To Whom it May Concern--

My name is Lily Padula, I am a professional freelance illustrator who has been in the field for the past 4 years. I have a degree from The School of Visual Arts in New York, have had my work recognized by illustration competitions such as American Illustration, Communication Arts, and Creative Quarterly. I've received two awards from The Society of Illustrators. I've worked with clients such as The New York Times, JC Penney, CoverGirl, The Boston Globe, and Tumblr.

I am very concerned about the upcoming proposed changes to copyright laws. My business, livelihood, and means of supporting myself rest on concrete copyright laws that ensure I retain all of the rights to the work that I spend countless hours to create. This is NOT an abstract legal issue, but the basis on which my means of supporting myself and my family rests. In order to make money off of my work, I need to control the copyright and ensure that I am paid fairly by companies that I license use of my work to. The images I create are products that belong to me and me alone. Allowing "orphaned works" to be used by companies free of charge equates to theft. Companies will use my images to make money for themselves and I will not be compensated. My livelihood rests on control of the inventory of images I've created. Once an image is published, it ABSOLUTELY does NOT lose its value.

I work extremely hard to make money doing what I love. In the digital age, visual works need strong copyright law that ensures the people that spend hours to create these images are fairly compensated. If control of our work is taken away from us, large entities will profit off of us unfairly and force us out of business. A strong creative community is essential to enrich the world we live in and communicate across boundaries. If large business interest is allowed to steal our works, this essential community will all but disappear.

Thank you for your time.

Lily Padula