Then and Now: Songwriter Compensation in the Digital Age

ASCAP operates on a not-for-profit basis, working to ensure music creators are paid fairly for public performances of their copyrighted works.

TECHNOLOGY IS RAPIDLY CHANGING THE WAY PEOPLE LISTEN TO MUSIC.
Public performance royalties paid through ASCAP are rapidly becoming the most important source of income for American songwriters and composers, who do not have the same revenue streams as recording artists (no tours or t-shirts, for example).

OUTDATED LAWS HAVE CREATED INEQUALITY IN THE MARKETPLACE.
A WWII-era consent decree between ASCAP and the DOJ dictates that rates for public performance licenses are set primarily by a single federal judge, or “rate court,” rather than the free market. No other entertainment industry operates this way.

The average amount of royalties songwriters earn for a song streamed a million times on the major audio streaming services is only about $125.

ASCAP internal data

IF OUR MUSIC LICENSING LAWS AREN’T UPDATED, THE COLLECTIVE LICENSING SYSTEM THAT KEEPS COSTS DOWN FOR MUSIC LISTENERS WILL BE AT RISK.

ASCAP BY THE NUMBERS:

ASCAP provides collective licenses on behalf of more than 575,000 songwriter, composer and music publisher members

88¢ of every dollar collected is paid out in royalties to ASCAP’s members

Last year, ASCAP distributed more than $865M in royalties

The number of performances we annually monitor and distribute royalties for will soon be 600 billion

700,000+ businesses that use music are able to do so legally through an ASCAP license
IT’S TIME FOR A MUSIC LICENSING SYSTEM THAT REFLECTS THE REALITY OF TODAY’S MUSIC MARKETPLACE

ASCAP’S MUSIC ADVOCACY PROJECT: A “MAP” TO MODERNIZING OUR MUSIC LICENSING SYSTEM

COPYRIGHT REFORM to protect music creators and consumers (Songwriter Equity Act)

CONSENT DECREES REFORM to reflect today’s music marketplace

ASCAP INNOVATION to better serve songwriters in the digital age

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