



May 24, 2011

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
U.S. Senator
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Senator Hatch:

On behalf of the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), Directors Guild of America (DGA), International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada (IATSE), Screen Actors Guild (SAG), and International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), we want to express our unequivocal support for the *PROTECT IP Act* and *S. 978, the Commercial Felony Streaming Act*. We believe these bills demonstrate, by giving U.S. law enforcement the much needed tools, that our government will not permit or condone the trafficking of stolen content and goods on the Internet and the diminishment of the American economy and American creativity and ingenuity which is the result.

We represent 400,000 creators, performers, craftspeople, and technicians who create the very films, television programs, and sound recordings that are enjoyed by billions of people around the world and represent our nation's most recognizable export. Our members, who reside in all 50 states, work for major studios, for record labels, for mid and small size production and recording companies, and for TV networks. Without our members, the filmed and musical works that are the entertainment industry would not exist. Their talent, creativity, and skills make possible the billions of dollars in annual tax revenue and the positive trade balance with every country in the world which our industry achieves.

Internet theft is not an idle concept for us, nor is it a passing "fancy"; the illegal downloading and streaming of films, television programs, sound recordings and other works, strike at the very heart of our business—and its threat to our members is a tangible one. The majority of creative works produced by our industry must secure financing and distribution partners prior to production. If digital theft is allowed to grow it will inevitably damage the confidence of producers and financiers in their investments, with one clear result: fewer creative works get made and the jobs for our members disappear, along with their pension and health funding.

We are well aware there is no one simple answer to Internet theft, and that it involves a myriad of solutions. However, there is one solution which is not new—it has been used in this country to stop thieves since our founding: law enforcement. The *PROTECT IP Act* gives law enforcement a necessary tool to go after foreign "rogue" websites that steal U.S. produced content and profit by

providing it illegally to an unknowing American public, who are also put at risk. S. 978, *The Commercial Felony Streaming Act*, addresses the growing popularity of Internet streaming and makes illegal streaming of copyrighted works a felony, bringing it in line with the penalties for illegal downloading. Together, they protect American jobs, creativity, and free expression—all of which are fundamental to the economic and cultural health of our country.

The broad and diverse coalition supporting the *PROTECT IP Act*, which extends well beyond the entertainment industry, is an indicator of how vital the issue of digital theft is to American workers and industry. America's greatest strength is its innovation and creativity. Those strengths, personified in our membership, are under attack by foreign profiteers and illegal streaming services. We thank you for understanding the true nature of digital theft, and for your advocacy in protecting American intellectual property and jobs. We look forward to working with you to move the strongest and most effective legislation possible to enactment.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Musicians (AFM)

American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA)

Directors Guild of America (DGA)

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada (IATSE)

International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)

Screen Actors Guild (SAG)

cc: Majority Leader Harry Reid

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell

Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee, Charles E. Grassley