To whom may concern,

I am writing you today on behalf of thousands of young and aspiring artists from across the United States. The current Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works proposal is in need of some serious revisions.

The function of any legislation should be first and foremost to protect the artists and creators of visual arts, photographs or literary works. It is their time, energy, skill and creativity that should be recognized and respected.

The idea of requiring works to be registered is both a good and bad idea, but in its current incarnation with a registration fee is a burden that not all artists are able to bare. Think about it. A young artist graduates college with easily $20,000-$80,000 in student loan debt. They need to be contracted for projects to earn money, for anyone to find them they must have a website and have a portfolio. I can tell you now that having to register every piece on their website for a fee of even $40 will cripple an entire generation of artists and hamper creativity. No progress will be made by this method and thousands of visual artists will disappear from online communities and more importantly, will hurt American small businesses and those who are trying to support themselves.

The idea that the public is somehow entitled to any works found on the internet is disgusting, and while the current copyright law is not perfect, it is better to have everything blanket copyrighted than have nothing at all. If a registration system is to be put in place, it should be with minimal but ideally no cost to the artist, and should take every step to protect them and their rights. If an individual or organization seeks to use a work, and they cannot find the rights holder, then they should not use the work. Plain and simple.

Do the right thing. Protect the artists.