July 22, 2015
To: Maria Pallante, Register of Copyrights

Thank you for allowing me to submit this letter of concern. I am a young artist just beginning my career with a Bachelor's degree in Fine Art, concentrating in Design. I am also a business owner, officially starting my career this year. I specialize in illustration and fine art drawings.

Copyright is the basis of my career. The default and automatic ownership of created work and resulting copyright, is the basis of my business plan. It's simple, I create a tangible representation of an idea and license the use of that creation to others. It's my prerogative to do that, or use work as a means of advertisement, or not let anyone have license at all because the copyright is my property. I post my work online as a demonstration of my skill, so that others know I exist and do art. My work doesn't lose value and become worthless because it's displayed, it is my source of future work.

The proposal says that as soon as an author creates work, any "potential user" is entitled to the same use as the author. No, they aren't. I am beginning my career, my created artwork is the main means by which I advertise myself. If someone wants to use my work beyond what's acceptable as fair use, then they pay for the license to use it, or commission me to work. That's the basis of my business, my copyrights are my product. If copyright laws allow anyone to use anything I make and bypass me, I have no assets and no business.

Having to register and pay for all of my work would be too expensive. Even though I haven't been a professional artist very long, I create a enough work, so that it would be more expensive to pay for registration than I'd make back. The idea that I have to pay someone else when I am the one providing a product is ridiculous and not a sustainable business model. Requiring registration of work would also make it mandatory that we get taken advantage of by having any number of fees or having any profit resulting in the work taking by a nefarious registration company. There would be no way out since it would be mandatory.

For people who wish to make legal use of photographs, graphic art works, and/or illustrations, under current copyright ownership laws, it's a non-issue. If you need that particular image, buy the license. If you can't or don't want to, find a creative commons option. Current licensing laws are fine the way they are. I use current visual art as references and inspiration under fair use, but do not take the work of others and it has been no problem in my work flow whatsoever. There is no challenge, commission the artist, use under fair use only (or as the creator allows), or pursue other options. There is no reason to change the law for people to get the legal right to take intellectual property as they see fit. The only reason the current system would be a challenge or hinderance is if the intent is to infringe on peoples' right and destroy their lively hood.

Lastly, this proposal discourages innovation because there is no point in creating and starting a business based on a marketable skill (creation of visual artwork), if the government creates laws and policies that cannibilizes our livelihood before we are started. This policy would set artists up to failure.

Submitted,
Taisa Willoughby