Online piracy bill would hurt internet freedoms.

By: Paulina Jedrzejowski

The Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) was introduced in Congress on October 26, 2011. SOPA was introduced to expand the ability of law enforcement organizations in tracking and clamping down on copyrighted intellectual property and counterfeit goods. In mid January a protest erupted on the Internet spearheaded by Google and Wikipedia, involving hundreds thousand people who wanted to stop Congress from passing SOPA signed the Google anti-censorship petition. Most of the protests involved the scope of SOPA. Under SOPA rules even if there was just one blog posting of unauthorized material, the whole domain would be blocked, severely limiting search engines and unfairly penalizing internet users that do not break copyright laws. Libraries would also have a difficult time functioning under the rules of SOPA.

Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook founder, opposes SOPA and describes the Internet as ‘a powerful tool for a more open and connected world.’ Critics argue that SOPA is an attempt to control and censor the Internet. After these online protests, eighteen senators withdrew support for the controversial bill. Congressman agree that Congress should listen and avoid rushing through a bill that could have many unintended consequences.

Some senators think that the effort put into SOPA is not worth the outcome. “I understand the government is attempting to make the Internet safer for people, companies, and organizations by introducing SOPA, but I also disagree with it. The government can not protect everyone, because everything is already on the Internet,” states sophomore Kayla Baker. But Baker also sees the benefits of SOPA. “SOPA would improve student’s because it would improve their study habits, and students would not be able to cheat on homework and tests as easily as they can today.” Students think SOPA will lower the plagiarism rate in the United States. At a study conducted at the University of Pretoria eighty percent of one hundred fifty undergraduates stated they have plagiarized directly from the Internet at least once. Jessica Comoletti, junior, thinks that after passing SOPA, people will be afraid to use copyrighted material unlawfully, and Kayla Baker feels that it will be harder for them to acquire copyrighted material. On the other hand, Lucy Chu believes passing SOPA will not lower the plagiarism rate because students will find another source to copy from.

According to Curtis High School students, SOPA will also affect teaching techniques. “SOPA will affect education because teachers use outside sources and it may affect them getting the source,” states Jessica Comoletti. However, because of the way teenagers use the Internet SOPA will hit them the hardest. “Teenagers get their music from websites such as Limewire, which may be blocked by SOPA,” states Comoletti, while Baker states, “Students will be mostly effected by SOPA because students use online sources such as Google for schoolwork, and SOPA might put a block on these websites.” Students and the large negative effect toward SOPA the government decided to postpone the voting for the bill until a consensus is formed. President Barack Obama stated he would veto the bill if it passes through Congress.

With papers shuffled, people anxiously waiting in lines that spanned the room, the New York Immigration Coalition’s Consulate on Wheels program served residents of the community for nearly 40 hours. From eight in the morning to four in the afternoon, the Mexican Consulate aided over 620 people in the James P. Molinaro Library with issues such as legal documentation, proper identification and passports.

Josephine * was able to renew her passport and was very pleased that should could do it on Staten Island. When talking about some of the problems she faced she voiced her opinion about the discrimination she feels when asked for identification. “Many undocumented immigrants cannot get any identification and have nothing to show for when asked by their children’s school. I feel bad for their children who were born here and still face discrimination because of their parents status,” said Josephine. Marco* who was in line getting his identification card said, “I come from Mexico and I feel discriminates because people judge me and assume I am undocumented. People just judge and do not take the time to know who we are as people and not look at us in spite.”

When asked about the benefits of the Mexican Consulate being run in Curtis High School, parent coordinator Mr. Tom Hepworth replied “Families who came to Curtis can now have identification which would make it easier to get into the building without a problem. It also enables them to open up bank accounts and purchase all sorts of things.” Hepworth continued to mention the benefits for immigrant parents as well. “One of our partners for working with adults is the New York Immigration Coalition. The Consulate on Wheels is their idea to better engage immigrant parents. Through a partnership with this coalition, the city council has committed funds for a family resource center which would provide literacy classes, social services, job readiness programs and even job training programs.”

Kevin Pierre, who helps out with the “El Centro de Imigrantes” said that he is working with Curtis High School to get night classes for people in the community to learn English. Ferrera is also trying to do a college and fellowship for parents who do not know English and need help with these topics. Marta * who renewed her passport was excited about it. “That’s wonderful, my son is in the eighth grade and this will really help.”

Curtis High School is the first Staten Island school to do host the consulate program. Previous locations for the consulate have been in Port Richmond. * names be omitted

**Students cope with disabled parents**

Beyond responsibilities at school, students become caretakers for ailing parents.

By: Nicole Clemons

When the 3:35 bell rings, students go home. Whether it’s to Park Hill or Todli Hill, Warriors go home to their families. In the stereotypical high school life, teens are welcomed home to parents that will care for them; but life is John Hughes movie.

Plagued by violence, financial problems, or sickness, an abundance of high school students have taken on the duty of caring for their families.

Statistics from the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1993 and U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services 2002 the show that in the United States, parents with disabilities represent approximately 15% of all parents of children under age eighteen. The percentage of parents with disabilities is estimated to be higher among notable groups: 24% of single parents have disabilities, 18.7% of all African American parents and 16.3% of Hispanic parents have disabilities. Additionally estimating the number of U.S. parents with disabilities with children under age 18 have ranged from 6.9 million to 8.4 million. It can be very hard for students to share their home life with their friends or teachers. “Some of the disabilities are mental and psychiatric. Sometimes a sign of disability is not visible. If your mom is in a wheelchair, it is easier to say that she cannot do anything because she is physically unable. If your mom is schizophrenic, it’s harder to tell that she is incapable of doing a certain task. Children have to hide the pain behind the windows of revealing to other people of their parents’ disabilities...” said Tom Hepworth, parent coordinator.

As a senior in Curtis High School, I have the responsibility of caring for a disabled parent. The hardest part is waking up not knowing what the day will bring. With a father who has renal failure, I know it’s tough on my mom to take care of the family so I always offer to help her with chores and meals, making her job easier. With renal failure, my father must attend a five hour dialysis session three times a week. The dialysis provides an artificial replacement for lost kidney function. When my father comes home from dialysis he can be really out of it and I have to keep an eye on him, make sure he eats and stays hydrated. There have been times when taking care of my father has gotten in the way of attending school and completing homework assignments. Dealing with a parent with a disability requires a lot of patience and organization. Knowing that there are other students in the same circumstance as me gives me assurance to handle my family and school.

Born into a family with two legally blind teachers, Jenessica Lopez, senior, tries to balance taking care of her parents and her schoolwork. “My mom started losing her vision at age 12 and lost it completely at age 15. My dad began losing his vision at age 18 and completely lost it at 20.” Lopez says growing up with disabled parents was and still is a challenge. “Shopping for clothes and hanging out with friends, holding these life plates and cups are one of the biggest challenges. It’s hard to explain what the experience is like to my mom since she can’t see.” Lopez’s situation has also interfered with her attendance at school. “Growing up, it was harder for me to do household chores and get independent. When I needed help with, it would be really hard to describe to my mom what I have to do. As I got older, I had to miss school to take my mom to her doctors appointments.” Lopez rarely talks about her parents’ disability because she doesn’t want the sympathy. “I’m not ashamed of who my parents are and what we have to deal with,” said Lopez.

“Living with two parents who are constantly fighting off sicknesses makes it hard on me because I have a bigger responsibility than most kids. My father has encephalopathy and two aneurysms and my mother has leukemia, diabetes, scoliosis and a brain tumor.” said Theodora Hadzi. Growing up with two parents that need someone to take care of them. “Some times I would have to stay overnight in the emergency room waiting with my mom or dad. At times it could be very stressful because it keeps me from school and focusing on all my school work,” said Hadzi. Teenagers dealing with parents with disabilities have a better understanding and view on what others are going through “Helping out my parents with disabilities makes me have more responsibility and a better perspective,” said Hadzi.

**Consultate on wheels comes to Curtis**

New program engages immigrant parents.

By: Stephanie Hernandez

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