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As of today, the controversies over the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) in the House of Representatives, and PIPA, the companion bill in the Senate, are on hold. The White House, the tech industry and just about everyone else have taken a hard stance against passage of these bills.

Everyone, that is, except the music and film industries in America, and their paid Congressional friends. The chief sponsor of SOPA, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), has even run in to major opposition to the bill among his constituents in Texas. But he is determined to run the entertainment industry playbook in an effort to get these dreadful bills passed.

There are two ways you can look at this. It is either (1) A critical issue about freedom on the Internet that will affect you and your clients, or (2) a welcome respite from the seemingly endless rounds of Republican debates. Either one is correct.

Actually, the correct answer is number (1). And here is why.

SOPA is based on the ridiculous notion that Internet Service Providers and Web Hosting Services are secretly behind the piracy of music and films worldwide, and that this piracy is the major reason why sales of CDs and movies on DVDs are falling. The reality, as most research has shown, is that piracy occurs from industry outsiders, not Internet geeks. And that sales are falling because the entertainment industry is trying to cling to an outdated business model that no longer works.

Setting all that aside, and all of the 15 years of efforts by the film and music industries to avoid moving into the 21st century with their products. And setting aside the fact that the US Department of Homeland Security surely has something more important to do than chasing copyright infringers. And setting aside the fact that the so-called "losses" to Internet piracy are bogus numbers made up in back rooms in a effort to get this ugly legislation passed, there is one thing you need to know.

This legislation will allow the federal government to shut down any web site it

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But this one is important, and you should follow it.

For your own sake, and that of your clients.

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