



NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

November 28, 2011

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy and Senator Hatch:

On behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), I am writing to express our support for the PROTECT IP Act of 2011 (S968).

In the past decade, counterfeiting and piracy have increased to threatening levels due to the Internet. Criminals are now exploiting the unrestricted distribution opportunities that the Internet has to offer, expanding their illicit activities and profits. They create rogue Internet websites to sell of a myriad of products including counterfeit pharmaceuticals; toothpaste; and baby formula, all of which pose a serious risk to the safety and health of the American consumer. Moreover, organized crime rings who deal in drug and human trafficking are now getting involved in online counterfeiting and piracy, including through the sale of pirated DVDs, as there is an incredibly low risk associated with the sale of counterfeit goods, while reaping high profit margins.

Consumers can easily find these sites through well-known search engines, and they often look exactly like legitimate sites. These rogue sites are often based overseas, outside the reach of U.S. law enforcement. S968 will provide law enforcement the tools necessary to prevent these foreign "rogue" websites, dedicated to the online piracy and the sale of counterfeit good, from accessing the American consumer. Through S968, the United States Department of Justice the authorization it needs to prevent these rogue sites from profiting off of the sale of counterfeit goods; authorize the Attorney General to serve an order on U.S.-based Internet third parties, such as search engines and payment processors, requiring them to either prevent access or cease doing business with the foreign "rogue" site; and enable victims of the site to bring action against owner or registrant of the site.

Piracy and counterfeiting pose a serious risk to the health, safety and well-being of our communities throughout the nation. Therefore, the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) supports the PROTECT IP Act of 2011 (S968).

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Kennard, Sheriff (ret.)
Executive Director