As a graphic designer and an artist, I am writing with concern for the Orphan Works Act, and hope you will take my letter and those of my peers into your consideration before going through with this potentially devastating move. As I'm sure you've seen from many others in creative fields, this act is a veritable disaster for those who make a living from their visual work. I spent four and a half years and a lot of money on my college degree in the arts because I have a passion for it, and I support myself on my work. It is not a hobby to be taken lightly; it is my career, my calling, and my *life's* work.

We are taught even in school to protect our work. Already, we know as professional artists, photographers, designers, and illustrators that our work is in danger. The very act of presenting your hard work to the public via the internet opens it up for theft and destruction. A Google search in many minds is like digging into a free candy pot at Halloween. Anything on the internet is free in their minds, and this follows the frequent and invalid argument, "if you didn't want it stolen, you shouldn't have put it online"

Anyone with any sense--and particularly anyone with any say regarding the livelihoods of those making their living from this kind of work—should recognize that in 2015 it is beyond time to appreciate just how integrated our lives are in social media and in the web. To get a job in most artistic fields, you are not considered even remotely viable if you do not present an online portfolio. It is the nature of our jobs as graphic designers to create work on the computer for print and web. The idea that that same work is free for the taking is like buying a new car and putting it in your driveway, only to have someone drive off in it because it was there.

Unfortunately, I am fully aware of the practice of watermarking work for protection, and just as fully aware how easy it is to remove watermarks with a Photoshop shortcut; simpler than that, it can be cropped away. Protecting your work and publicizing it can no longer be hand in hand, as even the most basic computers now come with a photo editor that can do these things.

For areas of this law dealing with 'reasonable efforts' to find the owner, that is the equivalent of the thief walking up to that same car you just bought, and—seeing you missing from your front yard, at least from where they stand—again simply taking it, since obviously the owner couldn't be found. Perhaps you were just in your house. Not to harp on the same parallel, but this it the kind of crime we deal with. The artwork may be obviously on our portfolio site and obviously our property, were one to do a quick reverse Google Image search, but seeing an image pop up on the internet and just taking it under the assumption it belongs to no one is much easier for thieves, even those doing so out of ignorance and lack of education on the matter of artwork ownership.

For an assessment of these types of transactions, please visit any reputable stock photography site. There you will see there is a charge for individual photos and for a fee with up to so many images included for download. Within each agreement

there are restrictions on the use of the image, for how many viewers it will have, whether it is for web or print, and a long section on the ramifications of breaking that agreement. Unfortunately, though the same law might apply to the photo someone finds in a Google search, they can conveniently bypass the agreement and take it there. That DOES NOT void the right of the author or artist to that work!

It is of the utmost importance that visual artists of every kind be given the same respect you give to every other profession. Stealing is a crime and we need protection from it. Our copyrights are our defense against these thefts, and we must maintain them to continue to make our living doing what we love and what we have been trained to do.

We have paid our time, money, and effort toward these careers, and we deserve to be heard on this matter. This decision should not be made lightly and should not ignore the pleas of those affected by it. Though it may seem simple, we are aware from the beginning of our journey as artists and photographers, designers and illustrators, that we fight an uphill battle. Please don't make this even harder when we already struggle so to defend our work.