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U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S. E.
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I have been working as a professional visual artist for 25 years. I earned my BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and my MFA from the School of Visual Arts. I make most of my income from creating book illustrations for the children's market. I also publish a lot of my personal work on blogs and other social media.

I have in the past had my work used illegally, so I am especially concerned about the "Orphan Works" legislation that is currently being considered. It is of vital importance that any future legislation include strong, specific enforcement mechanisms to protect the original artists of the works in question. The previous "Orphan Works" bill included troubling, vague phrases (for instance, what exactly is a "diligent and good faith search?") that would open the door for exploitation. I am also concerned about the financial burden and hassle of being forced to register all of my work.

And lastly, I am concerned that one "bad actor" could take my work, crop out my copyright notice, post the work without attribution or compensation, and then have other entities come along and use my work illegally. They could then claim that the work didn't have a copyright notice on it, so they assumed it was an "orphan work." That has essentially happened to me in the past, and I feel that the "Orphan Works" legislation may very well make this scenario more likely to occur.

Any new legislation should strengthen, not weaken, the Copyright Act of 1976.

Sincerely,