To the United States Copyright Office,

My name is Kylie Jayne Smith. I am 21 years old and have been an illustrator for three years now. I may be young, but I have dreamed of being a professional artist since high school, and excelled in my schooling, achieving a 4.0 GPA to be accepted to Brigham Young University, known for its specialization its art programs.

I have been accepted into two separate art programs, and now I am a senior, I will be graduating in a year with my Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis in Concept Art. I have received best of show in my local art contest in high school, second place in my city's contest (along with People's choice award) as well as winning the contest for my graduation cover art. In college I have worked as an artist on two video game creative collaboration teams, been accepted into Brigham Young's 2015 student art competition, and have been accepted for two internships with two notable professional illustrators in the summer of 2015.

When I graduate in one year from now, I plan to establish my full-time career as a freelance Illustrator. I want to work in fantasy art and children's illustration. I have already begun building my own website for my business, displaying my inventory of paintings and illustrations on my website in order to attract the attention of art directors and other clients via multiple social media platforms.

It is absolutely crucial to publish my work on the Internet to gain publicity. However, the only thing keeping the public from stealing my illustrations and paintings is the current copyright law. In a world where an illustrator's businesses is promoted by social media and Internet usage, it is easy for the public to steal my artwork and use it for their own profit or use. This is theft. It is my constitutional and legal right to own my own artwork—I have spent hours designing, composing, referencing, and painting my artwork. By changing the copyright rule, my business will suffer. There is nothing keeping the public from stealing my work and using it as they see fit, without paying me or acknowledging that I am the true artist and creator. This is nothing short of plagiarism and theft of my money and property. If Congress chooses to terminate the current copyright law with the "next great copyright act" reform, then my life's work, earnings, and success as a business owner will be devastated.

It is important to note that my work—and any other artist's work—does not lose value upon publication. Every piece of artwork that I create is made with time and precision, and just because one client has published it does not mean that its value is lost. My art, whether published or not, is valuable to my business as inventory; becoming a piece of my portfolio; and is therefore is displayed to art directors, clients, and others interested in my business. As a freelance artist, it is also important for me to have inventory so that I can sell prints. Many freelance artists, such as the one I interned with over the summer, published his work to a famous fantasy card-game company, but also sells the same prints from his website. In short, any piece of art that I publish or create becomes a piece of my business inventory; which I can sell prints and use to show other art directors and clients. Publication to a company does not give other people the right to deem my work invaluable and therefore steal my work to make profit without my consent.

Please understand that in our current digital era, an artist's inventory is more important than ever before. It is crucial for artists to have a wide collection of artworks to attract attention from clients and followers. Anything an illustrator publishes, whether it is on a blog, website, portfolio, or licensed to another client, can be for the artist's printing and self-promotion.

For example, I made a certain painting that attracted a client. She loved the painting so much that she wanted the illustration to be included in her children's book. I agreed to make another painting, identical to the one I had already painted, but included with her own character. Although one painting was already published and submitted to a competition, I used the same painting again. As you can see, just because I had published my painting to one area didn't mean that I couldn't re-use it to help my business. The painting did not lose any value to my client or to me, although the image can be found published on both my website and in her children's book. In the future, I hope to use the same painting to attract future clients.

As mentioned earlier, it is common for artists to make prints and sell them at events like FantasyCon and ComiCon. Although many of these paintings have been published elsewhere, illustrators sell these same prints at events for self-promotion and extra money. I have known many fellow artists who do likewise, and I intend to do the same as my inventory grows. This is a tactic that will help my businesses grow and prosper.

As an illustrator, I respectfully ask you to reconsider the notion that "publishing artwork decreases its value." This is simply not true. My inventory is invaluable to me for future business and should not be made available to the public. As a young artist and business owner, I rely on copyright laws to protect my money and my property. "The Next Great Copyright Act" would be an unconstitutional ruling to my career as an artist and business owner, and I ask you to reconsider changing the copyright law.

Thank you,

Kylie Jayne Smith