it any less unscrupulous. I've pasted the following sent to me in an email that summarizes the reasons for my opposition.

- "The Next Great Copyright Act" would replace all existing copyright law.
- It would void our Constitutional right to the exclusive control of our work.
- It would "privilege" the public's right to use our work.
- It would "pressure" you to register your work with commercial registries.
- It would "orphan" unregistered work.
- It would make orphaned work available for commercial infringement by "good faith" infringers.
- It would allow others to alter your work and copyright these "derivative works" in their own names.
- It would affect all visual art: drawings, paintings, sketches, photos, etc.; past, present and future; published and unpublished; domestic and foreign.

How many authors would countenance a plagiarism of their work to benefit opportunists too undisciplined to think for themselves? How many inventors would willingly step aside to allow thieves to arrogate their inventions for themselves and reap the rewards? How many creators in any discipline need a new middleman to pay in preserving what was rightfully theirs in the first place, namely, ownership of the creations they built with their own minds, hands and will?

Many of us freelance illustrators can only hope that some day, when we are too old to work, we will be able to make some passive income on our creations and pass that to our children and grandchildren. For some of us, this is our only legacy. We are already forced by clients to sign more than our fair share of work-for-hire contracts if we want to work at all, but in those instances when we are allowed to claim our work as our own, we hope to maintain some income stream from it.

Please consider defeating any attempts to replace existing copyright law.
Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,
David Boelke