

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF  
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Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Inductee

Kennedy Center Honoree

Testimony before the U.S. Senate  
Committee on the Judiciary  
Subcommittee on Intellectual Property on

*Balancing the Interests of Local Radio, Songwriters, and Performers  
in the Digital Age*

**December 9, 2025**

Chairman Tillis, Ranking Member Schiff, and Members of the Subcommittee, it is my honor to testify today in support of S. 326, the "*American Music Fairness Act (AMFA)*."

You may know me as "The Demon" from KISS. For over fifty years, I've breathed fire, spit blood, and rocked stages around the world. Over 100 million albums sold. Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. And just this year, Kennedy Center Honorees. Not bad for a kid who showed up in New York City at eight years old without a word of English.

But I'm not here to talk about me. Well — maybe a little. Because my story is the story of what's possible in America. And I'm worried we're pulling the ladder up behind us.

I was born Chaim Witz in Haifa, Israel, 1949. My mother Florence — may she rest in peace — survived the Nazi concentration camps. She was fourteen years old. Let that sink in.

When she brought me to America, we had nothing. I mean *nothing*. I remember the day a CARE package showed up at our door. My mother's face — I'll never forget it. Someone, somewhere, cared enough to help. Here's what I learned: In America, if you work harder than

everyone else, you can make it. Nobody's going to hand it to you. But they'll get out of your way if you're willing to bleed for it.

That's what I did. Four guys from New York — me, Paul Stanley, Ace Frehley, Peter Criss — we started KISS in 1973. The critics hated us. The record labels didn't get it. But you know what? The fans got it. We built the KISS Army one city at a time, one show at a time. Now here's my question: Could we do that today? Could four broke kids from New York build KISS in 2025? I don't think so. And that should bother all of us.

The music business has been turned upside down by technology, making it harder than ever to make a living. And on top of that — and this is why I'm here today — American artists have *never* been paid for radio airplay. Not one cent. Let me say that again: Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Whitney Houston, Garth Brooks, George Strait — none of them ever got a royalty check when their songs played on the radio.

Meanwhile, radio made \$14 billion this year. Billion with a B.

They play our songs. People tune in to hear our songs. Advertisers pay big money to reach those listeners. And the artists who created the music that makes it all work? They get bupkis.

I don't know about you, but where I come from, that's called robbery.

The music that moves the world — R&B, rock, blues, country western, jazz — was all invented right here in America by the people who now can't even quit their day job to devote their time to art. That is not the American way.

How do we explain this to the generation of American artists behind us—kids who are dirt poor like I was—and deserve the same shot I got?

As a United States senator, you hold the fate of these artists in your hands. Through your actions, you can send a message to them that hard work still pays off.

This is personal for me. My wife Shannon and our two offspring, Sophie and Nick, are here today. Both Sophie and Nick are recording artists. As guardians and protectors of our children, we are here to stand up for them and all young artists.

That is why I'm here to kindly ask all of you—both Republicans and Democrats—to help us remedy this injustice that has been ongoing for many, many decades. The American Music Fairness Act represents the next step in protecting our creators.

The stars have never aligned so well to pass this important piece of legislation. First off, we have an advocate for artists in the White House. I'm proud to say I first met President Trump years before he got into politics. I appeared on *The Celebrity Apprentice*. I've watched him work. And I'm happy to remind everyone that President Trump signed the Music Modernization Act in 2018. That bill updated copyright protections for the digital era. It was a big deal. It showed that when Republicans and Democrats work together on issues that matter to American creators, we can get things done. I'm grateful to the President for his leadership on issues important to artists.

Second, we have a Congress that says it's fighting for working-class Americans. And make no mistake, musicians and other artists work their tuchuses off to make a living. And far too many are now saying it's no longer worth it. Their American Dream is dying.

Only you, our elected officials, can change this.

The public airwaves belong to the American people. Radio works for the American people. And the American people would respectfully ask you to fix this injustice, once and for all. According to one poll, 73% of Americans say that the system is unfair. This is not meant to demonize the radio broadcast industry. We all have our favorite radio stations we listen to, because we like the music they broadcast. But I say again, it's time to fix this injustice.

The American Music Fairness Act is the answer to this injustice. It's not complicated. It simply says that when radio makes money playing our music, the people who created that music should get a fair cut. That's capitalism. That's the American way.

I've devoted my life to the pursuit of capitalism. I'm not ashamed to say that. The free market made KISS possible. It made America the greatest country on Earth. And it should work for artists today, too. In America, you get paid for your work.

America is the promised land. My mother knew it when she survived the Holocaust and brought me here with nothing. I knew it when I learned English and started a rock band in New York City. And the young artists of 2025 should know it too.

But they can only believe in the American Dream if we make it real for them. Pass the American Music Fairness Act. Pay our artists for their work. It's the right thing to do. Let's send this bill to the White House, where I'm confident President Trump will sign it into law.

I came to this country with nothing. I didn't speak the language. I didn't know a soul. But I believed that if I worked hard, I could make something of myself. America delivered on that

promise for me. Now, I'm asking you to deliver on that promise for the next generation. For my kids. For every kid with a guitar in their bedroom dreaming of something bigger.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.