

November 14, 2011

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.,
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
B-351 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Conyers:

We, the undersigned public interest organizations, write to you to express our concerns that the witness panel for the November 16 legislative hearing on H.R. 3261, the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA), will include no representatives focused on how real-world implementation of the bill will affect the due process and free speech rights of law-abiding Internet users around the world, user security, and the ability of entrepreneurs to create new products and invent new industries.

The precise meaning and practical effect of several key provisions of this bill remain hotly disputed. Enacting this bill without resolving these questions would undermine the very rule of law the bill's supporters want to defend. So, too, would long-standing U.S. foreign policy goals of promoting democracy be undermined if this bill unintentionally serves to validate subtle forms of censorship by authoritarian regimes.

We ask that you consider including public interest representatives who can express these concerns. Only by hearing testimony from independent experts from a diverse range of perspectives can Congress craft balanced legislation to address online piracy while ensuring that innovation and civil liberties are not unduly hindered.

Sincerely,

Competitive Enterprise Institute
TechFreedom
Public Knowledge
Electronic Frontier Foundation

cc: The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
The Honorable Melvin Watt