

Music & Entertainment

Tennessee's 5th District is home to Nashville, also known as Music City, USA. Music is the lifeblood of Nashville, and it's everywhere you turn in our city. We've got it all: recording artists, musicians, songwriters, record labels, manufacturers, retailers, and service providers. Visitors come from far and wide to enjoy our musical culture, the Grand Ole Opry, and the Country Music Hall of Fame and our rich Motown heritage in the Jefferson Street Music District.

Nashville continues to be the place to go if one wants to pursue a career in music, and thousands head there annually with nothing but a guitar and a dream. That's why sound music policy is so important to Nashville, and why it is one of my top priorities.

Intellectual property is almost exclusively the subject of federal legislation, and music policy that affects us locally is hatched in Washington, D.C. I'm a strong supporter of intellectual property rights and rights-holders and believe that intellectual property laws need reevaluating when significant new technologies reach the marketplace.

My goal is to make sure any new laws serve the public's interest in progress, civic discourse, investment and innovation.

I'm a co-sponsor of the Performance Rights Act to make sure our performers receive compensation for their hard work. I've also supported the Prioritizing Resources and Organization for Intellectual Property Act of 2007, also known as the PRO-IP Act, which strengthens the enforcement measures available to intellectual property owners and stiffens the penalties for those who break the law.

RECENT NEWS AND UPDATES:

September 23, 2010 Wireless microphone users won a major victory today as the FCC announced its decision to protect them from interference from new "white space devices". Jim has been an advocate of such action for a long time. "Music is a lifeline to Nashville's economy," he said, "and the live music industry depends more than ever on wireless microphones and other equipment to connect the artist with the audience."

August 30, 2010 Commerce Secretary Gary Locke visited Nashville to discuss intellectual property with music industry leaders and local officials.

April 1, 2010 Today the Performance Rights Act got a major boost with an endorsement from the Department of Commerce. In their letter, the Commerce Department reiterated their long held support for recognizing a performance right in a sound recording stating: "the Performance Rights Act addresses the long-standing omission in U.S. copyright law that may have harmed American performers and record companies." Read the full letter here. The Administration now joins the chorus of those that believe in fair compensation in exchange for the use of copyrighted works. It is an important step that puts us one step closer to passage. I look forward to voting for the Performance Rights Act soon.

March 28, 2010 An interesting article in today's Tennessean should get the attention of all area artists and musicians. Soundexchange is the performance rights organization that administers all the rights for sound recording performances, similar to BMI, ASCAP, and SESAC that administer the rights for musical works. Every artist and musician should be registered with Soundexchange because you may be owed royalty payments that you have not received. Check out the Tennessean article and the artist page at Soundexchange and make sure you are getting paid when your work is getting played!

December 14, 2009 In the last two weeks, two major interest groups have come out in favor of the Performance Rights Act, the AFL-CIO and the American Bar Association.

American Bar Association Support for Performance Rights Act

AFLCIO Support for Performance Rights Act

October 26, 2009 Jim wrote an article entitled "It's Time to Correct a Creative Injustice" which appeared in today's edition of Roll Call. Jim wrote this article along with Rep. Hank Johnson (D-GA), Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), and Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA). These Members represent different parts of the country and have very different political, philosophical and professional backgrounds. When these five Members agree on such a crucial issue as the Performance Rights Act, you know they are on the right side of history.

You may view the full article [here](#)

October 15, 2009 Today the Senate Judiciary Committee approved the Performance Rights Act with strong bipartisan support. The Committee made some important changes to the bill which brings it largely in line with the House version of which Jim is a cosponsor. For instance, small broadcasters will now pay as little as \$100 annually for unlimited rights to sound recordings and the bill contains strong language to protect our songwriters.

October 8, 2009 Today the House of Representatives passed a Resolution Recognizing that country music has made a tremendous contribution to American life and culture and declaring country music to be a uniquely American art form. Jim co-sponsored the measure which, among other things, recognized that "no institution is more closely associated with country music than WSM Radio's Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, which, since 1925, has introduced the United States to many of the great talents of country music through live Saturday night performances."

July 7, 2009 Today Jim was pleased to learn that record labels and online music providers have reached a rate agreement. This agreement was made possible by the recent passage of the Webcaster Settlement Act of 2009 in the House of Representatives. Jim was supportive of that Act and has this to say about this historic agreement: "Online music companies and record labels reaching an agreement is great news. The negotiated rates will let new media grow and prosper while ensuring that our local artists are paid for their work. Everyone wins when music fans can listen to songs online and music makers get a fair deal. Our music industry will only be successful by working with new media companies

to build business models for the 21st century. Today's news is music to my ears."

May 29, 2009 Today Jim became a cosponsor of a resolution celebrating the 30th Anniversary of June as "Black Music Month." The resolution recognizes the invaluable contributions of African-American artists to America's rich cultural landscape. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter recognized the far-reaching impact that African-Americans have made to music by proclaiming the Month of June as "Black Music Month." He further encouraged everyone to learn more about the role that Black music has played in shaping history and culture. As we approach June, Jim hopes that you will join him in celebrating Black Music Month.

May 13, 2009 The Performance Rights Act (H.R. 848) took a major step forward today: it was approved by the House Judiciary Committee by a vote of 21-9. Some much needed changes were made to the bill prior to the vote that will help protect smaller broadcasters. The Act now scales down the royalty payments based upon the size of the radio station, all the way down to \$500 a year for the smallest radio stations. It also delays the imposition of royalty payments for nearly all radio stations for 3 years so they will have time to plan for the adjustment. Additionally, the bill makes an attempt to bring parity to performance royalties across all platforms - terrestrial radio, cable, satellite, and internet services. Jim has been advocating for many of today's changes since the time he decided to co-sponsor the Act. He looks forward to supporting the Act when it comes up for a full House vote.

April 20, 2009 Jim wrote an op-ed on the current state of the music industry in today's Nashville City Paper entitled "WHEN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY SUFFERS, WE ALL SUFFER". A copy of the article is located [here](#) .

February 20, 2009 Today at the MusicFIRST townhall meeting in Nashville, Jim announced that he will be a co-sponsor of the Performance Rights Act, H.R. 848. Currently, every time a song is played on terrestrial radio the songwriter is compensated but the artist is not. The Performance Rights Act would change that, and would compensate artists for songs played on the radio, a right that is enjoyed by artists and copyright owners in most countries outside of the United States. Our artists, musicians, and record labels lose out millions of dollars in reciprocal revenue each year because of this anomaly.

In today's changing music environment, the Performance Rights Act is an appropriate step in the right direction, and Jim is confident that the House version of the bill will not hurt Nashville's songwriters. However, there are still a number of improvements to be made to the Performance Rights Act. Small-town, independent radio should not be disproportionately harmed by the change in royalty structure. Congress needs to ensure that those interests are considered before we pass a bill that might deprive listeners of music on the radio.