To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Courtney Ulibarri. I am a hobbyist digital artist who sometimes makes money from my artwork through clients commissioning me to illustrate an idea for them. I also create comics on a blog site that reaches millions of people in order to encourage continued commissions of my artwork. I also share sketches and works-in-progress on the aforementioned blog site, to share my processes and thoughts with others like me. I am not a professional artist by any means, but I am still very troubled by the proposed new copyright law.

Current copyright law is very important to small-time artists like myself. It protects us from users who would take our work, change it, edit it, and use it for their own designs without our permission. The proposed new law seems to suggest that my rights as a content creator are not above those of potential users. This is absolutely incorrect, and extremely disrespectful to us as creators.

For many of us, hobbyist and professional alike, the commissions we make are our sole source of income. The proposed new law would potentially take food out of our mouths by enabling others to profit from our years of hard work that we put into getting to where we are, and leave us out to dry and unable to stop the unlicensed use of our work. It would essentially be legalizing and encouraging the theft of personal property from the artists. That is what our artwork is to us: Personal property.

I have had work stolen from me before. Work which I created for my own personal use and for no one else to use without my permission. When I went after the perpetrators and the webmasters to have my work removed, it was extremely difficult. In fact it was practically impossible. This shows that, already under current law, users and companies alike disregard our rights to our work when we are virtually unknown in the art world, as I am. The proposed new law would exacerbate this problem, making it completely impossible for us to control where our work is posted, which is already very difficult for those of us who do not have public relations teams or legal advisers to help back us up on our claims; for those of us who only have ourselves and our original files or original copies to prove we are the originators.

Small-time artists, such as myself, do not have the resources to register every piece we make and post or publish, as the proposed new law would require of us in order for us to retain what is rightfully ours as content creators. We also do not have the resources to sue individuals or parties who have infringed upon our copyright without our permission. The proposed new law would force us to register years of works, many of which we may no longer have the physical copies or digital files, in order to protect them from non-permitted use by potential users.

It is my choice, as the originator, on whether or not any singular work or body of work I create is for use by anyone outside of myself or my commissioning client. This choice does not belong to any potential user, regardless of whether they are a large company or a singular teenager. I reiterate that it is my choice, and this is how it should stay.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,
Courtney Ulibarri