Wed. July 8th, 2015
RE: 2015 Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Report

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Brandon A. Miltgen. I'm a professional graphic designer and illustrator, who has been working as such to support my family for over 10 years now. I have a BFA in Illustration from Kendall College of Art and Design. Currently I work full-time for School Zone Publishing in the Grand Haven, MI area as a graphic designer and illustrator of children's educational apps, workbooks, and flash cards. As a freelance illustrator I also serve various clients including musicians, the Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival, and other interested individuals. I also use my illustration and design skills to create various intellectual properties of great interest to me. Copyright law is not an abstract legal issue to me—it protects what I create and guarantees my ownership of it. It is indeed important to my current freelance illustration business *and* my future freelance illustration business to be able to determine how and by whom my artwork is used.

My work continues to hold value after its publication in numerous ways: it allows me to pursue additional income by selling prints of the artwork (a right that I often work into my contracts), it allows me to advertise my abilities to future clientele, and it enhances my professional library of unique illustrative offerings which are beneficial to future projects and clients. Everything I create becomes a part of my business inventory, and this is vital to my professional identity and livelihood. If anyone infringes on my work, it is like stealing my money. The same goes for any professional artist, should an orphan works bill pass.

Being a creative professional can be very rewarding, but it is usually (in my experience at least) a great struggle to be paid honorably for it. Many people assume that an artist's passion for his or her work equates to a lesser remuneration being acceptable for it. Thus we struggle to be paid for our time on an even keel for our efforts, despite the incredibly long hours and high-level of training and skill required to be a successful professional artist. I humbly request that you oppose the proposed bill effort, as it would add yet another struggle to the difficulties professional artists already so often have to face. Thank you for your time and understanding.

Sincerely,

Brandon A. Miltgen
brandonmiltgen.blogspot.com
brandonmiltgen@gmail.com
210 S Lake Ave
Spring Lake, MI 49456