November 18, 1999

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

DIGITAL THEFT DETERRENCE AND COPYRIGHT DAMAGES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3456) to amend statutory damages provisions of title 17, U.S.C., and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I expect no objection to the request.

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There was no objection.

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Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3456) to amend statutory damages provisions of title 17, U.S.C., and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.
Property and the Committee on the Judiciary support H.R. 3456 in a bipartisan manner, and I urge its adoption today.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, at this time I have one more bill and possibly two more bills that are very brief, but I would be remiss as we conclude the first session of the 106th Congress if I did not convey my personal expressions of thanks to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. Berman), the ranking member of the subcommittee; to each Democrat and Republican member of the subcommittee; to our very fine chairman, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Hyde); and to the staff on both the Democratic and Republican side for the accomplishments.

And pardon our immodesty, but I think we have realized accomplishments during this first session.

Mr. Berman. Mr. Speaker, continuing my reservation of objection, first let me just respond to the last comment of my friend.

As he knows, and I have discussed this privately, I believe it was a real pleasure to be his ranking member this past year. We did get a lot done. We did it. I think, on a bipartisan basis on almost every single issue we faced and accomplished quite a bit, probably not as much as the Transportation and Infrastructure committee, but a substantial work product, much of which was in the legislation that passed as part of the non-omnibus appropriations bill.

I also want to express my appreciation to the staff both of the subcommittees and the full committees and to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Hyde) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Conyers) as well for all their support.

On this particular legislation which is an important bill, it comes under our obligations under the intellectual property provisions of Article 1 of the Constitution to reassess the efficacy of our laws in protecting copyright. Toward that end, earlier this year the Committee on the Judiciary in both Houses resolved to address several concerns which have been brought to our attention regarding the deterrence of copyright infringement and penalties for such infringement in those instances when it occurs.

While I support the bill that we presently have before us, I have some concerns about the potential for overreach in the bill which I would like to express.

Mr. Speaker, I continue my reservation of objection, and I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Coble).

Mr. Coble. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

While I was praising all my colleagues on the Judiciary and on the subcommittee, and, of course, intellectual property, inevitably omissions are committed and I inadvertently failed to mention the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Conyers), the ranking member of the full committee.

Mr. Berman. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The Speaker pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

The Speaker read the bill, as follows:

H.R. 3456

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Digital Theft Deterrence and Copyright Damages Improvement Act of 1999”.

SEC. 2. STATUTORY DAMAGES ENHANCEMENT.

Section 504(c) of title 17, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “$500” and inserting “$750”; and

(B) by striking “$300,000” and inserting “$300,000”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “$100,000” and inserting “$150,000.”

SEC. 3. SENTENCING COMMISSION GUIDELINES.

Within 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, or within 120 days after the first date on which there is a sufficient number of voting members of the Sentencing Commission to constitute a quorum, whichever is later, the Commission shall promulgate emergency guideline amendments to implement section 2(c) of the No Electronic Theft (NET) Act (28 U.S.C. 994 note) in accordance with the procedures set forth in section 21(a) of the Sentencing Act of 1987, as though the authority under that Act had not expired.

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by section 2 shall apply to any action brought on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, regardless of the date on which the alleged activity that is the basis of the action occurred.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONDEMNING RECENT HATE CRIMES IN ILLINOIS AND INDIANA

Mr. Coble. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 254) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives condemning recent hate crimes in Illinois and Indiana, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The Speaker pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

The Speaker read the resolution, as follows:

H. Res. 254

Whereas diversity and tolerance are essential principles of an open and free society;

Whereas all people deserve to be safe within their communities, free to live, work and worship without fear of violence and bigotry;

Whereas crimes motivated by hatred against African-Americans, Jews, Asian-Americans, or other groups undermine the fundamental values of our Nation;

Whereas the communities of Skokie, the West Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago, Northbrook, and Urbana, Illinois, and Bloomington, Indiana, were terrorized by hate crimes over the Fourth of July weekend, a time when our Nation celebrates its commitment to freedom and liberty;

Whereas hate crimes tear at the fabric of American society, leave scars on victims and their families, and weaken our sense of community and purpose;

Whereas Ricky Byrdsong, at age 43, was a loving husband and father, an inspiring community leader, and a former basketball coach at Northwestern University;

Whereas Ricky Byrdsong was a man of deep religious faith who touched the lives of countless people and whose death is mourned by his family, friends, and community, and by the Nation;

Whereas Won-Joon Yoon, at age 26, was the only son in a family of 6, and was soon to become a doctoral student in Economics at Indiana University;

Whereas Won-Joon Yoon was a man who, through his demeanor and firmly-held Christian beliefs, positively influenced those who knew him, and whose death is mourned by his family, friends, and community, and by the citizens of the United States and Korea; and

Whereas individuals who commit crimes based on hate and bigotry must be held responsible for their actions and must be