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Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20559-6000

RE: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Office, Library of Congress
Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works (Docket No. 2015-01)

Dear Ms. Pallante and the Copyright Office Staff:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share my opinion on the issues within the visual artist's modern marketplace. I am an award-winning freelance illustrator, freshly graduated from a four year art school in Philadelphia, currently taking steps to break into the publishing industry as a fulltime children's book illustrator. I am writing to share with you that copyright is essential to the business of illustration, and without proper protection of our work, many opportunities that visual artists have to generate more revenue would simply cease to exist. By overlooking the interests of visual artists while replacing the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, the entire industry would suffer unrecoverable losses.

I use my illustration business to help support my family, and a fundamental part of the business is using copyright. *All work* that I produce becomes business inventory, no matter where it is or who it is for. When observing the ease at which people can steal work via the internet, it is more important now than ever in our country's history of visual art that our rights to our work remain automatically protected. To inadequately replace the U.S. Copyright Act means that the ways in which I generate income to support my family will become impossible. I would no longer be able to protect anything that I create, and my business would, for lack of a better phrase, take a swan dive out the window.

When registering works of art with the Copyright Office, we are able to include our work in batches, in order to save ourselves money. Considering the amount of work that active visual artists produce, the current Act of 1976 is stronger. As a result of the new law, can you imagine how much money it would cost an illustrator to individually register each and every thumbnail, sketch, final painting, photography reference, etc., in order to keep our full body of work protected from theft each year? The cost of registering even a base-line volume of work would put visual artists out of business. Furthermore, registering with a for-profit business would mean that registration rates would inevitably rise, amplifying the effects even further.

I would like to make clear that once I complete a work of art, and it is published with a product (such as on a book cover), the monetary value of that work does not simply vanish. As long as I have

negotiated favorable usage rights with a client, I am able to use that work again down the road once the contract is fulfilled. This means I can generate another source of income from the same work. Without the guarantee that my work cannot be copied or stolen, not only does the structure of the illustration contract drastically change, but the ways in which I can find income and the relationships that I make with my clients change as a consequence. I do not want to tell my clients that there is no way to protect what they paid for. Nor would I like to find my personal work stolen and put on a t-shirt to line someone else's pockets, just because they were unable to find the copyright holder.

In this digital age, authors and licensees of visual art need to be exceedingly cautious. I will not claim that the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976 is ideal, but it is leagues better for creators than the one currently being constructed. Many businesses would be wiped off of the map. As a young artist who has just recently achieved her life-long dream, I implore you to protect the interests of visual artists in the new bill. Thank you for your attention.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Lockamy". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

Michelle Lockamy