Maria Pallante
U.S. Copyright Office
S.E.

Register of Copyrights
101 Independence Ave.
-6000 Washington, DC 20559

Dear Ms. Pallante & U.S. Copyright Office Staff:

As an artist who makes a living selling my artwork, I find it appalling that the copyright laws might change under the new Copyright Act that is being drafted.

I graduated with a BFA degree in Illustration from Art Center College of Design in 1996, and came to NYC to realize my dream of becoming a children's book illustrator. Since then, I have published illustrations in numerous children's books, both trade and educational book, and magazines since 1999.

The copyright law is not an abstract legal issue, but a very real entity that my profession is based on.

In addition to books, I create artwork on my own, and also sell my work. I would also like to license my artwork in the future to companies that produce products with my designs and art. It is crucial for my business to be able to determine VOLUNTARILY how our work is to be used and by whom.

My work does not lose value when it is published in books. Everything that I have created is still something that I own, and I should be able to control who is allowed to use it for their purposes.

With the existence of the internet, having that control is more difficult than ever. Countless times online I have seen work stolen from people and repurposed for the infringers' own benefit with no compensation to the creation of said work.

This new copyright law will make it even EASIER for thefts like this. And it will also send a message to people that it is OK to download artwork from the internet with no ramifications on their part.

Please do not let this new law pass! It will completely affect my livelihood and my business in a negative way. Lack of statutory damages will make it even easier for companies and individuals to take “cost effective” measures to obtain artwork for free.

Please do not reverse the ‘copyright exists upon creation’ premise, and instead require artists to pay a fee to register every design they want to protect!! As a working artist, I am constantly required to post work online to advertise myself, and to brand myself. I cannot afford to register every single piece of art I produce. At the same time, I cannot afford NOT to show my work, because I need to do this in order to gain future jobs.

Reversing this premise also would make it easier for infringers to copy and create “copy-cat” versions which they could then register, making it even more difficult for artists to monetize their creations because we would not necessarily be able to guarantee licensees exclusive use of the designs.

Please consider the artists who create the work and our livelihoods when drafting the new law.

Sincerely,

Melissa Iwai
www.melissaiwai.com