

Senator _____,

I am appalled at the way the US Federal Court system is being hijacked by corporations.

The Recording Industry Association of American and others are using the US Civil Courts as a way to punish both the wrong doers and the innocent. In all cases brought by the RIAA, the deck will be stacked in favor of the RIAA simply because they have more money to throw at the problem than an individual and better lawyers than anyone can afford.

I do not support copyright infringement, but I do not support big corporations bullying around citizens because they can, and I definitely do not support proposed legislation that would make distribution of electronic copyrighted material an automatic felony, because, it would hurt many more people than the few that benefited, and it does not require that there be material proof (a list of IPs and such) that the file was downloaded. The sad fact is that the current legislation supports the copyright holders far more than the rights of the people.

Right now both the RIAA and DirecTV are suing people for alleged infringements without any Due Process or conclusive proof and without a judge watching over their actions (as of right now it only takes a clerk's stamp to subpoena an individual). They have become their own police force, without all the restrictions that the police have, and without the assumption of "innocent until proven guilty". Now it's becoming like "You might already be a Millionaire" but in reverse "You might already be sued for Intellectual Property/Copyright Infringement". More legislation does not help; it only gives more rights to the corporations, and less to the US citizen. In the end it looks and smells like extortion, especially by DirecTV (pay us \$3,500 now and settle out of court, go to court and pay us \$10,000 to settle, or take your chances with a judge) just for buying a smartcard reader!

What is the reason why corporations can do this? It's a simple question with a simple answer: Digital Millennium Copyright Act, a law with good intentions, but with major flaws. According to the EFF (EFF.org/share) there are more than 60 million Americans that use file sharing networks. The RIAA (and friends) is trying to make everyone who has copyrighted material a felon (proposed legislation "AACOPS"), and you can bet everyone has copyrighted material on their computer. They could not shut them down because they do have legal uses, so they are instead going after the users instead. Also, why hasn't the RIAA been under investigation as a trust? It is an entity that its members control at least 80% of the current US music market. Not to mention those same corporations have recently been ruled against in a price fixing class-action lawsuit, yet they have not reduced the price of CD's. Not only that they try to bully out smaller independent means of distribution (one reason why the hate file sharing).