Hello,

I am an illustrator and author, graduating soon from the University of South Florida with a degree in art. This summer, I was accepted for my artistic talent to study art in France. I publish physical and digital content on a very regular basis, and as art is an essential part of my life, I feel threatened by a possible amendment to U.S. copyright law.

A significant challenge related to monetizing and licensing my own work is that many people treat an artist's efforts with disrespect, and will take and repost and edit work to put elsewhere. This is hard to enforce, as it can take a series of minutes for someone to do this. However, this is where I would place more burden on enforcement.

The problems concerning enforcement are that people do not defend or stay vigilant in terms of reproducing artwork-- an artist's graphic pattern being used by a company to print a skirt, for example. However, there are enough tools available (a popular example is reverse Google image-searching to find the source) that it is the monetizer's responsibility. Nobody asked the designer company to take that specific photo or pattern and profit off it without permission. They could have made the work on their own, or, who knows, hired someone for creative development (because artists are constantly underfunded and it would sovle everyone's problems).

Registration is difficult for an up and coming artist, especially a student; you may be talented and produce beautiful work, but you may also be out of money to pay for registration fees. As well, artists produce a large volume of work: do we have to pick and choose? What will happen to students who post artwork for critique or scholarship purposes, but companies take it without offering any sort of compensation? What will that do to the student's esteem and self-worth, that their life work can just be taken? What does this reflect on that student's approach to their mastery, and for people who appreciate art in general?

I can understand the legality issues concerning those who genuinely just want to fairly use and support artwork. I suggest, however, taking the steps to just ensure that it was the same person who made the work. (For example: looking at their portfolio, making sure it isn't a stolen repost). That way, if it was a repost, the burden would fall on the reposter rather than the company. These days, there are enough means to investigate where the source of an artwork came from.

The point I am trying to make is, please continue to allow copyright to remain with the author without needing registry. Rather, educate the public about means to properly identify ways to credit and contact the artist. If a work is orphaned as said, and all precautions were examined, they can simply not take the work (or, actually, commission an artist to make their own work, FOR them! Everyone would win in that scenario, and artists would have a better livelihood).

Thank you,
Threnody Gawron