

"Preserving America's Soul"

RHYTHM & BLUES FOUNDATION

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In Memoriam

Ed Bradley
Ruth Brown
Ahmet Ertegun
Gerald Levert

May 12, 2009

Congressman John Conyers
2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As Chairman of the Rhythm & Blues Foundation, Inc., I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued efforts both in this Congress and throughout the years to ensure that U.S. recording artists get a fair shake.

As you may be aware, the Rhythm & Blues Foundation was established some 20 years ago and continues to serve today as the sole organization worldwide that provides emergency financial assistance to pioneer rhythm and blues artists as well as honoring and recognizing the achievements of those legendary artists and preserving the genre known as rhythm and blues.

We also know that you have always been a friend and supporter of the thousands of heritage artists who created and made successful the music art form which has become not only the sound of modern American music, but has also influenced the shape of music throughout the globe.

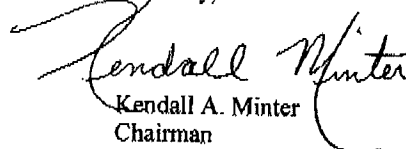
You have been a champion on issues affecting recording artists since you came to Washington and took it upon yourself to learn the inner workings of the music business so that you could gain a clear and informed historical perspective of the inequities and past unfair treatment of many artists whose long careers gave meaning and life to their music and performances which have been enjoyed by so many fans around the world.

From the viewpoint of our beneficiaries and constituents, American radio has enjoyed a virtual free ride for more than 60 years, dating back as early as the 1940's when performers such as Charles Brown, Ruth Brown, and groups like the Ravens were creating the new music which we now know as rhythm and blues. This inequity continued throughout the next several decades during the era of doo-wop, Motown, Stax, and Philadelphia International, and continues on into the present era.

Now, with the introduction of a Performance Right Bill, with you as the sponsor and driving force, the Rhythm & Blues Foundation and its constituents are hopeful that the artists responsible for creating the soundtrack of America will at last receive just compensation for the broadcast of their works on American radio. The music which our pioneer artists as well as contemporary artists create provides the content and foundation from which most American radio stations draw their listeners and realize their advertiser support. Thus, the relationship amongst all parties - creators and broadcasters - is truly symbiotic. We also strongly believe, as your legislation proposes, that the artists who create the music which is enjoyed by millions of people around the country should be fairly compensated for their work no different than any other creator or employee in the workplace.

Your legislation is fair, timely and we enthusiastically support it.

Sincerely,


Kendall A. Minter
Chairman