19 July 2015

This letter briefly outlines my comments on Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works.

I am a voice actor, and as a result, I have many samples of my work available for public listening. These represent my own time and labor, and will always remain so under current copyright laws. That I or anyone should suddenly be required to register every piece of their work under the revamped Orphan Works Act seems outlandish to me.

Ownership of one's work has become more or less inherent following the Copyright Act of 1976, and is a wonderful right we enjoy in the United States. I see no benefit to altering the entire structure of copyright law for the benefit of people who do not own a piece of work. Prioritizing the public's right to another person's work over that person's right to ownership of that which they created undermines that security that is, as far as US history is concerned, fairly new to us.

Several of my friends are artists, illustrators and painters. A few of them make a living exclusively from their art. It is a time-consuming process for them to promote and sell their work, teach workshops, collaborate with others, and still have time to produce new pieces. I imagine the impact such a change in law would have on independent creators would be a detriment to their operations. Even larger firms, while they may have the infrastructure to better deal with it, would require time and effort to adopt such a change. Having to retroactively register any previous work that wouldn't be grandfathered in under the new laws further confuses me; the amount of effort that represents to a long-standing artist is incomprehensible

Returning to the clumsy copyright laws prior to 1976 is what I would define as a step backwards. Revoking that inherent ownership from creators and artists is further contrary to those basic freedoms of ownership we enjoy in this country. We enjoy a diverse culture of art in this country, but that lawmakers would claim that no artist has a fundamental right to their own work is disconcerting. I encourage the Copyright Office to further consider the complicated and detrimental impact this law would have on artists.

Thank you for your consideration,
A.K.