



Press Release

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF WIKIMEDIA DC ON SOPA AND PIPA

WASHINGTON, D.C., JANUARY 18, 2011: Wikimedia District of Columbia (Wikimedia DC) stands firmly with the decision of Wikipedia editors and administrators to shut down the English Wikipedia for 24 hours on January 18, 2012, in protest of the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) in the U.S. House of Representatives, and the PROTECTIP Act (PIPA) in the U.S. Senate.

Since its inception, neutrality has been a fundamental value of Wikipedia and an essential component of its mission to become a free and accessible resource of global knowledge. However, as SOPA and PIPA threaten to disrupt the very foundations on which Wikipedia is built, over 1800 individuals in the active community of Wikipedia contributors recognized the need to act in order to confront these dangerous legislations. By requiring that sites proactively police content merely suspected of copyright infringement, both pieces of legislation place undue and unrealistic burdens particularly on global sites that depend on user-generated content, like Wikipedia.

"Open Internet has always been vital to our goal of empowering individuals and communities through free access to global knowledge," says Katie Filbert, President of Wikimedia DC. "While we recognize that copyright holders have legitimate concerns regarding their property rights, we do not believe that the solution should come on the backs of millions of innocent online users. Open Internet, like free speech, must always be protected."

ABOUT WIKIMEDIA DC. Wikimedia District of Columbia is the official regional chapter of the Wikimedia Foundation in the District, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Delaware. A non-profit educational organization, Wikimedia DC is dedicated to the advancement of general knowledge and the collection, development, and dissemination of educational content under a free license or in the public domain.