

Dear _____,

I urge you to support the Global Online Freedom Act, H.R. 2271, without any amendments that would hinder its ability to prevent U.S. Internet technology companies from cooperating with repressive governments attempting to limit freedom of expression and access to information.

Governments are now making Internet and technology companies allies in their effort to censor and repress the Internet. For example, the Chinese Government pressured Yahoo! to turn over to its police the names of political dissidents who use the company's e-mail service. One such dissident, journalist Shi Tao, was sentenced to 10 years in prison after being identified by Yahoo!. China convinced Microsoft to shut down Internet blogs in which Chinese users were criticizing their government, and persuaded Google to censor its search engine results.

As it now stands, H.R. 2271 would help ensure that the Internet remains an open forum for free expression in every part of the world, and help American companies resist pressure from foreign governments to compromise their U.S. values of free speech. Specifically, I ask you to protect the key provisions of the Act, which prohibit U.S. companies from locating personally identifiable information in a country that represses freedom of expression and resist providing repressive governments with personally identifiable information of users (except for legitimate law enforcement purposes).

Internet companies have an invaluable role to play in the realization of freedom of expression and information. To help ensure that U.S. companies operating in repressive countries can influence the development of the Internet in a positive way, they must operate on a higher standard than do local providers. Thus far, the leading U.S. companies are not doing so. Their task of standing up to repressive governments is more difficult, though, without clear rules of the road and strong engagement from the U.S. Government.

This bill helps companies stand up by requiring them to tell the U.S. government what terms they are using to filter, limit or affect search results based on a request or policy of a foreign government, and the content they are removing or blocking. This transparency is essential if we are to combat restrictions on freedom of expression around the world.

At this critical time, we call on the U.S. Government to demonstrate leadership in ensuring U.S. companies are not a party to censorship, but are truly a force for greater Internet freedom in the world.

Sincerely,

Send to:

President Barak Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Vice President Joseph Biden
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

AND

Your representatives in Congress