



March 8, 2010

The Honorable Christopher Smith
2373 Rayburn H.O.B
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

This letter is to confirm Google's support for global online freedom legislation including the Global Online Freedom Act (H.R. 2271). Our support for GOFA is based on our strong belief that we must work to promote and expand free expression online and that the free flow of information across borders is critical to establishing and protecting our nation's leadership in a 21st Century global economy.

As new technology dissolves borders and carries with it the potential for greater freedom of expression around the world, we believe that governments, companies and individuals must work together to protect basic rights to find and share information on the Internet. Online censorship is a growing global problem. Google has become a regular focus of governmental efforts to limit individual expression because our products enable people with an Internet connection to speak to a worldwide audience and gather knowledge otherwise out of their reach. More than 25 governments have blocked our services outright over the past few years.

The U.S. and other governments that value freedom of expression are strongly positioned to fight these attempts to limit access to information on the Internet. We believe that legislation like GOFA and related policy initiatives, including private sector efforts like the Global Network Initiative, can help companies like ours stand against such censorship. Indeed, one of the most effective elements of GOFA is that it would prompt the U.S. government to directly engage in conversations with other governments and lead robust international efforts to better protect individuals from government persecution and uphold the right to online free expression.

Congress has a strong role to play in advancing free expression online. We are grateful for your leadership and the efforts of other lawmakers who understand the importance of building a framework to address new global challenges to free expression. We have suggestions for further ways in which the bill can accomplish our mutual goals, and will work with you and your staff on those changes. We look forward to Congress addressing online free expression and standing up against government attempts to chill speech and restrict access to information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alan B. Davidson", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Alan Davidson

Director of Public Policy for the Americas

Google Inc.