

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS



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LEGISLATIVE ALERT

February 19, 2016

Dear Representative:

I am writing to remind you of the AFL-CIO's strong opposition to the Local Radio Freedom Act (H. Con. Res. 17). We urge you not to co-sponsor this bill, and, instead, to co-sponsor the Fair Play Fair Pay Act (H.R. 1733). This bipartisan bill would reform music licensing laws to ensure that musicians, artists, and performers get fair pay for airplay of all of their music on all radio platforms.

The broadcasters will argue that any effort to create a performance right would hurt small radio stations and local broadcasters. In fact, the Fair Play Fair Pay Act would cap royalties at \$500 annually for small broadcasters; college and public radio stations would pay only \$100 a year. In all, at least 75% of U.S. radio stations would pay \$500 or less a year under this proposal.

Although the title of the broadcaster's resolution appeals to concerns about preserving local radio broadcasters, its real purpose conflicts with the principle of a "fair day's wage for a fair day's work." The Local Radio Freedom Act benefits large corporate radio chains while harming individual artists and musicians. If artists aren't getting paid fairly, they can't continue to create music.

Just as we seek labor and wage protections for other workers, the AFL-CIO supports our musician members in their ongoing fight for economic justice. Like all workers, those who create music deserve fair pay. However, music licensing laws currently fail to provide fair play on all radio platforms. The U.S. is one of only a handful of countries—including China, Rwanda, Iran, and North Korea—where performers are not compensated for airplay.

For 80 years, radio stations in America have played hit songs over the public airwaves and made billions of dollars in advertising revenue without paying musicians, artists, and performers a penny. For just as long, performers have been fighting for a "performance right" that would force radio stations to properly compensate them for their work. The Fair Play Fair Pay Act would end the AM/FM radio loophole and require terrestrial radio stations to join satellite and Internet radio in making payments to performers for radio broadcasts.

We urge you to join us in supporting H.R. 1733 and opposing the industry-backed H. Con. Res. 17.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Samuel".

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department

