



The Walt Disney Company

Richard M. Bates
Senior Vice President
Government Relations

September 18, 2017

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Portman and Senator Blumenthal:

I am writing to express the strong support of The Walt Disney Company for S. 1693, the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017 (SESTA).

Disney is a diversified entertainment company and one of the most prominent faces of the American content industry. We are a company whose business is firmly rooted in creativity, expression and innovation. As technology has evolved, so too has our business, with each of our segments invested in a significant online and interactive media presence. As such, we are steadfast defenders of the principles of freedom of speech and of the press, and we are both beneficiaries of and advocates for the liability protections afforded by the Communications Decency Act (CDA). But we also recognize that the public has a strong interest in an internet that is open, secure, and protective of the rights of individuals. In the end, the public's legitimate expectation of responsible stewardship and accountability by those who make the internet their business is no less appropriate in the online space than it is in the offline world.

Recognizing the importance of the CDA's protection to online platforms, including Disney, it is hard to imagine that the Congress that crafted this protection intended it to operate as a shield against liability for the kind of horrific acts that are the target of your legislation. The CDA's objective to "promote the continued development of the Internet and other interactive computer services and other interactive media" was and remains an important one to promote investment and innovation in online platforms. But that objective cannot be so overriding as to require that we shield from liability those who knowingly engage in unlawful activity, particularly those who knowingly participate in the business of human trafficking. To the extent some are claiming that holding such actors accountable "jeopardizes bedrock principles of a free and open internet," Disney rejects that view.

Thank for your efforts to pursue a sensible policy in this area – one that is protective of both the internet and its continued development while providing redress for those who are the victims of unimaginably harmful and unlawful conduct. We will be happy to work with you as this bill moves forward to ensure the legislation meets its targeted objectives and becomes law.

Sincerely,

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