

RICHARD L. HANNA  
24TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE  
HIGHWAYS & TRANSIT SUBCOMMITTEE  
VICE CHAIR

COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE

COMMITTEE ON  
SMALL BUSINESS

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3224

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
219 CANNON H.O.B.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
PHONE: 202-225-3665  
FAX: 202-225-1891

DISTRICT OFFICE  
258 GENESEE STREET  
ITHACA, NY 13502  
PHONE: 315-724-9740  
FAX: 315-724-9746  
WWW: hanna.house.gov

December 15, 2011

Mr. Simon St. Laurent  
1259 Dryden Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850-8795

Dear Mr. St. Laurent,

Thank you for contacting my office regarding the Protect IP Act of 2011 and H.R. 3261. Stop Online Piracy Act or SOPA. I value hearing from residents of the 24th Congressional District and take your ideas and concerns very seriously.

As you know, S.968, the Protect IP Act of 2011, was introduced in the United States Senate by Senator Patrick Leahy on May 12, 2011. The Protect IP Act would strengthen online intellectual property rights by empowering the United States Attorney General (AG) and intellectual property rights owners to take legal action against Internet sites dedicated to infringing activities. Furthermore, it grants the AG authority to commence action against individuals using nondomestic domain names for purposes of intellectual property rights infringement. Perhaps most importantly, in cases where individual persons cannot be identified, this legislation would alter current statutes and give the AG authority to pursue legal claims against domain names themselves.

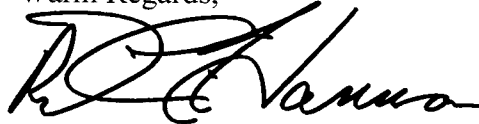
As for SOPA, the House Judiciary Committee conducted a hearing on the bill on November 16, 2011 with negative results. The bill would allow copyright holders and the government to demand the removal of links from search engines and social networks that provide online piracy. Many in Congress believe this bill goes after the wrong companies like ebay, Facebook, and Google who have so far done a good job at blocking sites who promote piracy. Instead of punishing American companies, many believe we should be focused on rogue foreign websites, and not the incidental violations on sites where the majority of content is legal.

Like you, I believe strongly in the importance of free speech, as it is a cornerstone of American democracy. In addition, an individual's hard work, ingenuity and creativity deserve the strongest protections possible. For these reasons, I am committed to protecting an individual's freedom of speech, as well as their right to fully reap the benefits of their own hard work.

While I am sure you may not agree with every vote I cast representing you, you will always know my rationale for the decisions I make on the House floor. I am committed to open government and transparency. That is why I post explanations for final passage votes on each House bill on my Facebook and Twitter websites.

Again, thank you contacting me to share your thoughts. I look forward to working with you and for you in the days and years ahead. Please do not hesitate to contact any of my offices in the future if I or my staff can be of assistance, and feel free to visit my website at <https://hanna.house.gov/> to sign up for "e-newsletters" regarding issues that are important to you.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Hanna", written in a cursive style.

RICHARD HANNA  
U.S. Representative

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