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To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter out of concern for the new copyright laws being purposed for works of art posted online. I teach high school students visual art and my husband is an illustrator. This issue effects me on many levels.

For my students, being 21st century artists, the only way to get their name out there for self-promotion is to post their artwork through social media and websites. This is a unique time to be an artists with all the self-promotional activities the internet offers. However, if students are to protect their original pieces by registering their work through online copyright agencies, they won't be able to afford it. But to have their works collected as orphans and "derivative works" because they are unable to afford registry is biased against those who cannot afford to do so or are too inexperienced or unknowing enough to protect themselves. The new up and coming artists and styles should be able to protect their original work through copyright laws that have protected artists intent and business prospects for decades.

As for my husband's business, he has been a working illustrator for 20 years. He owns his own site to promote his works and blogs regularly to showcase his latest accomplishments. While these works are commissioned form businesses, he is using social media and his site to attract future clients. How will these works be protected from companies gathering the images he posts into their databases online and be used for other purposes unless he goes through the trouble of placing a copyright symbol over every image? In his business agreements, he has the right to self-promote using these images even though they belong to the client. The new copyright legislation would restrict his right to self-promote for fear of having the image he's created for a paying client grabbed and used as an orphan work. It's a struggle to be a successful illustrator but you are making it even harder by trying to appease the corporate interests who want to gain financially by exploiting the wealth of talent across the online community with ease, without credit, and at the cost of the creator. For shame.

Sincerely,

Ashley Stroud
Graphic Design
Animation
Digital Illustration