My name is Lauren K Cannon and I am a professional freelance illustrator working primarily in publishing. I am strongly asking that the new copyright law be shut down so that it does not endanger my livelihood, or the livelihood of every other creative professional.

Art theft is already rampant. The DMCA only does so much; there are countless websites that use and profit from artwork they find online without ever attempting to credit the artist, let alone seek licensing rights. Already as a professional, I have to choose when it simply is not worth my time to pursue the large majority of copyright theft. Illustration is not a high paying industry; we do not have a union to protect us and rates have stagnated over the past 15 years. Predatory practices are extremely high in this industry, both from companies that do pay for their art and from the countless companies that simply don't bother. They just take, and hope no one notices. If they get busted, every single artist involved has to individually invoke DMCA. In other words, they companies manage to stay in business. If they are forced to remove some art because of DMCA, they just go steal some more.

We are already at the mercy of companies employing and profiting off out artwork, many of whom refuse to accept contract that ask for royalties. Our pay is low. Our jobs are unsteady. Our ability to mobilize for change against major corporate clients in our industry is nonexistent. An artist simply cannot subsist on commission rates alone. I currently make 25% of my income from licensing personal artwork to companies for limited use.

If this new bill passes, no one will need to ask me for permission anymore. They will be able to hack up my work and register it as their own copyright. They can "in good faith" avoid crediting artists, and artists will be powerless to pursue damages. We cannot afford lawyers to defend us in court over these kinds of infringements as it is. The public already has a tenuous and incorrect grasp on copyright law that results in wasted time and lost revenue from all working creative professionals. This would open the floodgates. The lack of tools and power creative professionals face against art theft is appalling and frustrating at best, career damaging at worst. Companies go on unscathed. What we need are MORE protections for artists, not to have what few protections we have stripped away.

This bill will DESTROY the livelihood of my industry, and every other creative industry.

The only "frustration" that those who wish to make legal use of photographs and illustrations face is to pay the people who created the work they desire to use. Why on earth would the government make it even easier for them to not bother doing so? The United States Copyright Artist is meant to protect Copyright, not to pander to corporations and predatory businesses. If the copyright act is changed as is proposed, this is exactly what you will be doing.

Thank you for your time. I hope for the sake of everyone, you will do the right thing.

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