Re: the proposed Orphan Works Act.

I am a working professional visual artist. I have been creating and selling my original watercolor paintings for 26 years. I have a bachelor's degree in the field and I have won recognition and awards. I am a juried signature member of professional artist’s organizations.

As of this date, I've created 577 unique and original works of art. Approximately 550 of them are in public and private collections around the country as well as overseas.

This rate of production averages two per month and represents many long hours of careful attention to detail. My artwork is painstakingly crafted, one painting at a time. Each piece is unique, and each piece is my own, whether I register it with a commercial entity or not.

It would be a very high burden and completely unfair to be forced to actively register my work in order to retain the rights that are inherent in my act of creation. As a self-employed artist, I have enough hurdles to overcome. Adding such a bureaucratic process would create a tax on my time- time that I can never get back.

Each artwork I create contains a bit of my soul. My copyright is not an abstract legal issue. It is my bread and butter. It is the basis upon which my business rests. The ability to control and profit from my own labor should *always be my legal right*. No one else should be able to profit from my labor without fair remuneration to me. In what other industry could that even be conceivable?

My work does not lose its value upon publication. My work has intrinsic value. My copyrights are the products I choose to license. The choice of whether or whom to license my work, and the negotiation for fair payment, *must* remain with me. Infringing my work is the same as stealing money from me.

Everything I create becomes part of my business inventory. I have a ledger dating back to 1989 with each and every one of my paintings

itemized, photographed, measured and labeled. In the digital era, inventory is more valuable to artists than ever before.

Please honor my rights and respect my labor. Please do not amend copyright law in such an adverse manner.