With computers, cell phones and other internet-connected devices becoming more popular every day, people have quicker, easier access to information right at their fingertips. What would happen if in an instant half of your news, entertainment, and download sites suddenly disappeared? We are not talking about the companies that host them going under, or an attack by a terrorist group on the internet, the threat is even bigger. The government has been looking to censor the internet. Not only is this a moral debate, it is one that stands on legality too, which is why the government has a chance at finally passing this bill.

Throughout the past decade technology has had a significant impact on our society; people have come to rely on the vast amount of information which has been made available at our fingertips. Most of this information is completely acceptable, but there is always the bit that is controversial. This is where the trouble comes into play. Any information that stirs controversy is fair game to be removed. How will the government go about this, you ask? Instead of hunting down individual documents and fighting a legal battle, the government wants the ability to expand the countrywide website blacklist. This would allow the government to block specific websites which have been repeat offenders. Our very freedom of speech extends to both verbal, and digital communication. On the internet we should be able (within reason and the law) to have full freedom of speech.

For the most part, we are able to create our content as we wish, but there have been dozens of cases in the past where people and governments, businesses, and individuals have tried to hinder the spread of information. In recent years a website named WikiLeaks has been “leaking”  
 confidential information to the public. This information is sensitive, and could affect national security. It is information like this that I believe needs to be dealt with. On the other hand we will begin to see content restrictions that obstruct our freedom of speech. According to the New York Times, in 2007 “Verizon attempted to block the abortion rights group Naral Pro-Choice America from using their text messaging services to speak to their supporters. Verizon claims it was in order to enforce a policy that doesn’t allow their customers to use their service to communicate “controversial” or “unsavory” messages.” This kind of abuse is what we should be afraid of, and it happens every day.

Several approaches for cleaning up the internet have been proposed, and one of the most promising, the Internet Community Ports Act, is a plan that would separate the internet into two separate access paths. Everything will be accessed in the same manner –open your web browser and it is right there. The difference will be in the way that internet filtering works. There will be no censorship, but if an educational institution or another provider wants to make a child-friendly surfing area, there will be two categories of websites. "Clean" websites which include educational, research, news and some other categories of websites, and an “open” path. This one will include every website on the internet, like you have now. The latter will include controversial, adult, religious and other content that may or may not be appropriate for children. There will be no change in your browsing experience, but if the need for a child friendly internet session would arise it is just a worry free click away.

With every opportunity to help resolve this controversial topic there will always be advocates. This may be individuals, groups of people, or even entire countries. The people may argue that controlling the internet is an infringement of their rights and that it is unconstitutional. The government will argue that a matter of national security overrides the Bill of Rights, but this is why the argument is so heated. Foreign countries do not have to be bound by the rules of the internet in another country, but if we could get everyone on the same path it would make life a lot easier. What do you think, is it better to have bad websites and content blocked, removed from the web, or should it be left alone? The debate is ongoing and will only become more heated as time goes on. Voice your opinion and do what you think is right.