

February 28, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: H.R. 275, the "Global Online Freedom Act of 2007"

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner:

The undersigned trade associations and business groups, representing thousands of United States companies, have deep concerns about H.R. 275, the "Global Online Freedom Act of 2007," approved by the House Foreign Affairs Committee in October. This bill was referred to both the House Energy & Commerce and House Judiciary Committees, and since the referral time has since expired could now be up for consideration by the full House of Representatives.

We share the concern of Congress for human rights and freedom of expression around the world. It is our understanding that the intent of H.R. 275 is to ensure that the Internet and information networks upon which we have come to rely do not become a vehicle for undermining those rights and freedoms. Despite the good intentions behind the Global Online Freedom Act, we are very concerned that the legislation would actually undermine the stated goal of the bill by effectively limiting the legitimate business activities of U.S. companies in parts of the world. Such restrictions on U.S. participation in global Internet operations would have the effect of limiting the very means of free speech and communication the legislation intends to protect.

One example of the practical problems associated with the bill is that it could prohibit U.S. companies from maintaining certain customer information on a computer in any number of foreign countries. As indicated by the range and number of associations represented as signatories to this letter, we believe that this bill would have a negative impact on a diverse and broad range of United States businesses.

We respectfully request that H.R. 275 not be placed on the House calendar at this time, pending a thorough review of the full impact of the bill to ensure that it does not interfere with the ability of global businesses to operate and provide information around the world.

Respectfully,

AeA
Business Roundtable
Business Software Alliance
Coalition for Employment Through Exports
Computer & Communications Industry Association
Digital Media Association
Direct Marketing Association

Electronic Retailing Association
Emergency Committee for American Trade
Information Technology Association of America
Information Technology Industry Council
Interactive Advertising Bureau
Internet Commerce Coalition
National Association of Manufacturers
National Business Coalition on E-Commerce and Privacy
National Foreign Trade Council
National Retail Federation
NetChoice
NetCoalition
Organization for International Investment
Retail Industry Leaders Association
Software & Information Industry Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
United States Telecom Association
US Council for International Business
USA*Engage
US-China Business Council

Cc: Members of the United States House of Representatives