To Whom it May Concern:

I am a teaching artist from the Midwest. I graduated from Minneapolis College of Art and Design with my master, shouldering a massive student loan debt in order to support my dream of working professionally in the visual art and teaching fields. My work is exhibited in galleries across the United States as wells as my illustrations being published across digital and print forms. I also share the knowledge of the arts with teens and adults at art camps and on university settings. I impart standards of copyright and proper ethics for visual artists. I feel strongly against this new copyright reform because this business model would hurt my creative rights as well as future artists more trying to form their careers. This reform only benefits big corporations and would leave individuals artist with no ability to protect their work.

Our copyrights are the products that we license. This can be anything from paintings, t-shirt and product designs, patterns, photographs, or street art. Copyright allows all of our works to be protected from from corporations and be able to fight back when it is unethically used (such as is the case with Starbucks and Urban Outfitters using designers and illustrators art without permission or payment). Artists, Photographers, and Illustrators should have that right to defend their works, to determine how and by whom our work is used. This art is our source of income and we shouldn't have to diminish our funds in order to keep "good faith" infringers from creating derivative work that would make more money. People or Businesses stealing our images for their own products, designs, etc. is no different than stealing our money. With the digital era, inventory is even more valuable to artist than ever before. Even if the product is not physical, it still deserves protection from becoming orphaned.

I also find this reform concerning, not just for my own interests, but for students. Most will not have the means to register their works every time they create for assignments, personal projects, or beginning commissions. They need that protection from their works becoming orphaned so that they can build a career without their art being unethically used for being unregisters. This reform can also encourage unethical usage from students who may not understand the legalities of the issue and therefore may cause more problems with fellow peers or other artists. If this happens on a peer-to-peer level, how might it occur on a corporate level? This reform leaves open a lot of area for abuse of power.

Copyright is meant to challenge others to work more creatively and respect the art that others create. If this reform passes, this would diminish the creativity by allowing others to steal uncredited work or create derivative works, instead of seeking new paths of creativity to solve a problem or allow an artist to be paid rightfully for the work that they toil over to create.

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