

US Senate bill seeks to crack down on online piracy

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A man walks pass the Chinese Web search giant Baidu's head office in Beijing. A bill introduced in the US Senate on Monday would give US law enforcement authorities more tools to crack down on websites engaged in piracy of movies, television shows and music.

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The Combating Online Infringement and Counterfeits Act has received support from both parties and was introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy, a Democrat from Vermont, and Senator Orrin Hatch, a Republican from Utah.

The bill will give the [Justice Department](#) the "tools to track and shut

down websites devoted to providing access to unauthorized downloads, streaming or sale of copyrighted content and counterfeit goods," Leahy's office said.

The illegal products offered by websites, many of which are based outside of the United States, range from movies, television shows and music to pharmaceuticals and consumer products, it said in a statement.

"Each year, online [piracy](#) and the sale of counterfeit goods cost American businesses billions of dollars, and result in hundreds of thousands of lost jobs," Leahy said.

"In today's [global economy](#) the Internet has become the glue of international commerce -- connecting consumers with a wide-array of products and services worldwide," Hatch said. "But it's also become a tool for online thieves to sell counterfeit and pirated goods, making hundreds of millions of dollars off of stolen American intellectual property.

"This legislation is critical to our continued fight against online piracy and counterfeiting," Hatch said.

The bill gives the Justice Department an expedited process for cracking down on websites engaged in piracy including having a court issue an order against a domain name that makes pirated goods available.

In May, the Congressional International Anti-Piracy Caucus condemned Canada, China, Mexico, Russia and Spain for failing to crack down on Web piracy and said theft of intellectual property in those countries was at "alarming levels."

The bipartisan caucus also released what it called a "list of notorious offenders" -- websites involved in making available unauthorized copies

of the works of US creators.

The websites singled out by the caucus, made up of 70 members of the Senate and House of Representatives, were China's Baidu, Canada's isoHunt, Ukraine's MP3fiesta, Sweden's Pirate Bay, Germany's Rapidshare and Luxembourg's RMX4U.

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