To Whom it May Concern:

My name Is Joe Cepeda. I am a working illustrator and have been for the last twenty years. I have illustrated over 30 books for young people as well as creating original artwork for magazines, organizations and various commercial entities over that time. I am also the president of the Society of illustrators of Los Angeles.

My clients include Scholastic Inc, Simon & Schuster, Knopf, MacMillan Harcourt, HarperCollins, Chronicle Books, The Los Angeles Times, Johns Hopkins, Land's End and any more publications and companies.

I have worked hard to hone my craft and to provide an honest living for my family. I love my work and consider myself fortunate to work in a profession that has been an integral part of American culture, as well as being part a vibrant American economy.

My stock in trade is the sale of usage of my intellectual property. I cannot state emphatically enough how important copyright law and the rights it protects is essential to the stability of not only to me and my livelihood, but to all my fellow visual creators. My business cannot exist without it. Like any other person, I want to be able to pass on my financial estate to my son. This is my legacy to give to him. Like the inventors and manufacturers, we should be allowed that right. The fruit of my work and hours spent creating are no different than the labor of any other worker, any other craftsman. I produce images and products I license. I create intellectual property and negotiate its usage and trade… work that is original to me, to my direct labor. How can I not be able to determine how my work should be used? How is it fair that another entity be allowed to do so without my permission? Creating an environment that makes it easier to take away rights without compensation is a step in the wrong direction.

Like any other creator of products, my inventory is my asset. The laws of this country should allow me to protect my assets and be free to control their sale.

In this technological era, protection of these rights is more important than ever.

I urge you to continue to protect copyright for anyone who has created work, protect those rights because it is all our common American heritage. That legacy and is invented and developed and created by innovators and creators The alternative is that our cultural will no longer be added to, but, simply copied over, altered, stolen one image at a time, until all that will be left is, unfortunately, the totally recognizable. That certainly is not what country looking to the future should be doing.

Joe Cepeda
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