July 22, 2015

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:

As a self-employed visual artist and author, copyright law as it stands is a very important part of what allows me to do what I do, and provide me with the chance for a retirement income.

I was previously a financial advisor until I decided to follow my passion as a freelance artist back in 2015. As I began to practice my craft, I my streams of income were a lot like diversifying an investment portfolio. Doing caricatures at parties and conventions was for current income, but provided no real future growth. Creating proprietary art and writing was often not for any current income, but provided me the chance for annuity income in the future from royalties, options, licensing, etc.

I've often thought about whether it was wise for me to assume that I could work a birthday party when I was 75 years old to make a couple hundred bucks, since I could be disabled, arthritic, etc. So, my ability to create stories that I had copyright ownership of was really my opportunity to provide someone in my position with a retirement income, since my net taxable income after deductible expenses doesn't often provide me with much ability to contribute to a tax-deductible ira or roth.

If copyright law changes to require registration, it can imply and be argued legally that anything out there that an artist has created that happens to be out there is free for use unless it's been registered. In essence, this forces all artists to register each and every piece of work or be unable to enforce the propriety of our creations. It is difficult enough to make a current living at what we do, but this legislation would create a huge current expense for us, and may prevent us from enforcing licenses from users of our work. In turn, this may create a morass of abuse that would affect artist's long-term well-being.

Plus, the suggestion of privatizing the registration is frankly repugnant.

Sincerely,
Stan Yan
http://stanyan.me