Dear U.S. Copyright Office,

I'm writing to you in regards to the Copyright Act and protecting the rights and ownership of visual works by their creators. Just as music, movies, and the printed word have protections against theft and reuse, visual works should be given the same protection. Below are observations I have from over 20 years experience as a visual content creator.

Theft of visual images is commonplace throughout businesses in the U.S., over the years and more so today than ever. This is largely because today an on-line image search can lead to the exact image someone is looking for. Images can easily be copied and pasted in to newsletters, brochures, books, websites, and other publications without any regard to the ownership of the images. This practice occurs in small businesses and large multimillion dollar industries, higher learning institutions and non-profit groups. The practice of copying images is done without care for the creator or owner of the work, and will continue to do so as long as there are no consequences for this illegal behavior.

These images do have creators and owners that should be compensated for their use, and the images should be protected from being used illegally. My industry (medical illustration) creates images and its survival depends on image rights and ownership. I have paid for my training and advanced degree, and the images I create are the end result of a lot of hard work. I expect to be compensated for my work, and I expect to be able to protect my work from theft. I'm relying on the U.S. copyright Office to help me protect my work and to help me continue being a productive member of society.

If you have questions about my experiences or what I've seen over the years regarding illegal image use please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,

Michael Gallagher