

A Fair Reward for Radio Artists

(The following appeared in The Washington Post, June 26, 2009)

We are delighted that the National Association of Broadcasters [letters, June 5] has professed [concern](#) for artists and musicians. We would be more delighted if its actions mirrored its words.

We and the American Federation of Musicians represent more than 100,000 artists and musicians. Perhaps we can shed some light on why American performers want terrestrial radio to acknowledge a performance right. Corporate radio earns billions in ad revenue every year. It does this by using our members' musical performances to draw listeners and then selling those listeners' ears to advertisers.

Other radio platforms -- satellite radio, Internet radio and cable music channels -- recognize the value performers provide by paying them a fair -- emphasis on fair -- performance royalty. AM and FM radio stations in every other developed nation in the world do, too. But AM and FM music stations in the United States do not.

Bipartisan, pro-music legislation is making its way through Congress to close the corporate radio loophole. The bill would allow half of the money collected to be paid directly to artists and musicians, and they would get even more when they own their copyrights.

If the National Association of Broadcasters wants to be a true friend to artists and musicians, it would accept our now year-old invitation to develop a fair performance right on radio with us.

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