Hello, I am protesting the passage of the Next Great Copyright Act, the Orphan Works Act.

I have been a fine art painter for 35 years, and have completed 10 graduate credits in painting and drawing at the University of Minnesota. My primary medium is watercolor, but I also work in pastel, acrylic, and charcoal, as well as mixed media and collage.

My work is featured in the Minnesota Governor's mansion, and my paintings are shown and marketed nationally and internationally. Recent national shows include the 2014 Red River Watercolor Society 21st Annual Juried National Exhibition, Moorhead, MN. International shows include the 2013 and 2014 International Society of Experimental Artists (ISEA) 22nd and 23rd Annual Art Exhibit, Sanibel, FL.

Recent award and honors include:

2013 4th Place, Watercolor, Gouache, Casein, Tempera class MN State Fair 102nd Fine Arts Exhibition
2014 Signature Artwork, 22nd Annual Ginnie Adams Watercolor Show, St. Paul, MN
2014 Honorable Mention at the 38th Annual Bloomington Art Center Members Members Exhibition
2014/15 Phipps Center for the Arts Healing Arts Program, Croixdale and Hudson Hospital, Hudson WI

2015 Corporate Art Force Artist of the Month, April,
2015 http://artforceminneapolis.tumblr.com/post/115857647166/april-artist-of-the-month-mary-axelson
My website is www.mnartists.org/Mary-Axelson

I also hold a Masters in International Management from St. Thomas University, and was a corporate trainer for 22 years where I designed and delivered many different educational programs. I have taught watercolor painting for 15 years at Bloomington Theatre and Art Center for all levels of students in watercolor landscape, seascape, and floral. I have also taught design, collage, and multimedia.

I also serve as volunteer Workshop Co-chair of the Minnesota Watercolor Society. I and my co-chair complete all workshop artist-selection programming and facilitation.

Copyright law is not an abstract legal issue for me, but the base upon which my business rests. Copy rights are the products I license.

The unique artwork I produce and its protection are vital to my business. It takes decades and tens of thousands of dollars to gain the skills necessary to produce award winning artwork. Copyright infringement is like stealing my money.

It is important to my business that I remain able to voluntarily choose how and by whom my work is used.

My work does not lose its value upon publication, but conversely increases in value.

Everything I create becomes part of my business inventory. In this digital era, inventory and its protection is more valuable to me as an artist than ever before.

If copyright protection of an individual artist's work is outlawed by this act, the individual artist will be wiped out as a business concern. It has been shown that artistic efforts have revitalized other parts of the economy. If artists are wiped out by this act, this revitalization will cease exactly when it is so very much needed.

Do not allow this major change in the copyright law to happen.

Thank you.

Mary Axelson