7-20-2015

U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

To Whom It May Concern,

We write this letter to ask that you not replace our existing copyright law with the revised legislation currently under consideration. As artists, the copyright protection we have under the US Constitution is the basis of our ability to support our business and personal income.

We are very troubled by the structure of the proposed law which would place an impossible burden on an independent artist to legally protect their own work. It is impractical, and unethical, and truly ridiculous, to expect an individual to be able to create works of art and also be their own legal department or finance one. Yet this is what the proposed law would require us to do. Therefore this new law would, in effect, make stealing from artists legal.

In today's world, it is very easy to make modifications to original artwork. It is therefore incumbent upon our lawmakers to keep up with the times and adjust the laws to protect its citizens from those who would use new technologies to abuse the law. Rather than loosening the law to allow for more abuse, laws need to reflect what's happening and require a stricter interpretation of a derivative work.

Corporations would like you to believe that once an artist's work is published, it has no further monetary value to the artist and should therefore be available for use by the general public, but this idea is inaccurate and absurd. For professional artists whose livelihoods depend on what we create and how it is used, this would be no different than stealing. The right of every US citizen to be protected from this kind of thievery is guaranteed to us by the Constitution, as stated in Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

Independent artists who are citizens of this country have been granted the exclusive right to our own work by our Constitution. To take that away would have serious consequences, I fear. Art is a vitally important part of any society, if you take away the ability of artists to support themselves, society as a whole will suffer.

We are writing to you as independent artists who make their living, and pay their taxes, from the sales of their own creative works. The government is responsible for protecting the rights of all its citizens, and that includes the artists. This proposed law to replace existing copyright law should be dismissed as unconstitutional and unethical. We hope that you will have the wisdom to understand the gravity of this decision and act to protect the artists of the United States.

Sincerely,

Christopher and Eliza Bareiss