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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Joint Statement from AFM, AFTRA, DGA, IATSE, SAG and Teamsters On PROTECT IP Act**

**Los Angeles** – American Federation of Musicians (AFM), American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), Directors Guild of America (DGA), International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada (IATSE), Screen Actors Guild (SAG), and International Brotherhood of Teamsters today released the following statement:

“We commend Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Ranking Member Charles Grassley (R-IA), and Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Christopher Coons (D-DE), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Herb Kohl (D-WI), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), for introducing the PROTECT IP Act today. This legislation will give U.S law enforcement agencies much needed and far more effective tools to fight the growth of illegal international rogue websites and foreign profiteers who directly attack our members’ livelihoods by knowingly trafficking in stolen content.

“As the Guilds and Unions that represent 400,000 creators, performers and craftspeople who create the multitude of diverse films, television programs and sound recordings that are enjoyed by billions of people around the world, we unequivocally support this bill which, by providing protection for our members’ work, clearly shows that our government will not condone or permit the wholesale looting of the American economy and American creativity and ingenuity – regardless of how that looting is disguised on the Internet to fool the American consumer.

“The industry in which our members work employs hundreds of thousands of people directly and millions more in related large and small businesses that support the creation of films, television programs and sound recordings. Rogue websites, which are run by foreign profiteers who play absolutely no role in financing or creating the content they so casually steal, rob our members of the ability to make a living, deplete earnings that would otherwise fund their pension and health plans, and threaten the ability of our industry to provide jobs now and in the future.

“We thank Chairman Leahy and the cosponsors of the PROTECT IP Act for understanding the true nature of this crime and for their consistent advocacy for protecting American content, particularly in the face of unreasoned and irrational claims that attempt to equate the protection of American films, television programs and sound recordings from digital thieves with actions taken by despotic regimes to quell and censor political dissent. Far from threatening free speech rights, this legislation clearly and undeniably protects the creators of speech by combating its theft.

“We look forward to working with Chairman Leahy, the cosponsors of the bill, the members of the Judiciary Committee and their counterparts on the House Judiciary Committee to move the strongest and most effective legislation possible to enactment.”

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