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# Al Gore slams SOPA in now-deleted YouTube video



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Former presidential candidate Al Gore has joined conservatives at the [Heritage Foundation](#) and [Americans for Tax Reform](#) in expressing reservations about controversial [Hollywood-backed copyright legislation](#).

Gore actually went a bit further than the Republican-affiliated groups: in a [now-deleted YouTube video](#) of a speech at a CareerBuilder event, the ex-veep warned that proposals to levy an Internet death penalty against allegedly piratical Web sites "would very probably have the effect of really shutting down the vibrancy of the Internet." (See CNET's [FAQ on SOPA](#).)

It wasn't clear whether Gore was talking about the House of Representatives bill known as the Stop Online Piracy Act, or SOPA, or the Senate bill called Protect IP, and the YouTube video was listed as "removed by the user" by noon PT today. The debate over SOPA in the House Judiciary committee is expected to resume this month; a Senate floor debate on Protect IP will [begin on January 24](#).

CareerBuilder refused to provide details on where or when the event was, citing Gore's [famously restrictive contracts](#) associated with his paid speeches, and did not respond to a question about why the video was removed. ([Gore tried to bar the press](#) from his speech at the 2008 RSA Conference, even though the room was filled with camera- and [iPhone](#)-toting security geeks.)

"Under our speaker contracts, we're not able to comment," Jennifer Sullivan Grasz, CareerBuilder's vice president for corporate communications, told CNET today.

Unlike many issues that roil Washington officialdom, copyright isn't especially partisan: support and opposition to SOPA and Protect IP comes from both major political parties. SOPA's author is Lamar Smith, Hollywood's favorite House Republican; the politician behind Protect IP is Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat.

Gore didn't exactly say he opposed the legislation, but did say that "anything that would serve to threaten the vibrancy and freedom of the Internet in the future, I'm against."

SOPA, of course, represents the latest effort from the Motion Picture Association of America, the Recording Industry Association of America, and their allies to counter what they view as rampant piracy on the Internet, especially offshore sites [such as ThePirateBay.org](#). It would allow the Justice Department to obtain an order to be served on search engines, Internet service providers, and other companies, forcing them to make a suspected piratical Web site effectively vanish. It's opposed ([PDF](#)) by many Internet companies, users, and civil liberties groups.

In other SOPA and Protect IP news:

- The Online News Association [announced yesterday](#) that it opposes SOPA and Protect IP: "We encourage our members to contact their representatives in Congress and ask that they, too, oppose these bills." This follows last month's [similar announcement](#) from the American Society of News Editors.
- Even though GoDaddy has, as CNET [reported last week](#), switched from supporting to opposing SOPA, some customers are still leaving. TwitchTV [said yesterday](#) that "we've officially [moved all our domains](#) off GoDaddy."
- An [analysis](#) from Media Matters, a left-leaning advocacy group, says that the legislation has "received virtually no coverage from major American television news outlets during their evening newscasts and opinion programming."
- Mitch Glazier, senior executive vice president at the RIAA, [wrote](#) a critique of the OPEN Act that opponents are positioning as an alternative to SOPA. Glazier said that a patent case involving Apple and Kodak using a process envisioned by the [OPEN Act](#) took 33 months to decide (on the other hand, that was a contested patent case, not an uncontested copyright case, which would be far speedier).
- The Cato Institute's Julian Sanchez [took a look](#) at Hollywood's claims about the economic benefits of SOPA, and concludes they're wildly exaggerated.
- MPAA chairman Chris Dodd [told Bloomberg TV](#) that at least now "no one is arguing about whether we ought to deal with these rogue criminal foreign sites that steal American jobs and products," which, he said, is an improvement. He called charges leveled by the Electronic Frontier Foundation that the legislation is un-American "insulting."
- Marvin Ammori, a First Amendment attorney affiliated with Stanford Law School's Center for Internet & Society, [noted](#) that SOPA and Protect IP target U.S.-based Web sites as well. Supporters "say that the bills only affect foreign infringing sites like The Pirate Bay and MegaUpload," he wrote. "Unfortunately, they're wrong."

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