Dear Copyright Office, Members of Congress, and all persons concerned in the preservation of US copyright:

I am a cartoonist and writer and have been one for twenty-nine years. I write and draw graphic novels that are published in print and in the web.
I was part of a pioneering movement to get digital-first comics recognized as legitimate works worthy of recognition by one of comics' highest honors, the Eisner Awards.
I also helped pave the way for a number current bestselling and award-winning cartoonists and writers by introducing them to web publication, where they could find and grow their audiences.
I and the people mentioned above have enjoyed the freedom to move my work freely between publishers as pay rates, philosophies, and business plans changed, and to choose whom we'd engage with.
I've also had the freedom to NOT license my work when the offers were insulting or inappropriate.
Moreover, my work is a tangible intellectual asset that I can and will pass along to my children. It is their right to choose what to do with my work as I did.
Making comics has been my passion for more than half my life. I endured considerable hardship to become an accomplished and respected member of my field.
I've suffered socially and financially because I wouldn't give up my rights and encouraged others to make the same choice, to not be part of rolling back artist's rights and normalizing vandalism of their work for a pittance.
Over time, as my body of work has grown, it has become more valuable as a whole. My work is not a car, immediately stripped of a fifth of its value when it leaves the dealership. Moreover, my body of work makes me more desirable and hireable as a writer, artist, speaker and consultant.
Current copyright law allows me to profit and flourish from my investment and sacrifices in time and education and that wheeze about getting into Carnegie Hall: practice, practice, practice.
Most cartoonists and writers enjoy modest incomes at best, but without our current copyright laws, that would dwindle to nothing. The corporate and predatory lilies of the field that do not spin nor toil only have to wait for me to make something then can take it.
I have been consciously choosing since I was fifteen (I'm now fifty-one) with whom I'd do business, based on how I and my work would be treated and protected by law.
I've honored that protection by making decisions that strengthen my rights and the rights of others.
We have much talk about being self-reliant and hard-working, about not taking handouts, of being self-made and bootstrapped. You would be hard-pressed to find a better embodiment of those qualities than me and my comics and cartoonist cohorts.
Don't punish us inky entrepreneurs by taking away what we have and will build for ourselves, our families, our fans and supporters.

Orphan Works and Mass Digitalization must not pass.

Signed,

Lea Hernandez