To whom it may concern,

Greetings my name is Chris Jaser. I am writing to express concerns with new legislations that is being considered for copyright and to give my perspective as an American Artist. I am a freelance Animator/Character Designer. I am a graduate of Savannah College of Art and Design with a BFA in Animation. I have been a professional artist for over five years working full-time as a graphic artist and a freelancer. Though my career is in the very beginning stages, the changes to the current Copyright laws that are being proposed might cut my career short and cause future artist to not pursue art as a career.

I would like to take the time to give my perspective of the current environment of Copyright and what changes to this law will do to the artist community.

1. What are the most significant challenges related to monetizing and/or licensing photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations?

Considering that I am in the beginning stages of my career, the internet has been a tool help gain clients. Allowing me to make a living as an artist. As well as licensing merchandise to be sold on certain websites.However, in order to show potential clients what I can do, I have to display my work on my website. Now I take great lengths to protect my work by resizing images, adding my logo, signatures, etc. However people can still get around this and might use my work without my consent. Whether by screen capturing the piece or downloading it.

2. What are the most significant enforcement challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

Currently, the copyright is created the moment I create the work and if clients want to use my work for their products they will have to ask my permission. However with what is being proposed in the new legislation, I would have to register each and every work in order to keep the same copyrights I have now. That concerns me because for each piece of art I make, I am not sure whether or not it will be a huge success. So to register each piece would not be cost effective as well as there is potential for abuse. I want to be able to register for full copyright on works that are overly successful and keep the initial copyright intact for all my works. The initial copyrights protects me from companies to steal my work for their own gain and to not register it as their own. Even if the artwork is a decade old and someone wants to use it, they still have to ask my permission to use it.

3. What are the most significant registration challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

As I stated before, not every art piece I make is going to be a money maker. Some will be successful some will not. Some might become successful later on in life. The initial copyright protects me and requires people to ask me to license my work. Registering work it is a significant cost to the artist to put full copyright on every piece of artwork. We already invest a significant amount of money into making the piece materials and promoting the art. Adding additional fees for just initial copyright (as being proposed in the new legislation) will cut into artists profits. Once more companies can just flat out steal and then register the piece as their own, under the new proposal, claiming that its orphan works.

4. What are the most significant challenges or frustrations for those who wish to make legal use of photographs, graphic art works, and/or illustrations?

Like most artists, I use photographs and other works of art as reference and inspiration. Even in blog posts, I will give credit to the original artist and link where I got the art from. When it comes to using other material for commercial use, I try to look for works that are free use or royality free (IE the artists gave permission to use for free so long that they are credited in the work). The majority of the time I either try to create the missing material on my own or collaborate with other artist to help make it.

I think the main frustration that most artist have is people not asking permission for use. Especially when they are making money off of your work. If it's non-commercial or for educational purposes, having a credit helps artists get noticed and build up their career. Commercial use should allow the artist to get a cut of the profits being created if their work is featured.

5. What other issues or challenges should the Office be aware of regarding photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations under the Copyright Act?

I think the Copyright Office should ask themselves whenever there is a big change to copyright is “How will it effect the artists?”. As artists, we don’t make a lot of money. We make enough to live a happy life and allow us to keep doing our craft.

Yann Martel said “If we, citizens, do not support our artists, then we sacrifice our imagination on the altar of crude reality and we end up believing in nothing and having worthless dreams.”

I feel that with the new proposed ideas towards copyright, that we're going to empower those who want to profit on art rather than those who make the art. Copyright should be protecting those who just want to make enough to have a roof over their heads, food on the table and to be able to have the means to create. There is no reason, other than greed, that companies should be allowed to infringed on our work. We created our work, if companies want to use it they have to ask. We need to make sure that it's a "Win-Win" situation for everyone not just for those who want to make it easier to infringe on copyright.

Thank you for reading my letter and I ask you to recommend that visual art be excluded from any orphan works provisions Congress writes into the new copyright act.

Sincerely,

Chris Jaser
Animator/Character Designer