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To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the affects the copyright law has on my career as a freelance artist.

For the past 6 years, I have spend every available moment I have had to perfect my skills in illustration. I have spent 50,000+ dollars in school and 10,000+ in equipment to make art. It has been a long and rough road and there is still much to go, but I have reached a milestone where my work is accepted as a professional quality level. Many of my clients have been small business owners or book authors who wish to have more life brought to their stories. So it's nothing fantastic, but it's enough to get me by.

I can rest easy knowing that my work is being protected by the current copyright laws. But if that were to change now, there is no way that I would be able to afford to register all my work for continued protection. You can imagine just how much work I have created in the past 6 years, imagine those who have been doing it for 30+ years of their lives.

Artists are people who run a business just like how Mc Donalds runs a business to make money; just like how a farmer grows crops to make money; just like how a carpenter builds homes to make money. We are workers and hard ones at that. So why is it that our rights should be targeted because some Joe Schmoe wants to use our work without paying for it? Would you condone a person stealing from a grocery store? Absolutely not! Stealing is stealing, and our art is our assets.

1. What are the most significant challenges related to monetizing and/or licensing photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations?

I have been studying and practicing illustration for the past 6 years of my life and I am finally at the point where I can begin selling my services or existing work. It has been nothing but an uphill struggle to get where I am but as of right now, I wouldn't trade it for anything. The hardest part about monetizing my work is gaining an audience. I [could] sell out and do a bunch of fan service art work, but then I wouldn't like what I do. I prefer to be original and that's what people seek me out for. This is how I make a living and it's a lot of work. My work days are 14 hours every day but I love doing it.

2. What are the most significant enforcement challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

If I understand this correctly, I would say the most difficult enforcement challenge is keeping

my work safe. I have had several people try to steal my work without my knowledge, but luckily, I am well connected and have friends that recognize my stuff when they see it. What people don't seem to realize is that my work is my assets. It puts food on the table and pays or my housing. If people steal my work, they might as well come right into my home and steal all my possessions.

3. What are the most significant registration challenges for photographers, graphic artists, and/or illustrators?

Right now, the copyright law automatically protects us from infringement. So if someone were to steal my work and not pay me for it, I can at least ask them to stop using it or I will take action. Most of the time, we artists will forgive the person if they cease use of our work upon request. If this new law passes, there will be another cost in my life to have to “register” my work to some other company. I'd might as well just stop making art if I have to do that because then I'm just giving away my rights to my work which I spent 10,000+ hours on to achieve my current skill level.

4. What are the most significant challenges or frustrations for those who wish to make legal use of photographs, graphic art works, and/or illustrations?

The most difficult challenge for those to make legal use of artist's work is probably being able to afford them. But it's funny, because people expect professional level work for less than minimum wage. See here's the thing. Everyone has the misconception that artists are greedy or that we shouldn't expect a proper payment for our work because “we love to do it.” Yes, we love what we do, but that is equivalent to saying that we shouldn't have to pay Microsoft for Windows because they love to make programs. That's a bunch of crap! We are a BUSINESS, and this is how we make a living. Do I need to keep repeating myself? We are open to negotiations of pay, but we wont sit back and let you rip us off. There are other artists out there who are willing to work for minimum wage, but you get what you pay for. I didn't spend the last 6 years of my time and investments in software, to not get paid what I deem fair.

5. What other issues or challenges should the Office be aware of regarding photographs, graphic artworks, and/or illustrations under the Copyright Act?

I will once again say this. We make a living doing art. If you take our protection away from us, then we will be abused more so than we are now. Many artists don't work for one place or one person. We are lucky if we can do that. Instead, we are working on 5 different projects for 5 different companies or people. We get paid in 5 different times and 5 different rates. We never know when we will hit a commission drought, but those times happen and they hurt. Should you take away our RIGHT to our OWN work, created by OUR two hands, then you are condemning us to poverty or worse. If those lobbyists need art work, there are TONS of it for free or even super cheap on websites that provide it for a small price. I'm tired of seeing large companies who can afford just about anything they want, screwing us artists over because they are too cheap to pay for our work and steal it instead. This goes for any individuals as well. Don't steal our livelihood from us.

I'd like to thank you again for this opportunity. I can only pray that the right, moral decision is made when the time comes. The fact that this is even an issue, wavers my faith in this

country. Lets make it right by denying the new copyright proposal and keeping everyone safe from those who wish to exploit us for their own gain.