My name is Carrie Di Costanzo and I am a botanical artist working in the United States. My art education includes a BFA from the Fashion Institute of Technology in NY. After working seven years as an illustrator at Calvin Klein, Inc., I began botanical painting in 2009. My work has been included in many group exhibitions throughout New York, California, Florida, North Carolina, New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Georgia. In 2014, I was named Artist-in-Residence for *Victoria Magazine*. I have won several awards for my work.

I strongly urge lawmakers to thoughtfully consider "The Next Great Copyright Act" and how it would affect the livelihoods of artists such as myself. Most of my time is spent cultivating a distinct style of painting that is truly my own. I have labored countless hours perfecting my knowledge of the medium, composition, and details of the subjects that I paint. It is a labor of love, however, it is still work. As such, I expect to be paid for my work. I have exhibited my art extensively throughout the US, and when the paintings are sold, I receive payment. Clients can also purchase prints from me, or copies of the original painting, and I receive payment. Original paintings may be commissioned from me at a cost. All of this contributes to my income, of course. Simply stated, my business rests on the fact that I hold the copyright to all of the work that I create. If the new Copyright Act is passed, lawmakers will effectively infringe on my right to my own work. It is no different from stealing the artwork and money. Right now, I have the power to determine who and where my work can be published. Of course this is how it should be, as I am the artist, and I should retain all control of my work, including copyright.

When my work is published, it does not lose its value. For example, a particular painting of mine sold this year. Last year, a magazine published the same painting. This week, prints of the painting will be up for sale in California. So, when I created the painting, it became part of my business inventory and it is still generating money. This inventory is very valuable to me, and no one has the right to infringe on it without permission or payment.

Lawmakers truly need to consider the inherent rights of artists. In this digital age, this is more important than ever before. Keep the copyright with the people who created the work. Use of my work and other artists' work is not a public privilege. The privilege to reproduce our own work and to choose who and when our work is reproduced is ours alone, and should remain that way. This is right and just.