My name is Renee, and I'm a casual artist. I'm working towards photorealism, and I do studies from stock art to practice my skill. It's a hobby for me, but the pieces I do can take upwards of thirty or more hours to complete. As the laws stand now, I can share my artwork online with the protection of copyright law knowing that, if my work is stolen, I have legal recourse. I believe these laws discourage serious thieves because they know they can be prosecuted for profiting off my work. Most of the problems I've had have been casual thieves, for their Facebook or website, and I've never had to do more than ask someone to take my artwork down or just to credit it. Most of them didn't 'click' that they were stealing and weren't a long term problem.

These were not businesses stealing my work. Just teenagers.

The suggested Orphan Works laws would strip these protections from me. The assumption behind them is that someone will do a diligent search for an artist's name when they want to use a work. The truth? They won't. They'll claim they 'couldn't' find me and flat out steal my work and other people's work. These wouldn't be casual thieves but people who want to profit from my hard work.

Add to this the sheer number of casual thieves who lift images and post them on their own websites. Have you ever used TinEye to reverse image search? Trying to find the original source of a popular artwork is difficult because SO MANY people have lifted it for their own use. It takes time and effort to hunt down the source, and sometimes you can't find it. Does this mean that an artist should have their efforts stolen just because so many people have stolen their work that the source is obscured? Does this mean that an artist should have their efforts preyed on by people who will claim to have searched without even bothering?

This law actively hurts artists. The only people it benefits are corporations and businesses who don't want to put the money down to hire an artist. The truth of it? There is no lack of artists willing to produce artwork for little to no money, however unfair that is to the artists. There are no lack of legitimate sources for artwork and stock photography that can be licensed for little or no money. These thieves would argue that they must have THIS piece or THAT piece, but what they're really saying is that they're unwilling to pay to have any piece done for them. They'd rather steal it.

This law benefits thieves. Flat out. Why should I work thirty hours on a piece and put it up for people to enjoy only to have someone flat out steal it while claiming they 'searched' for the artist and couldn't find them? They're not putting an actual effort in to find the artist. They're not paying me for those thirty hours. They're not paying me for the decade of practice it took to get good at what I do. They're flat out stealing. And this law protects them.