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Attention: US Government Copyright Office

Date: 20 July 2015

I'm writing regarding the proposed legislation that would require visual artists of all types to register their work with private registry offices or risk losing copyright control over their entire body of work.

I strongly object to this legislation and this type of registry, which, upon analysis, appears to only benefit private enterprise and not artists themselves.

I've been a professional artist (lettering, paintings and illustrations) on and off since the late 1970s, and full time since 1995. An American citizen, I currently live in France but continue to market and sell my work in the US. The increasingly wide use of the internet has already presented a challenge in protecting my work from unauthorized use, and this type of legislation would only add to those challenges.

I need to claim the copyright to my own work without paying registry fees. It's my output as well as my income, and like many other professions, our ideas, as expressed in our medium, is our product. Each artist develops their own look, their own style, that expresses their professional direction as well as defines their client base. If an artist loses control over that identity, that look, they in effect have no career left. It should be my decision how the ideas and images I have created are used, and by whom. For example, I offer some of my work via Creative Commons for use by non-profits, but if someone wants to use the images in a commercial context I would like to have the final decision on that use. If all the images I produce are subject to what amounts to an image tax, I cannot continue to make a living.

Many thanks for your help in stopping this punitive legislation, and protecting creative workers.

With my best regards, B. Sutton