I am deeply aggravated that the voices of so few have the chance to change the fate of millions of Americans concerning the changes to the Orphan Works Act of 2008 proposed by Orrin Hatch and Patrick Leahy.

As an artist, I rely on my ability to sell my own work as part of my annual income. I also should expect the right to sell future works as well as freely post my creative works without previously registering said works to private, for profit businesses. Often, I use my art in teaching aids for various online art groups to help teach, inspire and motivate the artists of the future. Art belongs to its creator until sold, licensed, donated or gifted.

This new legislation will take away my ability to maintain ownership of my art and to how it is used. My works are mine the same as you would not want someone else to use your hard work without your permission and then profit from it. Would you like someone else using a bill/act that you have written and taking credit for the work? You spend weeks writing something that you so passionately care about and could be part of your legacy and then no mention of your name…

The threat of legal action is what currently holds our fragile market together in the trust we place in our clients and vice versa. This new legislation would tip the balance of power so greatly in favor of large corporations as to send individual contractors back to a time where the idea of owning an idea -wasn't an idea. Our current copyright laws have helped the little guy rise to middle class - giving us recourse in cases of infringement. Side stepping the checks and balances will be too easy if this proposal passes.

THIS PROPOSAL IS THEFT OF SERVICES! Article 1.8 of the Constitution provides protection for our work.

The public will still be able to view our creations. They should not so easily be able to “legally steal” from artists as your proposal would allow.

Please - DO NOT change the US copyright law to reflect anything written that is in anyway similar to the Orphan Works Bill of 2008

Thank you,
Keith Cowan

Artist