



April 4, 2009

The Honorable John Conyers  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2426 House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-2214

Dear Congressman Conyers:

The National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts strongly supports the legislation you and your colleagues have introduced in support of Performance Rights. It is hard to believe that such legislation hasn't already been passed. American musicians deserve compensation for their work just as any laborers deserve compensation for their work. That commercial radio stations in the United States have managed to avoid making such payments needs to be changed. Not only are artists here being robbed of compensation, but our artists are also denied similar payments abroad in retaliation for current US laws.

Hispanic singers, writers, lyricists, musicians, producers . . . all of the creative talent involved in the making of a song . . . if we want these people to continue their creative efforts for the enjoyment of us all, we must make sure they are paid.

Our community is increasingly impacted by the lack of performance right protection. As the Latino portion of the nation's population grows – and it now stands at about 15 percent – the number of radio stations programmed primarily in Spanish grows. The number of Latino artists also is growing, from breakout artists such as Selena Gomez and Demi Lovato to more established performers such as Christina Aguilera, Shakira and Enrique Iglesias.

With digital technology changing the way we record, distribute and listen to music, we need to guarantee that artists' rights are as equally protected as those of consumers and radio stations.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to be of assistance to you in securing passage of the Performance Rights Act.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Smits  
Co-Founder

Esai Morales  
Co-Founder

Felix R. Sanchez  
Chairman