Dear Maria Pallante,

I am a self employed artist, currently employing 3 other people along with myself and my partner; if this new law of copyright goes into effect, the risk that my business will fall is a great one. I already struggle with theft of my work as an independent t-shirt and graphic arts designer and maker. Many people across the world steal my artwork and sell them without permission, and I am very worried that this new law will make it possible for them to claim they 'tried to contact me and failed' when in fact they did not.

Copyright law as it stands does need to be fixed, but there is no reason that a company or entity should feel entitled to a work that has already been made by someone else purely because they couldn't find the creator of that work. They are perfectly capable of spending the money to hire a new illustrator or designer for their artwork needs. Opening up Orphaned Works does nothing but make it easier and legal for large companies and unethical people to steal art from artists like me and avoid having to pay for my skillset. You have a skillset at your job, you spent time going to school and learning to do your job, and I respect you for that and feel that you are entitled to fair compensation at your work; I also deserve this same level of basic respect and understanding that my skillset is a valuable one, and that this art that I am creating belongs to me without forcing me to pay to register it with for-profit companies.

I truly hope that you understand that these changes to copyright law only benefit people in positions of massive power and wealth, and strip away the rights of artists themselves and leave us with little to no protection of our intellectual property. I implore you to consider small businesses like myself and many others who make our livings and support our families on our art and already struggle dealing with large companies like Target and American Apparel and many others getting away with stealing our work on a massive scale purely because we do not have the financial means to pursue extended court battles. Please do not make it any easier for them to take advantage of us, we are the ones who need your help, not them. I hope that you will do the right thing, on behalf of all creators and future generations of creators.

-Amber Whitney