

Conyers To Abolish IP Subcommittee On Judiciary Panel

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by [Andrew Noyes](#)

House Judiciary Committee Chairman **John Conyers** will abolish the Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property in the new Congress and instead keep intellectual property issues at the full committee level, a Judiciary aide told *CongressDaily* today. A Subcommittee on Courts and Antitrust will be created, but no other subcommittee changes are expected, the staffer said.

In the 110th Congress, the IP subcommittee was among the House's most active under the direction of Rep. **Howard Berman**, D-Calif., who plans to chair the House Foreign Affairs Committee in the coming session. Hot topics like overhauling the U.S. patent system; ending a long-standing music royalty exemption for AM and FM radio and changing a portion of copyright law that deals with musical tracks, writings, images, videos or other content whose owners cannot be easily identified drew ample attention from the high-tech and entertainment industries.

Conyers plans to remain just as active on IP issues at the full committee level, the staffer said. His decision to realign the subcommittee stemmed from the fact that it had grown too large and there was a high degree of interest from many full committee members in the IP arena. When Rep. **James Sensenbrenner**, R-Wis., was panel chairman in the 109th Congress, the IP panel expanded to include about two-thirds of the full committee, the aide noted. Conyers decision ends months of speculation about who would take over for Berman.

Rep. **Rick Boucher**, D-Va. -- who has routinely infuriated the content community -- would have been next in line for the chairmanship but heads the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over issues that are important to many of the southwestern Virginia residents he represents. Democratic Reps. **Melvin Watt** of North Carolina, **Jerrold Nadler** of New York, and **Zoe Lofgren** of California, who are senior members, were said to be contenders, but each had competing priorities within other subcommittees.