Dear Copyright Office:

I am a professional illustrator from Michigan. The new copyright law currently considered by the U.S. Congress will have a negative impact on my livelihood and the business of illustrators, photographers, fine artists and visual artists, writers, musicians and creative works from every field.

I've been a professional illustrator since 2000. I rely on creating visual works in a multitude of mediums to feed my family, pay my bills and further my career as an artist professionally and personally.

I work for authors, illustrating stories and creating book covers. I work for game companies creating package artwork, concept art and game components. I have worked for T-shirt companies creating imagery for a wide array of garments. I also do work for myself and sell my own works. All of which is sold through brick and mortar locations, conventions, art shows and online. Copyright laws make sure I benefit from these sales and future uses of the works, they don't lose value after they're printed.

Much of the time this type of work is feast or famine and not always regular which can make living challenging at times, added to that the cost, time and energy away from creating needed to police our own work to ensure it is not being used without our knowledge or compensating us for our efforts. Copyright as it is right now helps me prove these works are my own and gives me a huge leg to stand on when having to go after claims against infringers.

The internet has become my greatest ally and enemy in one package. Giving me the ability to promote myself worldwide and sell to a huge audience that might not know me by just word of mouth. It also gives infringers the ability to acquire copies of my work to put to their use without my knowledge thus taking advantage of my future prosperity and that of my family and potentially damaging the way I choose to promote myself to the world at large.

Under the new suggested changes I will have spend even more of my limited heartbeats on the earth to prove my work is my own by making sure I file contracts as well as any other meta-data that might even have a slight basis on the work while the infringers will have carte blanche to rape and pillage my creativity until the matter is resolved all the while shouting "I did due diligence, couldn't find the owner!".

I have become increasingly aware of copyright and its effects on myself and other artists from the first time the Orphaned Works legislation started making its way through my governing bodies. Every time I make a mark on paper, a brushstroke or a mouse click I add to the body of work that I define myself with. Whether I

use it in my portfolio or sell prints of them each piece is an opportunity to better my life or not as I choose and no one else should be able to say what I do or if I deserve to benefit from it.

These new copyright "reforms" will negatively affect all creative fields and as unthinkable as you may think it could result in less creation or innovation as creatives decide to no longer share their works with the world leaving only the derivative, the mediocre, the marginal in it's place.
Art has a huge place in our world and societies though many may discount that.
You only need look around to see the effects of artists on your life.

Please rethink these new guidelines for the Orphan Works and Mass Digitization.

With respect and hope,
Tony Steele