To Whom It May Concern:

I'm an artist who publishes my work online in order to gain a following and acquire more clients.

At a time when jobs are harder to find, social welfare programs are being cut back, copyright protections for intellectual property owned by corporations are being extended into infinity and globally, and technology that makes it harder and harder to track the original creator through no fault of his own, I find it unforgivable that protections for creations by independent and struggling artists are being stripped.

It's relatively easy to find a great image on Google Images or Tumblr and Right-Click Save that image onto one's hard drive without any effort put into finding who the original creator is nor who owns the copyright. In today's "sharing economy" the general public isn't interested in paying for the efforts and education creators put into their works.

Instead, they are looking to turn a quick profit. The plaster our images on their ebooks and use our songs in their movies without permission.

The only thing we had protecting us was the law that provide for punitive damages to recoup not only the royalties we would have gladly taken had they investigated and done their due diligence, but also the cost of recouping the costs of suing those who would infringe on our copyrights, quite often the offenders being those with the budgets to pay for them fairly. We've seen this most recently with Target stealing from an independent designer on Etsy and musicians like Bruno Mars stealing from indie Musician Breakbot. The reason those cases were settled amicably was because of the law ensuring no cap on damages.

By altering the rules in the proposed manner, it makes it far more difficult for me and 99% of the artists in the US to recoup damages from those who profit from my work without fairly paying for it. The costs of litigation are too expensive against an army of lawyers hired by corporations with unlimited wealth. This will encourage them to steal because they know the artists they steal from are too poor to fight them in court only to recover a fraction of their legal costs IF they win.

We are generally a quiet group because we're too busy working unreasonable hours to keep the lights on. But we can be noisy. As we saw with SOPA and Net Neutrality, we can mobilize. And we will.

Do not make life harder for us.

Best,

Rajesh Bhavnani