U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

July 16, 2003

Are you Concerned about Internet Piracy? Computer Security? Online Privacy? Child Pornography?

Do You Believe Law Enforcement Agencies Should Have the Necessary Tools to Deal with Online Scam Artists?

Cosponsor H.R. 2752, the "Author, Consumer, and Computer Owner Protection and Security Act of 2003"

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to join us as co-sponsor of H.R.2752, the "Author, Consumer, and Computer Owner Protection and Security Act of 2003" (ACCOPS Act), which we introduced today. H.R. 2752 provides authors, consumers, and computer owners with much-needed protection against several online threats.

Criminals and a variety of other scam artists are increasingly using the Internet to engage in illegal activities. The relative anonymity of the Internet, the technological savvy of some malefactors, and the sheer number of scams collectively make it difficult to investigate and prosecute many online illegalities. Further, current law does not, in some instances, adequately address the nature of these illegalities. Thus, law enforcement authorities need additional resources and statutory authority to effectively deal with these online scams. H.R. 2752 provides law enforcement with the tools they need.

Hackers, spammers, and a variety of online scam artists have been known to "hijack" the personal computers (PCs) of the unsuspecting, and use those computers to engage in a variety of illegal or unauthorized activities. A July 12, 2003 *New York Times* article described how some PCs have been hijacked to distribute pornography. A series of recent congressional hearings detailed how popular peer-to-peer (P2P) software programs sometimes "hijack" PCs to distribute child pornography and copyright-infringing material, come bundled with "spyware," and otherwise jeopardize the privacy and security of PC owners. H.R. 2752 attempts to address this problem. It requires that PC owners receive clear and conspicuous notice, and provide consent, prior to downloading software that would allow third parties to store material on the PC, or use that PC to search for material on other computers.

Criminals and other scam artists frequently use web sites to undertake a variety of illegal activities. Web sites may pose as legitimate payment processors in order to steal financial information, offer copyright-infringing material for download, or sell non-FDA approved drugs. In an effort to escape detection, the operators of these sites often provide false or misleading

contact information when registering the domain name of the web site. In several congressional hearings, law enforcement authorities, consumer protection agencies, and intellectual property rights holders have testified that false domain name registration information has substantially inhibited their investigations of illegalities. H.R. 2752 will address this problem by making it a federal offense to provide false contact information when registering a domain name.

The transnational nature of the Internet significantly hampers law enforcement efforts. If threatened with prosecution in one nation, online scam artists frequently relocate to a friendlier locale, from which they continue their scams unabated. Particularly with regard to copyright infringers, evidence of such attempts to evade U.S. law enforcement abounds. H.R. 2752 requires that the Department of Justice coordinate with foreign governments to bring fugitive copyright infringers to justice.

If you wish to cosponsor, or have any questions about these or other provisions of H.R. 2752, please contact Sampak Garg (x5-6906) or Alec French (x5-2022).

Sincerely,

JOHN CONYERS, JR.
Member of Congress

HOWARD L. BERMAN
Member of Congress