From taking a nap to buying a house, economics can be applied to nearly every aspect of life, and government is no exception. With dozens of internet censorship bills currently open for vote worldwide, one could benefit by setting rights and morals aside and making an educated decision based on the economic repercussions of such pieces of legislation. A good starting point to begin with would be determining the type of goods that will be affected by the passing of these bills, and the type of firm who is offering and producing these goods. In addition, the proposed economic arguments for the passing of said bills must be scrutinized for accuracy. Will these bills really be beneficial to the artists and society, or will they only pad the pocketbooks of the corporate leaders?

Entertainment is a huge industry, so big in fact that they are successfully pushing to get bills passed that will put the protection of their property in their own hands. Before looking at the economic benefit and demise of these powers let us determine the type of good we are talking about. The current rules of usage limit the sharing of this media and you aren't supposed to share content with others in public. This would point to a private good. If we look at how they are being used today -shared among large numbers of people, copied, distributed, et cetera the content is being treated more so as a public good.

The entertainment industry can try all they want to protect their rights on their own, but is it really needed? On opening nights moves bring in millions, the subscription and sales bring in massive amounts of revenue, and they operate monopolistic firms. When is the last time you heard of a small producer making it big on their own? They are gobbled up by the giants before the chance comes around.

It has been argued for years that the pirating of digital content is killing the entertainment industry, but is it really? According to a study from the RIAA, torrenting lets users illegally transfer petabytes of data every year, leading to billions in lost revenue. I do not believe this, as they referred to the whole torrenting network as a whole. A majority of this system is used for large scale legal file transfers, and in fact piracy is a miniscule amount of this traffic therefore vastly reducing the losses they claim to be having. In addition, by making it more difficult to steal content it will not necessarily solve the problem. People will always find a way to get around technological restrictions, and will cause further and further restriction of our rights.

In the short run, yes, I believe the record industry would benefit from these bills, but the public would suffer greatly. Many people use content without realizing it is against the law, for example in a school project. This could lead to fines and convictions of innocent citizens. Yes, it is protecting the media giants' rights but will eventually leading to less consumption of their goods and services out of fear of being convicted of unfair usage or piracy.

In addition, by limiting the creative minds from creatively using existing content, where would the need to innovate be? Sure, people will continue to modify existing works, sometimes for the better, but it will never be seen by the public. This will place a huge burden on artists and may discourage them from creating new works. Overall I believe that the record industry is lobbying to pass these bills out of nothing but its own best interests, but it is only looking to protect itself in the short run, assuming this will work indefinitely as it has in the past so many other times.