

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks on Signing the Orrin G. Hatch-Bob Goodlatte Music Modernization Act
October 11, 2018

The President. I know you've been waiting for this for a long time, you folks. Right? For a long time. Hi, Shelley. Hi, everybody. They've been working on this for years and years and years. And I guess certain entertainers have been taken advantage of. But no longer, because of Trump. Can you believe it? *[Laughter]* Who would think? Who would think?

But I'm thrilled—I know so many of you. I mean, it's just great. And I definitely know your music, and you've done a great job. I'm thrilled to welcome all of you to the White House today and the signing of the Hatch–Goodlatte—you know Hatch and you know Goodlatte, don't you? *[Laughter]* Terrific guys. I guess—I didn't know you liked music that much, Orrin. *[Laughter]*

Senator Orrin G. Hatch. *[Inaudible]*—saying here.

The President. Huh? The Hatch-Goodlatte Music Modernization Act. This is a landmark bill—they've been looking for it for many, many years—to protect the intellectual property and creative genius of America's incredible musicians.

Thank you to Secretary Wilbur Ross for being here and for working so hard to get this done. I especially want to thank one of the bill's lead sponsors, an accomplished musician and songwriter in his own right—which I heard, but I haven't heard his music. I'll let you know when I hear his music. *[Laughter]* The legendary Senator Orrin Hatch. It's been 44 years. How long have you been in the Senate?

Sen. Hatch. Forty-two.

The President. Forty-two. Oh, I thought it was 44. Oh, 42 is nothing. That's pretty good.

Sen. Hatch. Feels like 44. *[Laughter]*

The President. Feels like 44. And he's been my friend, and he's been a great, great Senator.

I also want to thank another friend of mine, Bob Goodlatte, for his tremendous leadership at the helm of the House Judiciary Committee. Very instrumental on this.

Let me also recognize and thank Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley. Everybody knows Chuck now. He's become more famous in the last 2 weeks. *[Laughter]* What a job you did. Was that easy, Chuck, or tough?

Senator Charles E. Grassley. No, it was nothing. *[Laughter]*

The President. I thought you were going to say that. You made it look easier than it was. Chuck is an incredible man. As well as Senators Lamar Alexander, Shelley Moore Capito, Chris Coons, Sheldon Whitehouse, and Congressmen Darrell Issa, Doug Collins, and—Jerry Nadler was going to be here, but he couldn't make it. I don't know what happened to him. I'm shocked. I'm shocked.

We're also joined by truly amazing artists and people I've known for a long time—people everyone knows—including Kid Rock. Kid, thank you. Great job. Do you like this legislation or do you hate it?

Musician Robert J. "Kid Rock" Ritchie. Like it.

The President. You've been—he's been fighting for a long time.

I want to welcome Christian rock group MercyMe. Also joining me is—gee, so many of these people, I've been with them—are famed guitarist from the Doobie Brothers and Steely Dan, Jeff Baxter. Jeff, thank you very much.

Participant. Skunk, sir. Just say "Skunk," sir.

The President. Where are you?

Musician Jeffrey A. "Skunk" Baxter. I'm standing right next to you.

Participant. Can we say "Skunk" in the White House?

The President. Oh. Here. I knew you were here someplace.

Mr. Baxter. I've got you covered. Yes, sir.

The President. Mike Love, I've heard him many times. Many times. He's—the Beach Boys. Where is Mike? Mike—come here, Mike. Boy, that's something, huh? You like this, right?

Musician Michael E. Love. I love it.

The President. Good. [Laughter] Mike Love. Been a friend of mine. The Beach Boys are—look, what can you say about the Beach Boys? Great music.

We have some great country artists with us, including Craig Morgan and my good friend John Rich of Big and Rich. He happened to win "The Apprentice," but we won't even get into that. [Laughter] I know him better than anybody. I'm the one—week after week, it was "John Rich, you're going to make it." I said "you're fired" to everybody but John Rich, right? Huh?

Musician John Rich. Yes, sir. Thank you.

The President. Great job. Great guy. Really good guy. And good under—he's good under pressure, which is very nice.

We also have Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Sam Moore, who is having a big birthday. Sam and Dave. But having a big birthday today. Right? Today is your birthday?

Musician Samuel D. Moore. Thank you. Today is my birthday.

The President. Eighty-three?

Mr. Moore. [Inaudible]—promise to keep your golf game going.

The President. My golf game? He looks good. [Laughter] Eighty-three. That means there's a future for us. [Laughter] That's great, Sam. Great to have you here.

Mr. Moore. Thank you.

The President. The legislation has wide support throughout the music industry, and I am very pleased that so many industry leaders, also over here—I won't call all the names, but some real leaders of industry are here with us for the enactment of this critical legislation.

I see Neil Portnow, who, in the world of music, is big stuff. He's the president and CEO of the Recording Academy, also known as the Grammys. Where is he? Thank you. Very good. Thank you for being here. I appreciate it very much. Thank you very much, Neil.

The Music Modernization Act closes loopholes in our digital royalty laws to ensure that songwriters, artists, producers, and providers receive fair payment for licensing of music. I've been reading about this for many years. Never thought I'd be involved in it, but I got involved in it. They were treated very unfairly. They're not going to be treated unfairly anymore. Streaming has made music more accessible than ever, yet our laws have not kept up with the pace of

technology. As such, artists of all varieties and all career stages are losing out on revenue that they have rightly earned. And I guess that's especially from 4, 5, 6 years ago, and beyond.

This legislation will help ensure that artists from eras long ago, in addition to modern day, can retire in security and that current and upcoming artists can make a living by creating amazing works that captivate their fans and entertain our Nation and the world. Because this is really the world we're talking about.

This legislation creates a single licensing system for reasons of simplicity, for digital music providers, so that music is more quickly licensed and paid for; ensures that American songwriters receive fair market value when their songs are streamed or purchased online; sets a standard licensing rate for digital performances.

Why aren't some of you guys performing for us today free? [*Laughter*] We should have done that, Senators. I'll tell you.

Participant. Free?

The President. We should have gotten some—Shelley, we should have gotten a little free music out of this. [*Laughter*]

Participant. We'd have to negotiate.

The President. They could have—they could give us a great concert, this group.

Sets a standard licensing rate for digital performance and recordings and applies that very same standard to music recorded before 1972; and creates a procedure for producers, engineers, and other participants in the recording and music industry to collect performance royalties.

This legislation passed both houses of Congress unanimously. How did you do that? [*Laughter*] See? Bipartisan. Second one. We just did the clean oceans act with Dan Sullivan and—he's around. Dan? And with Sheldon Whitehouse. We just signed that. And that was—I think we had one negative vote, didn't you? Did we have one?

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse. Unanimous. Bipartisan.

The President. Unanimous. So we just did two unanimous bills. Who says we can't pass unanimous? Who said we don't have bipartisan? It is bipartisan. But this legislation passed both houses unanimously.

Fair payment for intellectual property is essential to maintain America's longstanding position as the world leader in music and entertainment. And when they say "world leader," it's world leader, by far. It's not even close. This legislation accomplishes that goal by updating our licensing laws to reflect the significant growth in streaming and digital music.

Today we build on America's rich cultural and musical legacy, which brings joy and meaning to countless millions and millions and millions of Americans and beyond, frankly. And beyond.

So with that, I'm pleased to sign the Hatch-Goodlatte Music Modernization Act. It's my honor. Hearing about it for so many years, and we're finally getting it done. And these people are going to become even richer than they are, but that's okay. [*Laughter*] Because they really were; they were treated very unfairly. A lot of people got nothing. They'd do an incredible song, and they'd end up getting nothing. They'd create some of the most incredible music, some great music, and they would not be able to benefit. And that sounded—always sounded very unfair. And that's why you had a unanimous consent.

So thank you all for being here. It's an honor. And I'll go and sign the paper, and then you go on and do what you have to do. And, Kid, thank you very much, man. It's great.

Mr. Ritchie. You bet. Thank you, Mr. President.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

The President. All right, this is a big one, right? Got it.

Participant. Done.

The President. We're done.

How about if I asked Bob Goodlatte and Orrin Hatch to say a couple of words. Do you mind? And what this means. And I'm also going to hand out the pen. Who should get the first pen?

Participant. Sam! It's his birthday.

The President. Okay, let's give it to Sam.

Mr. Moore. Why, thank you. Thank you.

The President. Sam, say a couple of words. Go ahead. Say a few—you want to speak to the audience?

Mr. Moore. My wife can do all of that. My wife can do all of that. [*Laughter*] Thank you, everyone. I've got to tell you, this is a historic moment. I'm so proud. When Mr. Bush was in, we couldn't get it done. When we had Mr. Obama in, we couldn't get it done. But we got it done with this man. [*Laughter*]

Thank you so much.

The President. Thank you, Sam.

Mr. Moore. Thank you, everybody.

The President. Mike, say something. Mike Love.

Mr. Love. Thank you, President Trump. Thank you so much for your support of music, historically. I remember you tried your best to help get Whitney Houston in some kind of shape. And——

The President. It's true.

Mr. Love. And it was—yes, I remember being at Mar-a-Lago with this guy right here. He had Ron Perlman come down. He had—he tried your best to help Whitney.

The President. Right.

Mr. Love. And she's not the only one you've benefited and tried. And people are going to say what they want, but you've always been a big supporter of some of the best music that America has ever made.

The President. Thank you very much, Mike.

Mr. Love. And you're right when you say it's beyond. We remember going to Czechoslovakia 6 months after the Russians invaded. And because of our music—because of America and the freedom that we represented—you know, we were, like, welcomed like heroes. All we were doing was playing our songs.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Love. But it meant a lot to people all over the world. And so we appreciate you and Senator Hatch and Goodlatte. Darrell Issa, he's been involved with the pre-'72 stuff, and that's very near and dear to my heart. [*Laughter*]

The President. Darrell is a good man.

Mr. Love. Yes, he's great. Thank you. Thank you, President Trump.

Mr. Rich. Thank you. You know, I just am really encouraged by today, because we all know how divided our country is. We see it every single day. And to see that music is the one thing that can get unanimous consent in the Senate, in the House, in the State I live in in Tennessee—Marsha Blackburn has been pounding away at this for years. NSAI, pounding away at this for years.

And to see it come together and know that it affects all these artists and all these genres; the full political spectrum of artists are impacted. Kanye West, who you're going to see.

The President. He's coming in 15 minutes. [Laughter]

Mr. Rich. Kid Rock, Sam Moore, Taylor Swift, Big and Rich—you name it. Everybody is impacted by this.

So thank you very much for signing it. Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ritchie. Uh-oh, I've got the mike. [Laughter]

The President. This could be good.

Mr. Ritchie. This could be good. No, but I think we should start with, you know, I'd just like to bring it up that there's a whole lot of people in this country that do give you a lot of credit for everything you've been doing for this country.

The President. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. Ritchie. That we know that some people don't give it to you as much as maybe they should sometimes. [Laughter]

A big part of this bill that I'm a huge fan of is for the unsung songwriters out there. There's so many who have written the songs that no one will ever see at any level. And everybody knows this business of music is a pretty dirty business. There's a lot more that needs to be done here, and we need to go after the record companies next for things like free goods and things like that.

But this is a great start to protect songwriters, producers, engineers—the unsung heroes behind many of these songs that go out there. People like myself who are maybe more at the top of the food chain, it really doesn't affect as much. But I know many people it does affect. So this is going to help out in a big, big way, and be a great start for, hopefully, a lot of more to follow in the future. So thank you again.

The President. Thank you, Kid.

Mr. Baxter. You know, this is in the Constitution. This is in the Constitution. Patented language is actually——

The President. That's right. That's right.

Mr. Baxter. Congratulations.

The President. Please.

Sen. Hatch. Well, Mr. President, once again, it's—thank you.

Mr. Moore. The man himself. Yes.

Mr. Baxter. Songwriter. Absolutely.

Mr. Moore. Yes, songwriter. Give it to him. [*Applause*]

Mr. Baxter. Songwriter.

Sen. Hatch. Mr. President, I'm honored to be here with you, as always. And I'm honored to be with these great songwriters and musicians who really don't—haven't been able to receive all the recognition they deserve.

This is a very important bill. It's going to renew the interest in music throughout the country and throughout the world. And we've had a lot of help from a lot of good people, including the Senators and Congresspeople standing here. Bob Goodlatte carried this through the House, and I'm just very grateful to him. I'm grateful to all of you.

But, Mr. President, we're grateful to you. You're making a real—a hell of a difference in this country. It's a good difference. And we all—you're getting both sides to do it too. I love you, boy.

The President. Thank you. Please.

Representative Robert W. Goodlatte. Mr. President, you're doing a lot of things to make America great again. And signing this bill is one of them. And it is something that has been needed for decades. This has been a situation where the music licensing system in this country hasn't worked fairly. And I'm honored to have my name associated with it. I'm honored to have my name associated with Senator Hatch. But this is an effort of a lot of people all across this country, in the Congress and out of the Congress, over a long time.

The President. Great job.

Rep. Goodlatte. So thank you for putting the finishing touch on it. It's going to do a lot of good for a lot of great people. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Great job. Thank you.

Do you want to say something? Lamar, do you want to say something? One of our great people over here.

Senator Lamar A. Alexander, Jr. Thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership. There are tens of thousands of taxi drivers, waitresses, music teachers in Tennessee and across this country who are riding the bus out to their work and hoping they'll write a big number-one hit one day. And what this means is that when they do, they'll get paid, and they'll get paid a fair market value.

So I'm grateful to the entire range of the music industry for coming together on what they agree on, putting aside what they don't, and then working with this whole range of those of us in Congress who wanted to make this happen.

This is a great day, Mr. President. And thank you for your support and for calling attention to the music that, as John says, unifies our State and our country.

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, everyone.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Daniel S. Sullivan. He also referred to S. 3508, the Save Our Seas Act of 2018, which was approved October 11 and assigned Public Law No. 115–265. Mr. Moore referred to his wife Joyce. Mr. Love referred to actor Ronald Perlman. H.R. 1551, approved October 11, was assigned Public Law No. 115–264.

Categories: Bill Signings and Vetoes : Orrin G. Hatch-Bob Goodlatte Music Modernization Act, signing remarks.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Alexander, A. Lamar, Jr.; Baxter, Jeffery A. "Skunk"; Capito, Shelley Moore; Collins, Susan M.; Coons, Christopher A.; Goodlatte, Robert W.; Grassley, Charles E.; Greer, Craig M.; Hatch, Orrin G.; Issa, Darrell E.; Love, Michael E.; Moore, Samuel D.; Nadler, Jerrold L.; Portnow, Neil R.; Rich, John; Ritchie, Robert J. "Kid Rock"; Ross, Wilbur L., Jr.; Sullivan, Daniel S.; West, Kanye O.; Whitehouse, Sheldon.

Subjects: Arts : Musical licensing, strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Business leaders, meeting with President; Business and industry : Intellectual property law, strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Musical licensing, strengthening efforts; Commerce, Department of : Secretary; Commerce, international : Intellectual property law, strengthening efforts; Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : Senate :: Judiciary Committee; Legislation, enacted : Clean Ocean and Safe Tourism Anti-Drilling Act; Legislation, enacted : Orrin G. Hatch-Bob Goodlatte Music Modernization Act.

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