Dear Copyright Office,

I am a self-employed artist. I have worked as an illustrator and artist for over forty years. Since graduating with honors from the University of Akron, I have earned my income creating and selling images commissioned by publishers and works I generated with the intent to sell both physically and as intellectual properties. My artwork has been in the fields of Imaginative Realism, , gaming companies, advertisers, and other publishers. I actively resell my images nationally and internationally for all sorts of uses including book reproductions, prints, and many other licensed products. A portion of my income depends upon the reselling of my intellectual properties, a catalog consisting of several hundred images. I control the manner and quality of how the art I have worked so hard to produce is seen in the market place. I can negotiate the percentage of revenue I can expect from the uses available to me. I depend upon the protection of the existing copyright laws to allow me to sustain my livelihood and help provide autonomous creativity.

The proposed Copyright Law will remove my ability to control my creations. It will force me to register to private organizations who will hold digital records of my art. As I understand this change, I will need to register my copyright with your office and register with a private concern or concerns any unregistered works. This means I will pay for more copyright protection while having to allow digital access to my work by a corporate entity. This creates even more opportunities for infringement due to the reliance upon others to protect my creations. This takes more money out of my income while offering me less actual protection.

As a freelance artist, I have no company to offer me retirement opportunities. My belief in my work has urged me to register my art with the Copyright Office over the years to grant me recourse in the protection of the right to make money from the reproduction of my art for my lifetime and for that of my heirs. My inventory is an active part of my business. I use reproductions of my inventory to promote awareness of my work, to gain me more clients, sales, and income to benefit my professional goals. This proposed amendment will take away control of what I create and prevent me from protecting and enhancing my livelihood directly. In this era of endless online un-permissioned use and outright piracy, these new laws will only encourage further abuse.

This proposed law seeks to enhance the coffers of large digital storage companies who desire to make a profit from the creative labors of others without compensation and inhibits the direct sale of intellectual properties by their creators and heirs.

While the Supreme Court recognizes corporations as individuals under the law, they are NOT individuals regarding expression— Individuality is impossible in a corporate climate where stock holders decide an outcome. Granting non-creator non-persons access to an individual's creative voice, while allowing control of how, where, and when it may be used, will prove to be damaging to creativity. It will ultimately create a vampire industry that steals the lifeblood of creativity from true creators. Please oppose this horrible law. I beg of you.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Smith, Artist