Dear Legislators,

I am writing to express my shock and outrage at the proposed changes to the U.S. Copyright Laws, specifically the Orphan Works Act. I have been a professional illustrator for over forty years. I have earned my living by producing drawings and paintings for a wide variety of clients in advertising, publishing and other institutions including the U.S. Federal Government. I have been commissioned to produce various historical artworks for the National Parks Service including a mural of the battle of Lexington and Concord now on display at Minuteman National Park. The U.S. Department of the Interior has commissioned me to produce a series of murals illustrating the construction of Hoover Dam which are now exhibited in the Hoover Dam Visitor's Center.

The U.S. copyright laws have been critically important to my ability to make a living. They have protected my artworks' reproduction rights from theft by any persons or organizations wanting to reproduce my work in any form without paying me. The Copyright Laws have also allowed me to choose to whom I sell these rights and how my work will be reproduced by them. In the age of the internet and online publishing, selling second reproduction rights has become big business. It is therefore more important than ever that I retain the right to license the art that I have created over a lifetime of work.

If these rights are infringed by corporate interests, I will lose an important source of income today and possible an critically important source of income in the future. There is another issue. If I no longer control how my art is reproduced, it can modified, cropped, hacked up, cut apart and added to other artwork, photos and other graphic work for *any* purpose. This new creation could then be copyrighted by its creator. As well as being potentially very embarrassing to me, this could have a very detrimental effect on my reputation as an artist. Along with my talent, my reputation is the most valuable professional asset that I possess.

If the Orphan Works Act becomes law, it will make it much more difficult and in many cases impossible for hundreds of thousands of people in this country to earn a living from their creative works. If the pool of independent professional artists and writers is reduced, it will seriously damage America's cultural energy. I, therefore, implore you to say no to the self-serving corporate pressure to pass this law. In doing so, you will uphold and help preserve the United States' tradition of individual liberty and at the same time support and protect this country's creative cultural power, one of America's greatest assets.

Sincerely,
John Rush