

Christians Band Together in Battle to Protect Internet Freedom Before It's Too Late

National Religious Broadcasters today urged Congress to act immediately to protect internet freedom "while there's still time."

NRB President and CEO Dr. Jerry A. Johnson is calling for action as Congress is in the midst of negotiations to avert a government shutdown.

"In this digital era, internet freedom is indispensable as a means of protecting freedom of speech. This truth is proven by the track record of nations that don't uphold free speech restricting internet freedom," said Johnson.

The Obama administration has decided to transfer authority—effective Oct. 1—over the internet's basic domain name structure to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), even though there are concerns that this action creates new powers for governments—powers that could be misused by some state actors.

Reports indicate that a provision to forbid the government's transfer of internet authority has so far been left out of the Continuing Resolution to fund the government.

"Congressional inaction in the face of the imminent loss of oversight of the internet by the United States is a grave dereliction of duty," Johnson said. "There are still far too many questions and serious concerns about this transition. I urge congressional leaders to act now to protect internet freedom while there's still time."

Previously, NRB has announced support for the *Protecting*

Internet Freedom Act, sponsored by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Rep. Sean Duffy (R-Wis.), which would prohibit the Executive Branch from allowing its oversight over basic internet domain functions, including the authoritative root zone file, to lapse or be relinquished unless specifically authorized to do so by an Act of Congress. It also will require certification that the U.S. has exclusive ownership and control over the vital .gov and .mil domains.

In February, the NRB Board of Directors, a body of approximately one hundred key leaders among Christian communicators, unanimously approved a resolution calling on the U.S. to ensure internet freedom globally. They noted that repressive regimes seek to curtail freedom online and specifically highlighted concern with the Obama Administration's intention to transfer America's supervisory authority over web domain names and addresses.