United States Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

Re.: Notice of Inquiry on Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works

July 9, 2015

To Those Concerned:

As an artist and educator I am extremely concerned about the changes to the copyright laws that are under consideration. These changes would steal the livelihood from illustrators by making the application for copyrights complicated and expensive, and by eliminating key protections from copyright infringement.

Illustrators must have secure protections against the unlawful use of their work. We must be able to control how our illustrations are used and under what conditions. Compensation to illustrators for the use of their work is just and fair, and copyrights are key in this process. Our copyrights are the products we license. If these changes take place illustrators will lose their ability to make a living from their work. Please understand, an illustration that is published once still has value: additional publication or use of that work should be contracted with the illustrator. The illustrator must be in control of the conditions for use of his/her inventory of work.

Theft of property has always been a strong concern for illustrators — copyright protections are more critical now since the publication industry is digital. With the proposed changes to the copyright laws our work would be even easier for others to steal and profit from.

I am a longstanding member of the Pittsburgh Society of Illustrators, and have worked as a graphic artist/illustrator in full time positions and as a freelancer since 1983. In 2002 I was hired by Slippery Rock University to teach in the Art Department. As a full time educator I do not rely on illustration for the majority of my income, but I do not want someone else to profit from my work without contracting with me for the terms of its use. My illustration students are also at risk: a career in illustration will be undermined by this legislation.

Is there any other line of work that is under a similar attack? Your investigation of how illustrations are used by people and businesses should reveal that they have value. The illustrator is the lawful owner of the valuable work he/she creates. Do not allow others to steal it.

Sincerely,

June Edwards

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