July 17, 2015
Re: Opposition to "The Next Great Copyright Act"

My name is Susie Ghahremani, and I am an award-winning illustrator, fine artist, and art educator. I have been a professional illustrator for 13 years. From 1998-2002, I attended the Rhode Island School of Design where I now serve as faculty in the Illustration Department.

I'm writing in **opposition to "The Next Great Copyright Act",** legislation poised to threaten content creators like artists. Our original works (including those not copyright registered) are the entire basis for our livelihoods. We need the government to allow us to defend our artwork if it has been wrongfully used, or if our works are used without attribution -- whether or not we have a copyright formally registered.

Artists depend on the concept of common law copyright to give them the **security to share their work**, especially digitally / socially where their work may not be properly attributed by a third party (and thus considered an "Orphan Work"). Giving the public and "good faith" infringers the right to use and alter our original works is devastating to a career of an artist where **we are often paid less per image than it costs to formally register the work with the government.**

Many internet-based businesses benefit from the removal of unregistered copyright protection (i.e. Google) because **they are frequent "good faith" infringers**. However, artists – real American citizens who depend on the law to protect them – are the underdogs here, and we need copyright in the form of common law copyright so we can continue to decide where our work appears and how much we earn from its sale.

Should an artist prefer their works to be free for use by all, they can opt to offer the unpopular "Creative Commons" license. If you ask an artist, most of us will not choose this, because we need our rights to our artwork to monetize our art businesses and to selectively curate where we allow it to appear. Please **do not force us into a "Creative Commons" relationship** with everything we create. When an artist creates an original creation, the government should not have the power to take their ownership and creative rights away just because it wasn't formally registered.

This legislation is devastating to creative professionals: past, future and present. **Please do not pass "The Next Great Copyright Act" legislation**. As a professional artist and educator, I believe it encourages intentional misuse of copyrighted works and a lack of reverence for original, individual content creators like artists.

Yours sincerely,

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