To the U.S. Copyright Office,

I am an aspiring artist and high school student at Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies. It has come to my attention that Congress is considering a new bill that requires artists to register all their works in order to enjoy the benefit of copyright protection. This change in law will also affect all the images on the internet, allowing corporations to label any image they find an orphan as long as they can argue that it is an orphan work.

Not only is this a gross violation of artist property rights, it is also a grave privacy concern for any American citizen using internet services such as social media. Corporations will be allowed to retrieve images publicly posted to services such as Facebook, DeviantArt, Twitter, and Tumblr. These services are used by both amateur artists and citizens using the sites as public scrapbooks of sorts. Without their consent, any infringer will be able to slightly alter an image and use it for advertising or marketing. In the wrong hands, personal photos meant to remain private could leak out into the public sphere, with reputation-shattering effects. For younger users, this could count as cyberbullying on a corporate scale.

The definition of "orphan work" provides a dangerous loophole. All a corporation needs to say is that the artist was "too difficult to contact". This is immensely dangerous for individual, self-employed artists who have limited periods within their schedules to contact large corporations. If an artist misses an email or letter and doesn't respond for just a few business days, the company could rush off and use the work anyway without ever speaking to the artist again.

Copyright is central to an artist's financial stability and, for some, emotional wellbeing. It is imperative that artists are also rights holders, regardless of capability for registry. Passing this law would legalize intellectual property theft on a massive scale, even from creators outside of the United States.

Thank you for your time.
Madison Pippert