



# Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO

**National IPR Coordination Center  
Symposium: Online IP Theft in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
September 14, 2011**

**Comments of Paul E. Almeida, President,  
Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO**

Thank you, Director Morton, for inviting my participation today. Thank you also for your courageous leadership in fighting online infringement and the sale of counterfeit goods. Thank you as well to each of the government and private-sector representatives who are here today for all you do to combat digital theft.

I am Paul Almeida, President of the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO. The Department is a coalition of 21 national unions representing more than four million professional and technical people.

Among those unions are nine representing hundreds of thousands of creative professionals and other workers in the arts, entertainment, and media industries. Their members include actors, stage employees and technicians, musicians, writers, editors, and many others.

My message is simple. For these skilled professionals, online infringement costs jobs, steals wages, and cuts benefits.

In these unique industries, many hard-working professionals depend on residuals and royalties for much of their incomes. Backend payments from repeated showings of films and television shows, and royalties from recordings, keep them afloat between projects. Those payments also fund health insurance and pension programs.

By costing the arts, entertainment, and media industries billions of dollars, digital theft steals the capital that should fund hundreds of thousands of jobs. Too few people who download or stream entertainment illegally recognize, though, that they are stealing jobs, wages, and benefits from workers. That reality lends a special urgency to the work that so many of you do.

Online theft offers a rare case where the facts, the politics, and the policy align. The facts are straightforward. Online theft inflicts economic damage in a tough economic time. The politics are remarkable. Republicans and Democrats, business and labor, House and Senate and Executive Branch – all agree we should protect U.S. innovation, creativity, and intellectual property.

And the policy? The nine arts, entertainment, and media unions that I have the honor to represent unanimously support the PROTECT IP Act, Senate Bill 968. PROTECT IP stands for the Preventing Real Online Threats to Economic Creativity and Theft of Intellectual Property Act. These nine unions – and the hundreds of thousands of members whom they represent – look forward to passing the PROTECT IP Act in this Congress. That act will offer public law enforcement and private parties – the people in this room – more and necessary tools to fight infringement.

I started these brief comments with thanks. The alignment of the facts, the politics, and the policy means that I should extend those thanks:

to President Obama, for his February 8, 2011 Executive Order establishing intellectual property enforcement advisory committees and more generally, the strong support of this Administration;

to Vice President Biden, for his steadfast advocacy for intellectual property;

to Senator Leahy, for his leadership of the Senate Judiciary Committee and introduction of the PROTECT IP Act, which now has 29 co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle;

to White House Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator Victoria Espinel, for her tireless and inspired outreach that has brought both government agencies and private parties to new levels of collaboration;

to the AFL-CIO; its president, Richard Trumka; its Executive Council, and its affiliated unions, for their powerful solidarity at every turn; and

to you. Thank you all.

####

*The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE), is a coalition of 21 national and international unions that represent professional and technical people. Together the unions affiliated with DPE represent over four million people in more than 300 occupations. Among them are professionals in the arts, entertainment, and media; engineering, science, and information technology; education and information resources; health care; and public administration. DPE is the largest association of professional and technical workers in the United States. Visit its website at [www.dpeaflcio.org](http://www.dpeaflcio.org).*

*For the DPE Fact Sheet, Intellectual Property Theft: A Threat to U.S. Workers, Industries, and Our Economy, see <http://dpeaflcio.org/programs-publications/issue-fact-sheets/>. For a June 1, 2011 article by the presidents of four entertainment industry unions, Digital Theft Hurts U.S. Workers, see [http://www.aflcio.org/mediacenter/speakout/protect\\_ip\\_act.cfm?elink](http://www.aflcio.org/mediacenter/speakout/protect_ip_act.cfm?elink). For the AFL-CIO Executive Council statement of March 2, 2010, Piracy Is a Danger to Entertainment Professionals, see <http://www.aflcio.org/aboutus/thisistheaflcio/ecouncil/ec03032010h.cfm>.*