Dear Copyright Office,

I'm writing to express my support for the current copyright law. I have been a professional cartoonist for over 20 years, including 17 years syndicated nationally to newspapers.

The economist Milton Friedman once said, “The world runs on individuals pursuing their separate interests.” Owning my copyright and having the freedom to negotiate those rights, on my own terms, enables me to pursue my separate interest as a cartoonist. If the current copyright protection is ever diluted, then my ability to pursue my separate interest will be similarly diluted. And where then is the incentive to being cartoonist?

Cartooning is a business. The economic benefit I receive from working as a cartoonist comes from my being able to negotiate the sale of my cartoon rights to newspapers, licensing companies, web sites, book publishers, and other media companies at a mutually agreeable price. Current copyright law works best for me. I create a cartoon, affix my name to it and thereby claim ownership—it’s simple and ironclad, as the writers of the current copyright law intended. I can now parcel out those rights as I see fit for an economic benefit. In addition, when negotiating a price for the sale of those cartoons (and reproduction rights), buyers know that the United States Government currently affirms those rights protecting me and my creation in the marketplace.

Diluting this protection and its economic incentive forces me and other cartoonists and illustrators to abandon this commercial art. If we face a surmounting bureaucracy with increased fees and paperwork, resulting in a stripping of the rights to our own creations, then the math becomes quite simple. No one will stay in a business where the expenses exceed the profits. Once this happens, the very people looking for content to fill books, pages, apps, and web sites will find the pickings to be scarce. A creative community of entrepreneurial artists and illustrators will be destroyed.

President Theodore Roosevelt coined the phrase “square deal.” That's what he wanted for the American people. A square deal. An environment whereby the government deals with the American worker in an honest manner allowing them the protection to pursue their separate interests in the marketplace so that they may gain full economic benefit from their labors and secure the American dream for their children and posterity.

I implore you to leave the current copyright law in place. It's a square deal and allows me to purse my separate interests. If there’s a place to tweak the copyright law, it’s creating a cheap and easy way for me to bulk register my stream of cartoon creations. As of now, I can’t register my work because it is prohibitively expensive and time consuming.

Sincerely,

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