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## House Judiciary Committee Bill Would Crack Down on IP Theft

### **Prioritizing Resources and Organization for Intellectual Property Act of 2007 Heads to House Floor for Vote**

*By John Eggerton -- Broadcasting & Cable, 4/30/2008 2:02:00 PM*

The House Judiciary Committee passed a studio-backed bill that would put more teeth in a government-pledged crackdown on intellectual-property theft.

The [Prioritizing Resources and Organization for Intellectual Property Act of 2007](#) (or "Pro IP" act, for short) passed on a voice vote without debate and now heads to the floor for a vote in the House.

The bill puts additional teeth -- resources and organizational structure -- in the Justice Department's pledge to crack down on intellectual-property crimes, including an office in the White House devoted to the issue. A new Intellectual Property Enforcement Representative would be established in the executive office of the White House to coordinate enforcement.

In response to concerns that the White House might try to dictate policy from that perch, the bill makes clear that the role of the White House representative is to coordinate, not to make policy.

The bill was already amended in subcommittee to remove a provision that would have awarded multiple statutory damages for compilations that infringed on copyright. That would have meant that someone who copied a protected CD could have been liable for statutory damages for each song.

[Public Knowledge](#), which pushed for that change, also said it was pleased that the bill as passed in committee "makes clear that there has to be a 'substantial connection' between property to be seized, such as a computer, a car or a house, and any violations of the copyright law."

A Senate version of an enforcement-toughening bill, [S. 2317](#), was introduced last fall.

The [Copyright Alliance](#), which includes broadcasters, producers, sports leagues, and publishers (*Broadcasting & Cable's* parent, Reed Elsevier, among them), praised passage of the bill.

"With a weakened economy and rising unemployment, it is critical that the creative industries -- providers of millions of high-paying U.S. jobs -- have their rights protected," Copyright Alliance executive director [Patrick Ross](#) said.

"The PRO IP Act contains numerous means to increase copyright enforcement both domestically, as well as abroad, where the U.S. Trade Representative's most recent report shows that piracy remains rampant," he added. "Given the high stakes involved, we expect expedient action by the full House of Representatives."

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