July 21, 2015

I am writing to express my opposition to the new copyright laws that are being debated as outlined on this site: http://www.drawger.com/holland/index.php?section=articles&article_id=15400

I have worked with the handmade community in the US for over 20 years and the theft of ideas and images is a constant threat to our livelihood. We have had many great opportunities to get our products out directly to the consumer through the advances in the digital world and the internet, but with that, we have also seen increased abuse of our intellectual property.

This new law would make it even harder to protect ourselves against others who profit from our work. We have little recourse against countries like China and India where there is little understanding about copyright "manners" on a cultural level and now this behavior will become acceptable here in the US as well.

I run an organization of textile and fiber art businesses that have a handmade focus: www.tafalist.com. Many of our members have seen their images used by digital companies that sell downloads, calendars, or screens. They were never approached for permission nor compensated. When we see this kind of abuse, it takes a great deal of time, energy and organizing to get images off of these sites and we should be spending time on creating and marketing our work, not in chasing those who are stealing from us.

We would like to see our government protect all creative and intellectual work and make it harder, not easier, for these kinds of violations to happen!

Sincerely,

Rachel Biel

www.tafalist.com