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November 7, 2005

Mike Sodrel
Bloomington Regional Office
812 South Walnut Street
Bloomington, IN 47401

Re: Please Oppose the MPAA and RIAA's "Content Protection" Bills

Dear : Congressman Mike Sodrel

I am opposed to the Analog Content Protection Act, Broadcast Flag Authorization Act and HD Radio Content Protection Act. I believe in the rights of the consumer to "fair use" of copyrighted materials. The MPAA and RIAA would like nothing more that to take away those rights, and I think that is wrong. As a consumer and constituent, the government ought not make legislation that disregards the freedoms granted in the Sony vs. Betamax precedent. In addition, arbitrarily limiting technology, as proposed by the MPAA and RIAA, will stifle innovation. Media should not all of the sudden be granted special legal treatment today because the format in which the consumer receives content has evolved from analogue to digital. If these "content protection" laws are granted to the media cartels, freedoms that I have enjoyed my entire life will be taken away. This will effectively create criminals out of law-abiding citizens.

As my Representative, I urge you to investigate and oppose the Analog Content Protection Act, Broadcast Flag Authorization Act and HD Radio Content Protection Act, proposed by the RIAA and MPAA to Congress at the House Judiciary Committee hearing on Content Protection in the Digital Age, on Thursday, November 3rd, 2005.

Innovation depends on the ability to creatively add functionality to existing systems. If digital television and radio were to be locked down, it would limit my ability to use digital signals in the same ways I currently listen to, watch and use radio and television. If the RIAA and MPAA were to have their way, every future digital radio in every car and home would be limited to the uses that Hollywood executives currently imagine they could accept. Every digital television would be locked down by fixed rules, so that open source developers and American innovators could not adapt or improve upon them. And every audiovisual device - including DVD recorders, camcorders, VHS VCRs with digital outputs - would be encumbered with red tape and constant upgrading.

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None of these restrictions will impede or punish digital piracy; they will merely impede and punish innocent American television, radio and computer owners. Indeed, when consumers realize they can do even less with their digital media than they could do with analog equivalents, it would be no surprise if they chose to seek out freely available content with no such restrictions.

Each of these proposals is an incredible and far-reaching attempt by an industry to control and limit consumer choice, to constrict and cripple future audio and video technology, and to eliminate the fair use rights of American citizens.

Please oppose these acts on my behalf. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Nicholas A. Shertzer

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