Dear U.S Copyright Office:

By now you have almost certainly been inundated with complaints. By now you have learned that your drafts of a new copyright law would break the legs of the world's online art communities, large and small, and cripple the careers of thousands, perhaps millions of people. This issue is so big and dramatic to us that warnings are being issued en masse, public service announcements that everything we know is about to be quite literally taken from us. There's a form and format for this letter, available to the public, made by concerned artists just like me.

I don't work from my art yet. I'm 17 and I draw for pleasure, but I seek to earn a supplementary amount of money from commissions for others. I'm going to college soon for game design, which will involve my own original concepts and creations. This was possible before, but with this new Orphan Works act, you will have crippled my career before it began and rendered my entire life aspiring to be an artist completely moot. There are many others like me, young folk who haven't even gotten the chance to fully enter the art world, who will be devastated as well. Some people are so reliant on the money they make from commissions that this act will possibly kill them. Tell me how that is 'in the best interest of the public?'

Here are some quotes from the PSA post I found regarding this act.

"It would void your Constitutional right to the exclusive control of your work." - This is bad enough. We create our work as a part of our speech and self expression. We create it as gifts for our friends to tell them that we love them. To have a company take a gift for my friend and use it for profit would be an insult and a theft to us both, and you would have silenced whatever message I wished to send. This is unacceptable.

"It would make the public's right to use your work its defining goal; which means you would have to make your work available to the public. You would have to do this by registering every picture you want to retain the rights to with for-profit registries." - My understanding of this is that we have to pay money to some company in order to keep them from stealing it. We lose either way. Either rob us for our work or rob us for our money. How very fair.

"Unregistered work would be considered legally 'orphaned.' Orphaned work would be available for commercial infringement by 'good faith' infringers. Good faith infringers would be anyone who believed they had made a 'reasonably diligent,' but unsuccessful effort to find you. Infringers could also alter your work and copyright the 'derivative works' in their own names." - If you knew anything about the online art community as it is now, you would know that this blasts open the door for even more art theft than there already is. Now any person can pick up my work that I put immense amounts of effort into, register it for their own benefit, and make money off of it just because I didn't have the cash or the desire to feed some company that doesn't need my money. They may make money off of what I created. What I love. A robber is punished for stealing items from a home and pawning them off for his own gain. Why shouldn't this?

"This would affect all visual art: drawings, paintings, sketches, photos, etc.; past, present and future; published and unpublished; domestic and foreign. It would include family snapshots and any picture or work you ever put on the Internet." - This is perhaps the most frightening. The thought of my family photographs being used by some company to promote their product without my consent worries me. I do not want to see my face on a McDonald's ad.

"The Copyright Office acknowledges that this would pose special challenges for visual artists… But they conclude that it's in the public interest for your work to be available for anyone to use." - I don't even understand this. How is it in the interest of the public to steal my work? What can they gain from the things I slaved over? Oh, right. My money.

This will not stand. We as a community are not pleased with this development, and with our rights to free speech that you are so ready to trample upon, we will make sure that you know it. Perhaps our right to petition will come into play next.

I seriously hope you reconsider this updated copyright law, in the best interest of the public. People like me are 'the public' too.

Regards,
Katelyn H.