



For Immediate Release: September 30, 2009

Barrow P2P Legislation Voted Out of Energy and Commerce Committee, Heads to House Floor

Washington, D.C. – The Energy and Commerce Committee today completed their markup of H.R. 1319, the Informed P2P User Act, legislation that Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) introduced this year with Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack (CA-45) and Congressman Joe Barton (TX-6). The House of Representatives will now consider H.R. 1319 on the floor.

“Folks who connect to these networks don’t even realize that their most personal and private files are visible to everyone else on the network at any time,” said Barrow in his statement to the Committee. “They’re posting their tax returns, financial records, and personal messages on the Internet, and don’t even know it... We have truth in lending and truth in labeling – I think it’s time we had truth in networking.”

Many people use peer-to-peer (P2P) software on their personal computers for legal, and sometimes illegal, file sharing. These programs are one of the fastest-growing uses of Internet technology, yet many of these programs can make ALL of the files on a personal computer available to anyone else using the same P2P software. Personal records, such as tax returns and medical records, have been reported stolen.

H.R. 1319 will make Internet users more aware of the inherent privacy and security risks associated with P2P file sharing programs.

Specifically, the Informed P2P User Act:

- Ensures that P2P file sharing programs cannot be installed without providing clear notice and obtaining informed consent of the authorized computer user.
- Makes it unlawful to prevent the authorized user of a computer to prevent reasonable efforts to:
 1. Block the installation of a peer-to-peer file sharing program, and
 2. Disable or remove any peer-to-peer file sharing program.
- Gives enforcement authority to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

A recent report indicated that P2P software was implicated in a security breach involving Marine One, the helicopter used by President Obama. Another high profile case involved Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer.

Congressman Barrow's entire statement to the Energy and Commerce Committee follows:

Statement of Congressman John Barrow
Committee on Energy and Commerce Markup of the Informed P2P User Act
September 30, 2009

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I'm glad we're meeting today to mark up H.R. 1319, the Informed Peer to Peer User Act, which I cosponsored with Congresswoman Bono Mack. This bill tackles the privacy and security risks that come with peer-to-peer file sharing programs. A lot of folks who connect to these networks don't even realize that their most personal and private files are visible to everyone else on the network at any time. They're posting their tax returns, financial records, and personal messages on the Internet, and don't even know it. I hope that our work on this Committee will come up with a strategy that will let folks know, in a way they can understand, when the information on their computers is at risk.

We have truth in lending and truth in labeling – I think it's time we had truth in networking.

I want to thank Congresswoman Bono Mack for allowing me to work with her on this legislation, and I want to thank Chairman Waxman and Ranking Member Barton for bringing these issues to the forefront in our Committee. And I want to thank my Senior Legislative Assistant Brandon Webb for his good work on this bill.

Thank you.

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