To Whom It May Concern:

As a professional designer and photographer for the past ten years, the 2015 Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Report is extremely troubling. Photography is an art form that shares a rich and important history within the United States. It shapes our memories, our ideas of who we are as a country, and emblazes the halls of our museums, history books, homes, officials, government buildings, stores, and just about every part of our daily life. And while each and every American has some kind of personal relationship with Photography and design- - very few people outside of the field understand the myriad challenges that professional Photographers have faced for many years.

While the proliferation of the internet has afforded artists the ability to reach new audiences across the planet, it has also served as one of the greatest impediments for an artist's livelihood. Digitization has allowed for an artist's work to be exponentially shared and therefore almost impossible to exert complete control over how it is used. Most of the time our images are utilized simply as decoration on social media sites. But just as often our names and copyright information are unlawfully removed, rendering our images particularly vulnerable to orphaning and thus appropriation. It is almost daily that I read about a fellow artist's work being monetized by an unscrupulous third party with zero profit or credit being afforded the creator.

Generally, a client will commission me for a shoot and I give them the rights to print that shoot for themselves. I retain the rights to the image that may be shared all over mass media by friends of this client without credit – a fact that the authors of the Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Report seem to not understand. Unfortunately, there seems to be a misconception that upon publication our artwork loses it's value. This is an inaccurate and potentially dangerous falsehood. For the Photographer, copyright law is not an abstract legal issue, but the basis on which our business rests. Our copyrights are the products we license, so in essence taking our work because it is deemed orphaned is literally stealing money out of our pockets. Everything that we create, whether for a client or for our own personal enrichment, becomes part of our potential future business. In the digital era, inventory is more valuable to artists than ever before.

Please reconsider how the 2015 Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Report could have potentially disastrous effects on not only the fields of artwork and image creation, but on the future creation of quality art in the public realm. It is already a difficult thing to make one's way in the business of art, if we pass this bill it will put a strain on our already taxed artists, making our country loose out on countless artists who could have once provided us with art and beauty to last the ages but will now not be able to view it as a viable career. Help us to protect the work we work so hard to create and enrich the lives of everyone in our country.

Sincerely,

Janel A Norris