Stellaria Art Studio
website: www.stellariastudio.com

Hello,
My name is MaryBeth Hinrichs and I own a scientific and educational illustration business in Minneapolis, MN. I have been an illustrator for twenty-eight years, after graduating with a Master's Degree in biochemistry and a certificate in graphic design. My illustration experience is further detailed on my website, www.stellariastudio.com.

I am writing to add my comments on the potential new US Copyright Act. During my work process, I spend quite a few hours researching reference material for my illustrations and carefully editing numerous drafts in order to create accurate, informative and understandable images for scientists and members of the general public. My finished illustrations then become my business inventory; my business income is ***very dependent*** on protective copyright law so that I may receive income from my own re-purposed images. For example, I sell prints and printed cards of some of my images. Thus, my work does NOT lose its value after initial publication.

Much as a competitor of Medtronic — another company benefitting the public and founded in the Twin Cities metropolitan area — would be considered to be stealing if it sold a copy of a (Medtronic) patented device without permission and/or sufficient compensation, unauthorized/non-compensated use of my or any other illustrator's created images is just that — stealing. With the advent of home scanning devices and digital cameras used in conjunction with personal computers, protection of the use of my created images could be a full-time job in and of itself. Just think of how protection of US paper currency in the face of these devices has created additional work for many law enforcement individuals.

Dilution of current copyright law would literally undermine the foundation of my (small) business and effectively create monopolies of image users who risk using some (instructional) images in potentially harmful ways.

Current registration procedures for large numbers of works from creative individuals does already take a significant amount of time. Further simplification of this process and ready, **secure** access to my registered copyrights would allow my illustration business to thrive. Not pursuing vigorous protections of copyright and simplification of the filing process could destroy it.

Sincerely,
MaryBeth Hinrichs