

SOPA 'shelved' indefinitely, but Reddit's Jan. 18 blackout is still on, as PIPA fight continues

Written by Staff

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With a vote on the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) delayed indefinitely due to political pressure, Reddit.com has confirmed with Digital Trends that it still plans to blackout the popular site on Wednesday, in protest of the equally-controversial Protect IP Act (PIPA).

UPDATE: *Wikipedia will also blackout its pages on Wednesday. See more details [here](#), and below.*

A vote on the controversial Stop Online Piracy Act ([SOPA](#)) has been delayed indefinitely, but the fight against Internet censorship continues:

[Reddit.com](#)

will go forward with its

[site-wide blackout](#)

on Wednesday, January 18, to protest the Senate's Protect IP Act (PIPA), Digital Trends has confirmed. PIPA, a similar bill to SOPA, is scheduled to go up for a vote before the Senate on January 24.

"Protect IP Bill is still scheduled for a vote. Senator Reid said on Sunday that they're still going forward with it, so [the Reddit blackout is still on]," said Erik Martin, Reddit's general manager, in a phone interview with Digital Trends on Monday morning.

While SOPA has received the brunt of the backlash, PIPA contains similar provisions, which critics say could usher in an unprecedented level of government-enforced censorship online, harm the underlying infrastructure of the Internet, and hamper online innovation by stifling investment in Internet startups due to a more risky investment environment.

In the face of constituent outrage, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), co-author of PIPA, said [in a statement](#)

on Thursday that he would be willing to remove the portion of the bill that would empower Internet service providers (ISPs) to block access to foreign websites that have been accused to distributing copyrighted material illegally. Despite the possible removal of this highly contentious provision, the Electronic Frontier Foundation's Trevor Timm

[wrote](#)

on the EFF's website today that "the fight is still far from over," due to a number of other potentially "damaging" parts of the bill. These include the "vigilante" provision, which allows

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ISPs to block sites voluntarily, without recourse; and the anti-circumvention provision, which seeks to punish sites that give users information for how to access blocked sites.

In addition to Sen. Leahy's admitted willingness to remove one of the most-criticized parts of PIPA, six Republican senators sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, urging him to postpone a vote on the bill, [reports](#) ComputerWorld.

"We have increasingly heard from a large number of constituents and other stakeholders with vocal concerns about possible unintended consequences of the proposed legislation, including breaches in cybersecurity, damaging the integrity of the Internet, costly and burdensome litigation, and dilution of First Amendment rights," the senators said in the letter. Signers of the letter include Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Jeff Sessions (R-AL), John Cornyn (R-TX) Mike Lee (R-UT), and Tom Coburn (R-OK).

Greater focus on PIPA follows an announcement from House Oversight Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA), a vocal opponent of SOPA, who said that House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) "assured" him that SOPA will not be brought up for a full House vote until consensus on the bill is achieved.

"While I remain concerned about Senate action on the Protect IP Act, I am confident that flawed legislation will not be taken up by this House," Issa said in a statement, quoted by [The Hill](#)

"Majority Leader Cantor has assured me that we will continue to work to address outstanding concerns and work to build consensus prior to any anti-piracy legislation coming before the House for a vote."

Sen. Cantor's promise to shelve SOPA indefinitely — a major win for the opposition — follows [a statement](#)

from President Obama's chief technology officer, Aneesh Chopra, and National Security Staff cybersecurity coordinator Howard Schmidt, which said that the White House "will not support legislation that reduces freedom of expression, increases cybersecurity risk, or undermines the dynamic, innovative global Internet." The statement is not an explicit declaration that President Obama would veto SOPA or PIPA, were they to make it to his desk, but the possibility of such a veto appears to have resonated on Capitol Hill.