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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Joint Statement from AFM, AFTRA, DGA, IATSE, IBT and SAG
Regarding the *PROTECT IP Act (S. 968)* and the *STOP Online Piracy Act (HR 3261)***

The following statement was issued by the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), Directors Guild of America (DGA), International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada (IATSE), Screen Actors Guild (SAG), and International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT):

“We thank and commend Senators Reid, Leahy and Kyl as well as Congressmen Smith, Conyers, Goodlatte, Watt and Berman and all the other co-sponsors of the *PROTECT IP Act* and the *Stop Online Piracy Act*, who in the face of an onslaught of mistruths and great pressure to renege on their commitment, stood steadfast in their belief that the uniquely American creativity embodied in our country’s films, TV programs and music deserves to be protected from illegal foreign profiteers. We fought for this legislation because illegal Internet businesses that locate offshore expressly to elude US laws should not escape the very same rules of law that currently apply to illegal US websites – they should not be allowed to reap in profits if they knowingly sell or distribute illicitly gained content and goods which they had no role in creating or financing to the American consumer.

“We recognize that we are currently part of a complex and important debate about the future, not just of the Internet but also of creativity, the American economy, free expression, and a civil society. We believe that the light should be being shined on every aspect of this discussion and on all of those who have a stake in it. We believe we should discuss what an unregulated ‘free’ Internet means for the future of content, just as we should also discuss the importance of an open Internet.

“We welcome this debate. We hope a new tone can be set and it is not one that turns our advocacy for this legislation into an implication that we promote censorship. Our commitment to the First Amendment is decades old and long established – it is a matter of public record from long before the word ‘Internet’ was part of anyone’s vocabulary. If one truly embraces free expression, they do not take down the Library of Congress websites, the very symbol of our country’s belief in knowledge and learning. We would hope a new tone can be set that does not pit the creativity and innovation of our directors, actors, performers, craftspeople, and technicians against those innovators in other industries. We hope a new tone can be set that does not include website attacks, blacklists, blackouts, and lies. We believe an Internet that does not allow outright stealing has to be the Internet of the future or all the promises it holds will be unrealized.

“We are committed to open debate. We are equally as committed to protecting our members’ ability to create and to earn a living while doing so. We will work with Chairmen Leahy and Smith to make both possible.”

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