STATEMENT OF REP. JOHN CONYERS, JR.
Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property Subcommittee
Hearing on "Content Protection in the Digital Age: the Broadcast Flag,
High-Definition Radio, and the Analog Hole"
Thursday, November 3, 2005

A creator's right to their intellectual property would be meaningless without the ability to enforce it. It is Congress's job to make sure that copyright owners are able to protect their content from theft, whether it is in analog or digital form.

It is worth repeating that copyrighted content serves as this nation's number one export. The sale of music, movies, games, books, and other media provides our economy with billions of dollars in annual revenues. Creators of such content depend on their ability to sell their work in order to employ thousands of artists, writers, and programmers in this country.

Unfortunately, the same technologies that enhance our educational and entertainment experiences are being used to deprive creators of their livelihoods. Several software programs were written for the sole purpose of allowing free access to copyrighted content. The copyright laws, in general, and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, in particular, have helped combat these acts of theft.

While these laws have encouraged copyright owners to release their content in digital form, a new problem has arisen. Creators have developed technology to protect their work, but not all devices obey such technology. If creators cannot ensure the viability of their anti-piracy efforts, they will be resistant to transitioning away from analog content and toward digital content. Such resistance would be unfortunate but understandable; that is why we must ensure there are no loopholes in copyright law.

In closing, I would suggest that the need to plug loopholes in the law should not be used to trade on other proposals. Providing necessary content protection is directly related to the transition to digital; without such protection, there will be no digital content and no need for new electronic devices.