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11:10am

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The 19 Senators Who Voted To Censor The Internet

from the *free-speech-isn't-free* dept

This is hardly a surprise but, this morning (as previously [announced](#)), the lame duck Senate Judiciary Committee [unanimously voted to move forward with censoring the internet](#) via the COICA bill -- despite a bunch of law professors explaining to them how this law is a clear [violation of the First Amendment](#). What's really amazing is that many of the same Senators have been speaking out *against* internet censorship in other countries, yet they happily vote to approve it here because it's seen as a way to make many of their largest campaign contributors happy. There's very little chance that the bill will actually get passed by the end of the term but, in the meantime, we figured it might be useful to highlight the 19 Senators who voted to censor the internet this morning:

- Patrick J. Leahy -- Vermont
- Herb Kohl -- Wisconsin
- Jeff Sessions -- Alabama
- Dianne Feinstein -- California
- Orrin G. Hatch -- Utah
- Russ Feingold -- Wisconsin
- Chuck Grassley -- Iowa
- Arlen Specter -- Pennsylvania
- Jon Kyl -- Arizona

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- Lindsey Graham -- South Carolina
- Dick Durbin -- Illinois
- John Cornyn -- Texas
- Benjamin L. Cardin -- Maryland
- Tom Coburn -- Oklahoma
- Sheldon Whitehouse -- Rhode Island
- Amy Klobuchar -- Minnesota
- Al Franken -- Minnesota
- Chris Coons -- Delaware

This should be a list of shame. You would think that our own elected officials would understand the First Amendment but, apparently, they have no problem turning the US into one of the small list of authoritarian countries that censors internet content it does not like (in this case, content some of its largest campaign contributors do not like). We already have laws in place to deal with infringing content, so don't buy the excuse that this law is about stopping infringement. This law takes down entire websites based on the government's say-so. First Amendment protections make clear that if you are going to stop any specific speech, it has to be extremely specific speech. This law has no such restrictions. It's really quite unfortunate that these 19 US Senators are the first American politicians to publicly vote in favor of censoring speech in America.


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And I'd thought Al Franken was a decent politician until now...