To whom it may concern,

When I learned about the suggested changes to Copyright Protections pertaining to what are referred to as orphan works, I was appalled. Those these suggestions have been offered with the best intentions in mind, they will inevitably lead to a creative suicide. The reality is that the copyright protections that currently exist are vital for artists—both freelance and hobbyists—and these recommended changes will only serve to further the financial exploitation of these groups of people. Most artists cannot afford to individually register their works with for-profit copyright offices to protect that which they have already poured their own time, their own effort, and their own income into. To suggest that there should be changes to make it easier for individuals to exploit the work of another is insulting to artists whether they are a professional that has sold their own work for years or a hobbyist than simply enjoys sharing what they're passionate about.

Even without these changes, protecting one's work from being exploited is an endless struggle for artists. Companies such as Hot Topic steal work that is not theirs without informing the original artists, and too often the artist faces an uphill battle in regards to compensation. Even nonprofits such as Feminist Frequency take artwork with complete disregard to the time and effort put into these pieces by the artists.

This change will encourage artists to withdraw from public exchange in order to protect themselves and their work instead of encouraging a sort of creative resurgence. After all, why should artists continue to contribute when they will inevitably be exploited by companies and nonprofits when their consent can too easily be dismissed as too hard to obtain and compensation for their time is considered an afterthought.

As an artist, I put time and money into that which I create. The idea that I have to individually register each of my drawings and paintings to protect myself from being used by a company or nonprofit that has more income at their disposal than myself is insulting. How am I—as well as many others—supposed to even consider making art into a viable career option when my being paid can easily be swept to the side under the guises of my consent being too hard to obtain or the individuals that stole my work having "the best intentions in mind." If they can't ask for my consent and offer a reasonable compensation then they need to look to other options. The hard work of the individual needs to be protected.

I would like to thank you for your time, and I certainly hope you will protect the interests of the artists who are currently at risk of having their hard work being taken advantage of.