



MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.
1600 EYE STREET, NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
(202) 293-1966

Memorandum in Support of Connecticut Bill S.B. No. 981
March 24, 2017

The Motion Picture Association of America and its member companies¹ are pleased to support S.B. No. 981, which would enact a statute to address pernicious Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (“SLAPPs”). Approximately thirty states have enacted such anti-SLAPP statutes, and by joining them, Connecticut would be taking an admirable step to protect the First Amendment rights of its citizens and businesses.

The MPAA’s member companies are the major producers and distributors of motion pictures in the U.S which are subsequently released to DVD, pay-per-view, broadcast, cable and satellite television, as well as Internet services. In addition, several of our member companies have affiliates that are in the news business. And of course two major corporate affiliates of MPAA members are based in Connecticut: ESPN, an affiliate of Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, and Blue Sky Studios, an affiliate of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

SLAPP suits are baseless lawsuits brought for the purpose of silencing those who exercise their First Amendment rights. The MPAA’s members and their affiliates are strong supporters of anti-SLAPP statutes, which provide a means for those sued for exercise of their First Amendment rights on public issues to resolve such lawsuits relatively quickly and efficiently, so that defendants do not have to spend vast amounts in attorneys’ fees defending their right to speak freely. As companies that are often sued over their speech, the MPAA’s members have made frequent and successful use of anti-SLAPP statutes, particularly in California, which has had a strong anti-SLAPP statute for 25 years. The MPAA is proud of the role we have played in encouraging the enactment of new or improved anti-SLAPP statutes in recent years, including in Georgia and Florida, and we continue to work in numerous other states that are considering similar legislation to protect First Amendment rights.

While supporters of S.B. No. 981, we do look forward to working with the bill’s sponsors to strengthening several of its provisions, consistent with anti-SLAPP legislation in other states, to ensure that the statute provides an effective means to combat lawsuits targeting First Amendment rights.

¹ Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal Studios LLC; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.