To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing a letter due to the Orphans Works Act, asking you to please not pass this. Right now copyright law actually helps to protect artists rights without forcing us into a situation where we have to already have money to copyright all of our works or run the risk of someone stealing it. I use the word stealing, because that's what it is. Even if this passes that's what it's going to be. Because the people taking artist's works are preying on those who are either financially unable to copyright all their work, or to young to understand.

This bill does not help artists, it puts us in a position of vulnerability and fear. I've done art for nearly ten years and have a degree in graphic design. I also do illustrations and the way the law is now, helps me. It ensures that I retain the rights to my work unless agreed upon with the client, but with this law it gives permission to anyone to use my work unless I have enough money to copyright everything. Artists have a hard enough time with getting paid by people for their work, and this would make it even harder. It gives free range to businesses and even private individuals to take something that isn't theirs and make a profit off of it, purely because the artist in question was unable to get a piece copyrighted. That isn't right.

Art is grossly undervalued already, with artists working well over the forty hour work week just to scrape by. Now it's going to be even harder because artists will be more worried about sharing online portfolios to get the exposure they need, for fear of seeing someone else selling merchandise or prints with their artwork. It also leads to context issue as there are art pieces that can now be taken and used for marketing of a company, or their message twisted into something it was never meant to be.

For instance, if I made a piece of artwork protesting the Orphans Works Act, but was unable to get it copyrighted to me, there is nothing now to stop someone from taking it and using it to try and support the act.

There seems to be a mentality going around that if it's on the internet, it's free for anyone to use, without compensation to the person who actually did any of the work. But that isn't true, and it's sad to see the Copyright Law Office that should be protecting people and their rights, following in that same mentality.

There is absolutely no reason for this change. It only serves to damage flourishing artists, even established artists who now have to go back and copyright everything they haven't. As stated earlier, it also harms artists who are young, financially limited, or new to the art field in general. The only people this law will serve are those who already try to use artists as a free labor force. What's even worse is with this, there's no limitation to who can do what. Any number of people could take an artists work and sell it, or even take it and copyright it themselves after throwing it into Photoshop and throwing a filter over it. That's something I've had happen to me in the pastt. Fortunately the issue was rather minor and resolved quickly. But this law makes matters like that impossible to resolve in the artists favor, and could potentially lock artists out of using their own work to support themselves.

This also forces artists back into the arms of publishers and away from being able to self-publish with confidence, or even host their own content on a website in order to get exposures and jobs. I worry perhaps that's true the goal of this law. Not protecting artists as it does nothing to actually protect us. Publishers and businesses have seen artists being able to take a different route that doesn't tie their hands to them and lets them control their own work, and are trying to cut that off.

Please do not let this happen. This Orphans Works Act wasn't wanted by artists in 2008, and it's not wanted now. Nor will it ever be wanted. We want to be able to work in the field we've trained in. In the field we love, and be able to support ourselves. That's all. We want to work like anyone else, and this law makes it nearly impossible for us to do so. Right now with this bill artists are scared and angry, and we need protection of our rights. Not this.

I ask that you reconsider this act, and thank you for your time.
Sincerely
Corbie Cordova