

## HR 1528 Hip-Hop Cultures Newest Threat

Written by Robert ID1485

Sunday, 05 June 2005 10:05 -

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There is now a new threat to all of us in the hip-hop community. First be clear that I am in no way endorsing drug use, but if this bill is passed into law you will be put into a 'damned if you do damned if you don't' situation.

If made law, will make you bound by law to maybe 'snitch out' friends, and family. They want to use us - to destroy us. Use us to lock us up, and at the same time 'stiffing' the laws surrounding these kinds of arrests. Think jails are crowded now? This will affect almost every family you know.

We all know that hip-hop culture is a street thing. If you 'snitch' in the streets you know what is coming. Now, if this becomes law, if you don't 'snitch' you know what's coming. This is a real 'catch 22' situation. We have been warned that this or something like this was coming. Honorable Min. Louis Farrakhan spoke about this very thing in 2003. He has said that the government would go after hip-hop culture and here it is. (Read the second part of this article below to learn about that).

The bill H.R. 1528, Defending America's Most Vulnerable: Safe Access to Drug Treatment and Child Protection Act of 2005, is one of the worst drug war bills that Congress has ever considered.

Among other things, HR 1528:

--Virtually eliminates the ability of federal judges to give sentences below the minimum sentence recommended by federal sentencing guidelines, essentially creating a mandatory minimum sentence for every federal offense (including both drug and non-drug offenses).

--Expands the federal "three strikes and you're out" law to include new offenses, including mandating life imprisonment (with no possibility of parole) for anyone convicted a third time

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under the RAVE Act.

--Mandates a 10-year minimum sentence for anyone 21 or older that gives marijuana or others drugs to someone under 18 (i.e. a 21 year old college students gives a joint to his 17-year old brother). A second offense would be life in prison.

--Expands what is considered to be a "drug-free" school zone to include almost any place in an urban area, and increases penalties for selling or distributing drugs in that area. (The result will be enhanced penalties for people in inner cities, while people in rural and suburban areas get less time for the same offense).

--Mandates a 5-year minimum sentence for any person that commits a drug trafficking offense near the presence of a person under 18 or in a place where such person resides for any period of time. The sentence is 10 years if they are parent. (I.e. a mother that sells her neighbor a joint will get a 10-year minimum sentence, even if her kids were at school at the time).

--Creates a new offense for persons who witness or learn about certain drug offenses that fail to report the drug offender to the police within 24 hours or fail to provide full assistance to the police in tracking and prosecuting the offender. Offenses that would get someone a 2-year minimum sentence, including failing to report a neighbor that is storing or selling drugs when that neighbor has kids, failing to report anyone that gives a joint to someone under the age of 21, and failing to report a college student that is selling marijuana on a college campus.

--Mandates a 5-year minimum sentence for any person that offers, solicits, encourages, or induces a person enrolled in drug treatment, or previously enrolled in drug treatment, to purchase, possess or receive drugs.

--Makes it a federal crime to provide "drug paraphernalia" to anyone. While the goal is to make it a crime - punishable by up to three years in prison - to give someone a bong as a birthday present, it would also make it a federal crime to provide someone with sterile syringes (except where it is explicitly authorized by local or state law). If enacted, it would essentially criminalize many needle exchange programs.

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The full text of H.R. 1528 can be viewed by going to <http://thomas.loc.gov/> , entering "HR1528" in the search box, checking the "enter bill number" circle under the search box, and clicking "search".

If you "witness" certain drug offenses taking place or "learn" that they took place you would have to report the offense to law enforcement within 24 hours and provide "full assistance" in the investigation, apprehension, and prosecution of the people involved. Failure to do so would be a crime punishable by a mandatory two year prison sentence.

Here are some examples of offenses you would have to report to the police within 24 hours:

You see someone you know pass a joint to a 20-year old college student.

Your cousin mentions that he bought Ecstasy for some of his college friends.

You find out that your brother, who has kids, recently bought a small amount of marijuana to share with his wife.

Your substance-abusing daughter recently begged her boyfriend to find her some drugs even though they're both in drug treatment.

In each of these cases you face jail time if you don't call the police within 24 hours. It doesn't matter if the offender is your friend or relative. It also doesn't matter if you need 48 hours to think about it. You have to report the person to the government within 24 hours or go to jail. You also have to assist the government in every way, including wearing a wire if needed. Refusing to cooperate would cost you at least two years in prison (possibly up to ten). In addition to turning family member against family member, the legislation could also put many Americans into dangerous situations by forcing them to go undercover to gain evidence against strangers.

You need to be aware of the bill and state an opinion on it. The following sites can give you

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information on how to approach this.

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/news/051805sensen.cfm>

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/news/051105sensenalert.cfm>

In October of 2003 Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan said in an interview with rap artist Ja Rule " Hip Hop is being threatened today—the future of it," Min. Farrakhan told Ja. "And I don't want to see you lose your life or 50 Cent lose his life, or any of the rappers lose their life. I think we've paid a price now to go to a higher level."

Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan continued to explain that those who govern and control see hip hop as a threat to their rule, because its culture is captivating the minds of all youth, regardless of class or color, and is causing them to reject the system of White supremacy, as it is portrayed in hip hop lyrics.

"Hip hop has taken White children away from those who would shape them into oppressors," he said, adding that hip hop is a force the government can't control and so the government seeks to eliminate it.

If we look at some of the news since these statements were made by Min. Farrakhan we can only wonder if he foretold the future with his words.

There have been rap artist who seem to foretell the future in their rap. Tupac Shakur being one of the most talked about.

Since Min. Farrakhan spoke these words we have seen many things that seem to point to the "government" seeking out hip hop artist for persecution.

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The recent cases of Beanie Sigel, Rakim, Lil Kim, Irv Gotti, T.I. and many other only point to an assault on the "head" of the beast known as rap and hip hop. In the case of ex Hot Boys member Turk, after ballistics test; it was shown one of the officers he was accused of shooting was in fact shot by another police officer. Then there are the law suits that threaten to put a "damper" on the lives of some rappers. Nelly for one is being sued over Vokal. Ludacris and Kayne West are being sued. And conservative radio and tv host take shots at rappers all the time. Trying to make them look like gangstas and bad role models. ( O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh being the top haterz).

Then there is the "Hip Hop Binder". The "surveillance" material collected by police on rap and hip hop artist. This is a six-inch thick black binder. It includes the arrest records and photos of dozens of rap artists and their companions. Also, the Village Voice newspaper recently revealed the existence of a Hip-Hop Intelligence Unit within the New York Police Department.

Why is all this happening now? I am not saying any of the artist that are mentioned above were framed nor am I saying anything about guilt or innocence. But it is amazing how many of these cases start to fall apart when they finally get to trial. Of course there are some who are doing time. And there are some that we hear about; that the police are wanting to question a certain rapper and give them 5 days to turn them self in and then we hear no more of it. I guess there are two groups of rappers and hip hop artist; one to watch out for and one to look the other way.

Separate the force and you have a better chance for overcoming them. This is a famous war strategy. Or pit us against each other is another. These tactics have been used by the government against the Black Panthers, the NOI and even farther back - The American Indian.

The Eminem racist factor has been thrown into the mix now too. Imagine race playing a factor in hip hop? A culture based on being real and one love.

So we have the ones who side with Eminem and those who side with the Source. We have those who flip flop on this subject and we have those who really don't care. The diss tracks are still being dropped. Maybe not by Ja but it seems there are plenty of rappers who want to make a diss track just for the "buzz" it will create.

What Min. Farrakhan said in 03 is coming to truth. It seems the government is taking a stance

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against the "head" of the beast -(rap and hip hop), basically because rap and hip hop really does scare the majority. No matter how widely accepted you believe hip hop is there are still many who wish we all would just go away.

They are finding ways to lock up some of the artist. They are causing others hardship. And they are watching and keeping records on most of them. It is time for all of the culture of hip hop to realize that we are being sought after to. Not just the artist but look across the country. Shows are having problems, fans are having problems, and still the record lables and the police seem to maintain their standard of living as we struggle just to enjoy our culture of hip hop.

Min. Farrakhan was right and we should examine what else he had to say in Oct. 2003 - "We're tired of allowing people to use our pain to get rich and then watch us die and then hold our masters and keep making money for themselves and their families at our expense," he said. (Min. Farrakhan was talking about the record companies, but this can also apply to the government)

Be aware that all this is happening and don't let the main stream press make your mind up on a lot of the issues that affect the hip hop culture. Assure yourself that you will not fall victim to the governments "witch hunt" on rap and hip hop,nor will they be able to separate us or pit us against each other; READ, be informed, make your voice be heard.

ThugLifeArmy staff member NiKKi contributed to this story.