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Former Vice President Al Gore urged by National Writers Union to help delay the proposed Google Book Settlement

NEW YORK, NY -- The National Writers Union today called on former Vice President Al Gore to use his considerable influence to urge Google Inc. to seek a delay in the proceedings of the settlement between Google, the Authors Guild and the Association of American Publishers. Gore is a Senior Advisor to Google and is said to be a friend of Google's co-founders, Larry Page and Sergey Brin.

In a letter faxed today to Gore, Larry Goldbetter, president of the National Writers Union, said the delay is needed because the settlement is complex and that writers need more time to examine the agreement. The court deadline for writers to "opt-out" of the settlement is Friday, Sept. 4. The court could close the entire process down and approve the settlement on Oct. 7.

Last month the National Writers Union opposed the proposed settlement stating that it is grossly unfair to many writers. "But for individual authors and publishers the decision to 'opt-in' or 'opt-out' of the settlement involves many complex issues," Goldbetter said. "The potential positives and negatives are still unclear. More time is needed."

In the letter to Gore, Goldbetter said "the proposed settlement would give Google monopolistic control over access to many previously published copyrighted books and materials. It would also give Google a license to reproduce a writer's copyrighted work unless the writer specifically tells Google to remove his or her work from the program. This is grossly unfair. No corporation should be able to profit from the work of our members without first obtaining their permission." A copy of the letter to Vice President Gore is attached.

The National Writers Union is the nation's only labor union and advocacy organization for freelance writers in all genres, media, and formats. In addition to print media writers, NWU represents electronic writers and editors of blogs, e-newsletters and web sites. NWU is affiliated with the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the AFL-CIO. NWU's headquarters are at 113 University Place, 6th floor, New York, NY 10003.