Dear Copyright Office,

I am a science illustrator and graphic designer based in New Haven, CT. As a young professional in visual art, the passing of an Orphan Works act would severely hinder my ability to do business. Today, it's virtually impossible to attract attention and work in this field without having a prominent online presence, which of course involves having a digital portfolio. I also sell my work as prints, t-shirts, and other products using Redbubble.com. So you see, having my work online is an important part of my income, and it concerns me that others could potentially use it without reimbursing me and have the law on their side. I feel strongly that there is no case where a person or corporation should be able to use my work for free if I have not chosen to distribute it as such.

When a client commissions me for a piece, I sell them whatever usage rights they choose but retain the copyright myself so I can use the piece for self-promotion and, where applicable, for making prints and other products to sell. My work does not lose its value after publication – I can and do continue to make money from it. Many illustrators handle their business like that. It's a model that works for us, and the Next Great Copyright Act will threaten that. Please consider the needs of independent artists and do not allow this act to pass.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Gelernter