I'm writing in response to the proposed copyright laws, and I know how difficult it can be to sort through a lot of responses, so I'm going to keep mine as organized and to the point as possible.

First, I want to tell you about the artist behind this text.

What I do.

I am not a professional, but I do a lot of work; for a lot of people. I put smiles on kids faces who get to see their characters in a visual medium. Characters and ideas they can't draw themselves or afford to have drawn by more 'professional' artists. Kids that put together their allowances or mow a lawn to see these ideas come to life. Ideas that are put online so they can show their friends, or budding/hobbyist writers that get to see their scenes and characters illustrated.

I do the same with my own ideas, most of the things I draw, paint and make, go online so that I can show my work to my friends and to strangers who might be interested in commissioning me. If my protective rights are taken from me, I can no longer do this. If posting my work on the internet suddenly strips me of my rights to it, I can no longer post it. I will not longer be able to make those children, young teens and even older adults smile. This will be stripping my right to own what I make, and what I love. My rights to the little thing that keeps me going in life because I cannot afford a formal copyright neither in funds or mental ability to handle that level of stress.

Why I do it.

Art for me is my release, my love in this life of mine. A hobby I am slowly turning into a living. I get commissions here and there but not yet anything to live off of. The money I make usually goes into my other hobbies or into things I need at that moment such as food or bills; or more recently gas to get to my appointments or roofing supplies. I'm very poor, my main source of income is what I get from Welfare. I can't get let alone hold a conventional job due to a disability I've had for most of my life, however it's a rather misunderstood disease so getting better benefits has been proving very difficult. Art, and sharing what I make is all I have to cope with the chronic pain and social seclusion I'm in every day; but if my right to own my work and decide who and who may not use it becomes unprotected, I will not have this. Art and sharing it with like-minded people is one of the few things keeping me from spiraling back into deep depression. Art is the only thing keeping me from sinking.

What will happen if this passes.

As important as art is to me, I cannot justify to my family putting the money and time into getting a copyright for my work, work that is 'not professional' and doesn't bring a steady influx of income. I cannot put up with that level of stress to jump through the legal steps needed to get said copyright. The automatic rights to my work is all I have and will have.

If this passes and becomes law, I will lose my spare income, because then the only artists being seen are those that can buy a copyright. Nobody will be willing to post their art online anymore if it's not protected. Nobody will want to commission an artist whose work will be up for free grabs the second it's posted on the internet.

Being an artist is all I have left, if I lose this majorly important part of my life, I fear for my mental and in turn, physical health. Being an artist is my identity, who I am outside of my disease, the only possible job I could have and if that gets taken from me, I don't know what I'll do.

How I learned.

I picked up a crayon when I was very young, and metaphorically haven't put it down. I've spent my spare periods in school taking as many art classes as I could and even attended BOCES technical center, earning two years worth of college credit for Graphic Design and Ad Printing. BOCES taught us extensively about the current Copyright laws, and how they protect us, ALL of us. Rich and poor.

Which brings me to this point; I believe this new law is extremely unjust. Protecting only the people that can afford to buy a copyright, instead of everyone. This doesn't sound at all like America; where our government and our laws are meant to protect everybody, not just the rich and able.

Now to get to the requested questions. I left the question line itself intact because I know reading through so many comments; it can get confusing.

1. What are the most significant challenges related to monetizing and/or licensing photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations?

To me, making sure it stays in my hands. There's so many young people completely unaware that the current copyright laws exist, so work gets taken enough as is. But with the current laws in place that can often be very quickly righted. People have to get my permission before using the things I put my time, effort and materials into before using them; or they will face punishment through whatever site they reposted my work onto.

Monetizing, is mostly about being seen. It is so difficult to be seen amongst the scene of smaller artists that aren't professional. Artists that paint and draw for one another, small time writers or everyday people rather than big businesses. If this new law becomes a reality, that'll be erased. The only artists left standing will be the professional and those with enough funds.

2. What are the most significant enforcement challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

Having their stolen art removed or compensated. Again, a lot of the youth are unaware of copyright even existing, having the current law in place to point to is great enforcement on its own. A lot of the time, website admins have artists on their teams that know of the copyrights and administrators are willing to back up the artist when a member of their site posts something that doesn't belong to them. This isn't always the case however, and this is what's hardest.

Even harder is when the thieves are big name companies, or physical sellers selling prints of others' work at festival stalls. The law often turns their faces at such 'pitiful' cases, when in reality it's anything but. Other people making money from our work; in some cases can be a death sentences for us. We pour days, weeks sometimes months into one piece of work. If it doesn't sell, that's less food on our plates, less toward rent for a shelter. We need our current laws to protect us; all of us. NOT just those that can already afford to buy a more formal copyright.

3. What are the most significant registration challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

I've never registered my work nor known anyone who formally has, so I can't speak about this.

4. What are the most significant challenges or frustrations for those who wish to make legal use of photographs, graphic art works, and/or illustrations?

Making sure it isn't stolen, even more so that it isn't being used to make a profit elsewhere out of their control.

5. What other issues or challenges should the Office be aware of regarding photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations under the Copyright Act?

There are none I can think of at this moment. Except that this world will be a far less pretty place if only formally copyrighted works are shown.

6. What are the most significant challenges artists would face if these new copyright proposals become law?

I've already spoken of this throughout, but will reiterate myself.

Key points:

- This'll be killing the small-artist communities, and greatly discourage any new artists or even long-term artists from making their hobby into a career. The future of the major art industry will suffer from this. Ranging from the future people that will design your cars, clothes and jewelry all the way to the people who make the billboard you pass. Or how about the people that will illustrate future medical books that teach doctors how to perform operations you, your kids or grandkids might need someday?
- It will be greatly crippling on a lot of the country's youth, for a lot of people art and sharing it is an outlet for internalized stress and a major coping mechanism. Sharing it is often a large part of this, and for a lot of people; online is the only place to do so because their 'real life' peers look down on them.
- It will greatly devalue a LOT of people and further hurt the already stigmatized view on artists and their value as people and employees.
- This is a highly discriminating law, protecting only those that can afford to be protected and abandoning the poor and those that don't wish to make their hobby into their work.

A final few words.

Without the money I make from art, I wouldn't make it to my appointments, I wouldn't have a roof that doesn't leak

or the friends that I do. I wouldn't have hope for a life outside of my disease.

Please, don't take this away from me. Don't take this away from the thousands, possibly millions like me.