

RESOLUTION 39

SUPPORTING MUSIC FAIRNESS AND ARTISTS' RIGHTS

Submitted by the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the American Federation of Musicians
Referred to the Resolutions Committee

Vocalists and musicians are not paid when their music plays on the radio. Thousands of union member artists are working all across America to build a thriving career by playing and recording the music they—and we—love. But the rules are rigged against them.

For far too long, our broken and unfair system has let AM/FM radio stations—many of which are owned by just a few massive media corporations—get away with refusing to pay artists when they play their music. While these big corporate broadcast companies gobble up billions upon billions in advertising dollars, the union vocalists and musicians, including session and background performers, whose work make all of it possible receive no compensation whatsoever for their creations. It's unfair, plain and simple.

And the COVID-19 pandemic has made things even worse. With many venues shuttered for months and live performances virtually nonexistent for more than a year, thousands of artists have lost one of their primary sources of income—exposing many to extreme financial hardship. For each blockbuster artist, there are countless working performers across the country fighting for

a living with each song and every gig. They literally cannot afford to stand by and watch big corporate broadcasting companies make billions in profits off their uncompensated works.

It's time to right this wrong, and the American Music Fairness Act (AMFA) aims to do just that. The AMFA will require corporate broadcasting companies to fairly compensate artists when they play their songs on AM/FM radio—because paying people for their hard work is the right thing to do.

Fairness and equity are bedrock American principles and yet, the United States is one of only four countries in the world that don't pay artists for radio airplay. The other three are China, Iran and North Korea.

As the country recovers from two years of tremendous personal loss and economic suffering, it is vital that Congress protects the livelihoods of those who create the music we know and love. And therefore, the AFL-CIO commits to continue working to pass the American Music Fairness Act to protect all performers, vocalists, musicians and all music artists.