



**INTERNATIONAL
BROTHERHOOD
OF ELECTRICAL
WORKERS®**

900 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202.833.7000
www.ibew.org

EDWIN D. HILL
International President

SAM J. CHILIA
International
Secretary-Treasurer

January 21, 2012

VIA EMAIL

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

Intellectual property (IP) theft by foreign websites and the sale or dissemination of counterfeit or pirated products by these websites costs the United States economy approximately \$250 billion and 750,000 jobs each year.

In addition to these economic concerns, the safety of foreign counterfeit products is troublesome. Items such as counterfeit toothpaste from South Africa containing antifreeze or counterfeit Square D circuit breakers from China which fail to trip when overloaded are documented to have created dangerous situations in the United States. IBEW members in the manufacturing and construction branches are directly hurt by the widespread foreign sale and dissemination of counterfeit property. Square D, headquartered in the United States, is a leading manufacturer of electrical distribution, industrial control, and automation products, systems and services. Square D employs 847 IBEW members. China has been counterfeiting Square D products for years. Electrical contractors and individuals in the United States are unknowingly purchasing the counterfeit goods from China. The sale of these counterfeit products endangers consumers and electricians alike. The Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and the Protect IP Act of 2011 (PIPA) both aim to make the sale of foreign counterfeit goods, like the counterfeit Square D circuit breakers, more difficult.

The IBEW members in the manufacturing and construction branches would not be alone in benefiting from the Acts pending before Congress. While exact amounts vary, it is safe to say the broadcasting industry loses billions of dollars a year to piracy. Less money in the broadcasting industry results in fewer media projects retained and created. A decrease in media projects means fewer jobs for IBEW members in the broadcasting branch. SOPA and PIPA both aim to make piracy of media by foreign sources more difficult.

SOPA and PIPA would require a United States website to take reasonable actions that would make the foreign websites like those discussed above less accessible via its United States website. A United States website such as Google, Wikipedia, or Facebook would take action after the foreign website is brought to its attention by the Attorney General.

Copyright infringement is already illegal under the 1998 Millennium Copyright Act. However, the Millennium Copyright Act does not provide any tools with which to curb foreign sites from pirating or selling counterfeit property. It is important for those IBEW members located outside of the United States to understand these Acts are not intended to affect foreign websites that are operating legally. SOPA and PIPA would not remove foreign websites from the internet. Foreign sites that are engaged in the sale or dissemination of counterfeit or pirated property would simply become difficult to find for persons accessing the internet from the United States. SOPA and PIPA would not make accessing the foreign websites illegal. SOPA and PIPA would do nothing to existing laws



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which make the download of pirated materials illegal – the 1998 Millennium Copyright Act would be unchanged.

Within the Labor Movement the IBEW is not alone in its support of SOPA and PIPA. SOPA and PIPA are vigorously supported by the Department of Professional Employees at the AFL-CIO. Unfortunately, internet sites like Google and Wikipedia to name a few have engaged in a campaign that falsely claims SOPA and PIPA will stifle innovation and shut down the internet. This is simply not true. Instead, SOPA and PIPA will protect the legitimate interests of those who copyright their intellectual property, protect American jobs, and provide a way for the United States to curb the foreign sale and foreign dissemination of counterfeit and pirated property.

Therefore, the IBEW stands in support of SOPA and PIPA on behalf of its members in the manufacturing, construction, and broadcasting branches who have the most to lose if foreign websites continue the widespread sale and dissemination of counterfeit and pirated property.

With best wishes, I am,

Fraternally yours,

Edwin D. Hill
International President



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EDWIN D. HILL
International President

SAM J. CHILIA
International
Secretary-Treasurer

November 17, 2011

VIA E-MAIL

Senator Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Lamar Smith
Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the approximately 725,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I write to express the IBEW's support of S. 968, the PROTECT IP Act of 2011 and H.R. 3261, the Stop Online Piracy Act. Both of these Acts would retain and create jobs for IBEW members.

The illegal sale or display of counterfeit goods or copyrighted materials costs the United States numerous jobs and billions of dollars a year. Individuals working in many industries feel the effects of these illegal actions - from the television and music industries to the manufacturing and pharmaceutical industries, the problem is widespread.

The websites used to perpetrate these crimes are located outside of the United States and are designed to convince consumers they are purchasing brand-name goods or legitimate items. Because the websites are located outside of the United States, they are beyond the reach of the United States law enforcement. The Senate and House Acts will give the United States government a tool with which it can protect American workers by cracking down on these foreign websites.

The IBEW commends you for introducing and supporting S. 968 and H.R. 3261 which protect American jobs.

Sincerely yours,

Edwin D. Hill
International President

EDH:lgd
Copy to all Members of the United States Congress