

**Statement of Senator Daniel K. Akaka**  
**STOP!: A Progress Report on Protecting and Enforcing Intellectual Property**  
**Rights Here and Abroad**  
**Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce**  
**and the District of Columbia**

July 26, 2006

Thank you, Chairman Voinovich. I join you in welcoming our witnesses and commend you for your leadership in the area of enforcing intellectual property rights for American manufacturers and entrepreneurs.

We live in an increasingly changing world. Technology provides improvements and conveniences for everyday life that were almost unimaginable only a few decades ago. These technological advances are the product of efforts by exceptionally talented individuals who are supported by academic institutions, government, and private enterprise. We are justifiably proud of the achievements of our brightest minds and most innovative companies.

These technological advances have transformed the American economy and changed the way that our companies do business. Today's global economy is fostering new opportunities for U.S. businesses and opportunities to forge relationships around the world.

Unfortunately, U.S. manufacturers and businesses daily face the threat of theft of their most innovative products and ideas. Although estimates vary widely, we know that counterfeiting costs our companies billions of dollars and deprives our workforce of hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Counterfeit goods also threaten public health and safety by bringing unregulated and untested products into the U.S. marketplace. Consumers have no way of determining whether the goods that they are buying are legitimate or counterfeit.

The STOP! initiative is an important step forward because the program demonstrates an understanding that solving the problem of counterfeit goods cannot be accomplished solely through the efforts of the federal government and law enforcement agencies. Counterfeit goods are a global problem. Protecting manufacturers and consumers from counterfeiters must be accomplished through international efforts and through cooperation with our trading partners.

I am pleased that Chairman Voinovich recognizes the importance of this issue and is reviewing the status of the STOP! initiative. Thank you for holding today's hearing. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about this important and timely subject.