

1 **The Artist Rights & Platform Accountability Act**

2 **Introduction & Purpose**

3 The Artist Rights & Platform Accountability Act is a federal
4 legislative proposal designed to protect independent musicians and
5 creators from unjust fraud accusations, metadata tampering,
6 premature removal from streaming services, and digital erasure.
7 These practices harm artistic careers, erase cultural contributions,
8 and misallocate income on a national scale.

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10 In 2023, the U.S. music industry generated over \$10.3 billion in
11 revenue (RIAA). Yet independent artists — the backbone of that
12 growth — are increasingly silenced by fraud flags with no appeals
13 process, takedowns without notice, and distributors who profit
14 from royalty misdirection without transparency or consequence.

15

16 This isn't just a cultural issue — it's an economic one. Misapplied
17 fraud flags and royalty theft don't just impact creators — they
18 reduce taxable income, distort the digital labor market, and
19 undermine confidence in the music economy. Improper takedowns
20 and untraceable royalties enable offshore laundering, disrupt IRS
21 revenue collection, and weaken oversight of a multi-billion-dollar
22 sector.

23

24 The Act establishes a centralized oversight agency (NOMES),
25 restores due process for artists, and demands accountability from
26 platforms, curators, and distributors alike — not only to protect

creative rights but to safeguard U.S. cultural and financial
infrastructure in the digital age

Bill Objectives

This legislation is built around four pillars: Accountability, Royalty Oversight, Economic Protection, and Artist Empowerment. Its enforcement will be overseen by a new independent agency: NOMES (National Organization for Music and Economic Safety).

Repetition is not coordinated fraud. Fans don't loop music to boost payouts — they loop music because it resonates, emotionally or socially. Platforms that misinterpret this behavior risk penalizing the very engagement they depend on.

Neglecting due process causes career collapses, tax revenue losses, and misallocated royalties — all of which ripple into the U.S. economy. Music isn't just art; it's labor and business.

Artist Rights & Platform Accountability Act

Section 1 — Definitions

1.1 Digital Service Provider (DSP)

Any platform that streams, sells, or monetizes music digitally, including but not limited to Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube Music, Amazon Music, and Tidal.

1.2 Distribution Partner

Any company or entity responsible for delivering music to DSPs on behalf of the artist, including but not limited to DistroKid, TuneCore, CD Baby, Horus Music, UnitedMasters, and Amuse.

1.3 Streaming Fraud

The use of artificial, deceptive, or automated methods to inflate play counts or generate royalties. Includes, but is not limited to: phone farms, bots, repeated stream loops, or services that offer guaranteed streams for a fee.

Cultural Context of Repetition — Not Fraud

Listening to music on repeat is not inherently suspicious — it's cultural. From workouts to weddings, fans repeat songs because they love them, not to exploit streaming systems.

This was made clear when Kendrick Lamar performed “Not Like Us” six times in a row at his Juneteenth Pop Out concert in Los Angeles — an iconic, culturally resonant moment. Similarly, Jay-Z and Kanye West performed “N***** in Paris” twelve times in one night while touring Paris. These moments reflect how musical repetition is celebration, not manipulation.

Listeners don't repeat songs to increase payouts. They repeat them because a track speaks to them — emotionally, socially, or culturally. Criminalizing that behavior devalues how people experience music.

This bill clarifies: Repetition by fans is not fraud unless clear, automated manipulation is proven.

1.4 Bot

An automated or non-human process used to inflate streaming numbers. Includes AI-generated listeners, device farms, and automated replay software.

1.5 Locked-Out Artist

An artist who is unable to access their DSP or distributor accounts due to account termination, content removal, or denial of appeal. These artists are denied due process and often become invisible on DSPs despite continued platform activity involving their content.

1.6 Fraudulent Playlist

A playlist composed or operated by bad actors (including bots or pay-for-play curators) that is not supported by genuine listener activity, often used to inflate streams artificially.

1.7 Algorithmic Playlist

A playlist generated by a DSP's internal algorithms, such as Spotify's Discover Weekly or Release Radar, based on user behavior and engagement patterns.

1.8 Internal Playlist

A playlist created by a distributor, DSP, or affiliated third party and branded in a way that resembles public, editorial, or organic playlists. These must be disclosed as internal when used for promotion or marketing purposes.

1.9 Editorial Playlist

A playlist curated by official editorial teams or DSP-appointed curators. These playlists are widely followed and presented as organic, trustworthy sources of music discovery.

1.10 Metadata

All information tied to a musical work or recording, including artist

108 name, songwriter, producer credits, ISRC codes, publishing splits,
109 and release date.

110 1.11 Transparency Tools

111 Platforms such as Spotify for Artists or Apple Music for Artists,
112 which are intended to give creators visibility into playlisting,
113 demographics, and royalty flow. This bill mandates improvements
114 to these tools.

115 1.12 Royalty Theft

116 Any failure to pay or intentional withholding of royalties owed to
117 an artist, including the removal of songs or catalogs after revenue
118 has been earned, without fair compensation or due process.

119 1.13 Shadowbanning

120 A form of soft censorship wherein an artist's music remains live but
121 is removed from visibility in searches, recommendations, or
122 playlists. Often used to quietly suppress accounts without formal
123 takedown.

124 1.14 NOMES (National Organization for Music Economic Safety)

125 The federally supervised body proposed in this bill to oversee
126 fraud reviews, enforce transparency, and protect artists' rights in
127 the digital music economy.

128 1.15 Innocent Until Proven Fraudulent Clause (Universal 129 Protections)

130 A core principle of this bill that assumes the artist's innocence until
131 verifiable, independently reviewed evidence of fraud is established.
132 Applies to all artists, curators, and rightsholders — regardless of
133 registry status.

Section 2 — Protected Rights for Artists

This section affirms the foundational rights of artists operating within the digital music economy. It ensures fair treatment, due process, transparency, and mechanisms for recourse in cases of wrongful removal, fraud accusations, or account access denial.

2.1 — Right to Due Process Prior to Takedown

No distributor, label, or digital service provider (DSP) may remove an artist's work from streaming platforms without providing prior written notice and an opportunity for the artist to respond. Automated detection or algorithmic suspicion alone does not constitute sufficient justification for takedown.

2.2 — Notice and Evidence Requirement

Before initiating a takedown or account suspension, platforms must provide the artist with:

- A formal explanation outlining the basis for the action, including the specific nature of the alleged violation.
- Access to relevant data, logs, or reports used to justify the decision.
- A minimum of fifteen (15) business days to respond, dispute the claim, or file an appeal.

2.3 — Right to Appeal Through NOMES

Artists shall have the right to appeal any takedown or suspension through the National Organization for Music Economic and Safety (NOMES). Upon receipt of an appeal, NOMES shall:

- Conduct an independent investigation of the claim.
- Notify the relevant distributor, DSP, or label of the appeal.

- Temporarily freeze further punitive action until the appeal is resolved.

2.4 — Protocol for Locked-Out Artists

Artists who have been locked out of their distributor or DSP account—rendering them unable to respond—may report the issue directly to NOMES. These cases shall be flagged for expedited investigation, and NOMES shall make good-faith efforts to contact the artist via alternative means. Such cases will be treated as potential violations of artist rights.

2.5 — Presumption of Innocence and Burden of Proof

If a takedown occurs before a NOMES investigation is completed:

- The artist shall be presumed innocent.
- The burden of proof lies with the platform or distributor.
- If the investigation confirms wrongful removal, the following remedies must be enacted:
 - Return of all withheld royalties.
 - Compensation for damages, including financial loss and career harm.
 - A formal public acknowledgment of the mistake by the responsible entity.
 - Restoration of platform visibility, algorithmic parity, and search functionality. No shadowbanning, downranking, or related retaliation may occur.

2.6 — Metadata Misattribution Accountability

Artists have the right to accurate representation of their intellectual property across all platforms. Distributors and digital service providers (DSPs) shall be held accountable for any

metadata errors that result in a release being uploaded to the wrong artist profile, misattributed to another party, or mislabeled in title, artwork, or credits. These mistakes are not cosmetic — they fracture audience engagement, misdirect royalties, and jeopardize an artist’s digital footprint. Distributors and DSPs must implement quality control systems to prevent such errors, offer clear channels for urgent metadata corrections, and publicly acknowledge significant attribution issues. If not resolved within 14 days of notice by the artist, the issue shall trigger enforcement measures, including financial penalties, mandatory royalty reimbursements, and access to independent arbitration.

2.7 — National Economic Protection

These rights are not only a matter of fairness for individual artists—they also support national economic integrity by:

- Ensuring accurate royalty payments.
- Preventing revenue loss through unlawful removal.
- Enabling proper taxation of music-related income.

Wrongful takedowns, unreviewed fraud flags, and unnotified account suspensions contribute to the suppression of legitimate American labor, undermine small businesses, and disrupt the flow of royalties into the broader U.S. economy.

2.8 — Data Portability and Pre-Takedown Access

Artists shall retain the right to access and export all data related to their content prior to or during any fraud investigation. This includes but is not limited to: streaming statistics, earnings reports, metadata records, playlist placements, advertising spend, and traffic origin breakdowns.

In the event of a fraud flag or takedown, digital platforms and distributors must provide a downloadable report within 7 business days of notice — regardless of whether the artist's account has been locked or removed.

This ensures that artists are not severed from their own work, cannot be gaslit by manipulated data, and retain the ability to defend their career, royalties, and reputation with transparency.

Any failure to comply with these data access requirements shall constitute grounds for investigation under NOMES oversight.

2.9 Cultural Impact and Erasure

The removal or suppression of independent artists does not occur in a vacuum — it actively threatens cultural memory, representation, and legacy. When artists are silenced due to false fraud accusations, algorithmic takedowns, or negligent oversight, the public loses access to potentially transformative works. Music is not only a form of expression — it is a record of social history.

Imagine if artists like Eminem, whose music helped define the early 2000s and inspired films like 8 Mile, had been deplatformed before reaching the mainstream. Or if Black artists who contributed to the Black Panther soundtrack — a landmark moment for cultural representation — had their work removed without due process. Even in more recent years, artists like Billie Eilish, whose minimalist bedroom pop redefined mainstream aesthetics, or Playboi Carti, whose experimental approach reshaped the sound of an entire generation, could have been prematurely silenced under today's opaque fraud systems.

These are not hypotheticals for the next wave of creators. Artists working today deserve the same chance to shape culture without the looming threat of invisible censorship, misclassification, or unaccountable removals.

Section 2.10 — Educational & Nonprofit Exemption

Music released by nonprofit organizations, accredited schools, or educational programs — including student projects, therapeutic recordings, or community initiatives — shall not be subject to automatic fraud flags based solely on irregular streaming behavior. These works must be reviewed within context, with consideration for their noncommercial nature. NOMES shall provide special intake procedures for nonprofit groups to report wrongful takedowns or fraud flags and receive expedited resolution.

2.11 — Minimum Appeal Window

Artists shall have no less than 3 months from the date of content removal to file an appeal, regardless of any internal policy from digital platforms or distributors. In cases involving locked accounts, mental health hardship, or lack of legal support, NOMES may extend this appeal window to a maximum of 6 months upon request.

Once an appeal is filed, no artist's content shall be permanently removed or hidden from streaming platforms until NOMES independently verifies and confirms fraudulent activity. Premature takedowns before a confirmed finding constitute a violation of this Act.

For complex or high-impact fraud allegations, NOMES may extend its investigation window up to 8–12 months to ensure thorough and impartial review. Once a final determination is made, the artist shall immediately become eligible for all restorative measures under this Act — including reinstatement, royalty repayment, and metadata correction, as outlined in Section 2.6 and Section 7.7.

Under this Act, the fraud allegation process begins when a DSP or distributor formally submits a report to NOMES. However,

neither party shall take punitive action — including removals, account lockouts, royalty withholding, or visibility suppression — until NOMES completes its investigation and confirms the fraud claim. The artist shall retain access to all rights and revenues during the investigation unless NOMES determines otherwise through due process. This ensures that the platforms responsible for ecosystem integrity are held accountable for premature enforcement, and that artists are not punished for unverified claims or third-party misconduct.

This clause also affirms the national economic impact of independent music. By ensuring fair treatment and accurate oversight, NOMES may work with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to trace royalty flows and verify that U.S. artists are receiving their legally earned income — thereby promoting proper taxation, financial transparency, and revenue collection in support of American citizens and the broader creative economy.

Subsection 2.12— Social Media ≠ Streaming Value

In today's industry culture, artists are often judged not by the quality or impact of their music, but by their ability to generate content for social media. This has led to a false and harmful standard: that success on streaming platforms must be reflected by proportional growth on social platforms — or else it's assumed to be fraudulent. This clause rejects that standard entirely and affirms the validity of all legitimate organic success, regardless of social media presence.

Policy Provisions:

1. Distinct Ecosystems, Distinct Metrics:

Social media metrics (followers, likes, engagement) and DSP metrics (streams, saves, playlist adds) operate in different digital

ecosystems. Their growth patterns are not required to mirror each other, nor do they validate one another.

2. The Replayability Principle:

The most valuable music is often defined not by its social media shareability, but by its replay value and lasting emotional resonance. From Kendrick Lamar to underground beat tapes, many culturally vital works succeed in silence — not virality.

3. DSP-Only Success Is Valid:

A creator may experience significant organic growth on streaming platforms without corresponding growth on social media. This growth is valid, protected, and shall not be treated as evidence of fraud.

4. Dark Virality Exists:

Some songs spread through closed communities, private sharing, or offline scenes. These listening patterns may not generate visible shares — but they generate real replay value. Platforms must recognize and respect this form of cultural movement.

5. Prohibition on Metric Comparison for Fraud Detection:

Distributors and DSPs are prohibited from flagging artists as fraudulent based solely on perceived mismatches between social media and streaming performance.

6. Inter-DSP Discrepancies Are Not Evidence of Fraud:

Artists may experience uneven performance across streaming platforms — for example, a song may thrive on Apple Music but underperform on Spotify, or vice versa. These platform-specific differences are natural and cannot be used as sole indicators of fraud or manipulation.

7. Replayable Music Reaching the Right Audience Is a Positive Outcome:

Discrepancies between DSP performance and social media growth — or between one DSP and another — should be interpreted as signs of algorithmic success, not fraud.

If a streaming platform surfaces a song that connects deeply with real listeners, even when the artist has minimal social media presence, that is evidence that the system worked.

A song like “what the hell what the helly” may go viral due to absurdity or meme value — similar to the satirical music of Yuno Miles, which thrives on platforms like TikTok and Instagram through its intentionally bizarre aesthetic. These songs may succeed as memes — and that success is valid in its own lane. In contrast, a composition like “Weird Fishes / Arpeggi” by Radiohead has no dance challenge, no algorithm bait, and no viral trend — yet it continues to be one of the most replayed and emotionally resonant tracks in modern music history.

DSPs must learn to distinguish between flash-in-the-pan content and meaningful, slow-burn success — and recognize the latter as an essential function of a healthy, human-centered music ecosystem.

8. Organic Sharing Exists Outside Social Media:

Music can spread through human networks that leave no digital footprint. Word-of-mouth recommendations, private text messages, group chats, in-person interactions, or even hearing a song played at a local business — these are all valid and time-tested pathways of musical discovery.

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382 A track's share value cannot be measured solely by its performance
383 on social platforms. An artist may reach large audiences simply by
384 having a strong personal network, community support, or cultural
385 relevance in offline spaces.

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387 DSPs and fraud detection systems must recognize that real
388 listeners often discover and share music in ways that are not
389 tracked by likes, shares, or retweets — and that this organic spread
390 is not only valid, but vital to music culture.

391 **Cultural Respect Clause:**

392 Music is not content.

393 The music industry must recognize that not every song is a meme,
394 a trend, or a viral dance. Some are compositions. Some are
395 movements. Some are just good music.

396

397 Streaming platforms must respect the artist's right to exist outside
398 of the social media algorithm — and within the streaming services
399 algorithm. A song's worth is not defined by how many followers the
400 artist has, but by how deeply it resonates when played. Whether it
401 spreads through private playlists, emotional connection, or cultural
402 moment, it deserves protection and respect.

403 **Real-World Context:**

404 This clause was informed by the experience of independent artist
405 and producer Kenan Ali Erkan, known as Ali Prod, who reached
406 over 500,000 streams without a large social media following —
407 only to be wrongfully flagged due to an industry assumption that
408 success without virality must mean fraud.

Final Cultural Dagger:

“In meetings with labels and distributors, artists are increasingly asked: What’s your social media strategy? instead of What’s your next musical project?”

This inversion of values signals a systemic failure — one that prioritizes content output over creative output. The Artist Rights & Platform Accountability Act demands that we reverse this trend and return music to the center of the music industry.

Section 3 — Distribution Oversight and Royalty Protections

This section establishes federal oversight of music distributors, labels, and digital service providers (DSPs) to ensure accurate royalty payments, transparent artist treatment, and accountability for mismanagement or fraud.

3.1 — Royalty Accuracy Standards

- Distributors and DSPs must provide artists with clear, itemized royalty statements.
- Statements must disclose total streams, payout per stream, fees deducted, and destination of funds.
- All financial statements must be audit-ready and retained for 7 years.

3.2 — Mandatory Royalty Transparency Tools

- Platforms must display real-time earnings and streaming data to artists.
- Earnings must be broken down by DSP, territory, and currency.

435 - Artists must be able to track royalties from DSP to distributor to
436 payout.

437 **3.3 — NOMES Audit Authority**

438 - NOMES may audit distributors and DSPs on a rolling basis (every
439 3–6 months).

440 - Failure to comply or obstruction of audit will result in legal
441 penalties.

442 - NOMES may refer fraud, tax evasion, or royalty theft to the DOJ
443 and IRS.

444 **3.4 — Illegal Practices and Penalties**

445 - It is illegal to remove music, withhold royalties, or shadowban
446 artists without verified cause and due process.

447 - Violators must return royalties, pay damages, and face civil or
448 criminal charges.

449 - Repeated offenses may lead to federal takeover of artist
450 distribution for affected American creators.

451 **3.5 — Fair Access for Independent Artists**

452 - Distributors must not deny service or remove content based
453 solely on volume of streams or perceived risk.

454 - Algorithms and fraud detection systems must be independently
455 verified and transparent to NOMES.

456 - All takedown actions must be reviewed by a human, not solely AI
457 or automation.

458 **Section 3.6 — Loudness Transparency and Playback Control**

459 **Artist & Public Access to Loudness Normalization Data**

460 All digital streaming platforms (DSPs) shall publicly disclose loudness

normalization information for every published audio work. The following data must be made available:

- The original LUFS (integrated) level of the uploaded master
- The gain adjustment applied during normalization (e.g., “-3.1 dB”)
- The final playback LUFS level as rendered to listeners

This information must be clearly displayed in two locations:

1. The artist-facing dashboard (e.g., Spotify for Artists, YouTube Studio)
2. The public-facing track or album interface, accessible to any user (e.g., via an information panel, toggle, or expanded playback metadata)

Listener Playback Normalization Toggle

All DSPs must provide end users with the ability to enable or disable loudness normalization during playback. This toggle shall be:

- Included in the platform’s playback or audio settings
- Available to both free and paid users
- Accompanied by a clear explanation stating:
“Normalization reduces volume differences between songs. Disabling this will allow playback using the artist’s original dynamics and loudness.”

Optional Artist Bypass for Preserved Masters

Artists may request normalization bypass if their master meets the following conditions:

- The track has a true peak of -1.0 dBTP or lower
- The file is certified free from audible distortion or clipping
- The artist or mastering engineer submits a playback integrity declaration

489 In such cases, the DSP shall honor the bypass request and render the
490 track without gain reduction by default, unless the user has
491 normalization enabled in their settings.

492 **Purpose**

493 This section ensures transparency in loudness manipulation, protects
494 artistic intent, and empowers both artists and listeners to control the
495 dynamic and playback integrity of published works.

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497 **Section 4 — Transparent Fraud Review Standards**

498 This section establishes clear guidelines for how DSPs and
499 distributors must handle fraud detection, investigations, and
500 communication. The goal is to eliminate vague or arbitrary
501 enforcement and protect artists from wrongful accusations rooted
502 in flawed data or misused technology.

503 **4.1 — Verified Evidence Standard**

504 No fraud-based takedown or penalty may occur without a
505 documented audit trail showing verified evidence of artificial
506 activity. Anonymous tips, vague algorithmic red flags, or
507 assumptions based on genre or region do not meet this standard.

508 **4.2 — Disclosure of Reason for Takedown**

509 If a track or profile is flagged for fraud, the distributor or DSP must
510 disclose:

- 511 - The specific reason for the flag
- 512 - The data that triggered it (e.g., unusual geographic activity,
513 repeated IPs, etc.)
- 514 - Whether the evidence was reviewed by a human

4.3 — NOMES Audit Rights

NOMES reserves the right to request full internal logs and investigation data from any platform accused of false fraud enforcement. Platforms must retain such data for at least 18 months after a takedown.

4.4 – Artificial Streaming Penalty Elimination

All charges, penalties, and financial seizures from DSPs related to alleged “artificial streaming” are hereby suspended unless the platform can:

1. Demonstrate a transparent and reproducible investigation, and
2. Prove the artist intentionally engaged in fraudulent behavior through documented, verifiable evidence.

Digital Service Providers (DSPs) must formally acknowledge their role in cultivating and profiting from an ecosystem that enables artificial streaming — including but not limited to phone farms, bot networks, exploitative ad algorithms, and manipulative playlist curators. DSPs may no longer offload liability for this flawed infrastructure onto artists who operate in good faith.

Any deduction of royalties, account penalties, or takedowns based on unproven or algorithmically inferred suspicions shall be classified as unauthorized seizure of income and subject to legal and financial restitution under this Act.

542 Enforcement and Oversight:

543 The National Organization for Music and Economic Safety (NOMES)
544 shall be tasked with auditing DSP fraud claim procedures and
545 handling artist appeals related to artificial streaming accusations.
546 NOMES will maintain a national database of artist complaints and
547 ensure platforms comply with this provision or face federal
548 penalties and public reporting of non-compliance.

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551 **4.5 — Timeline for Review**

552 Distributors and DSPs must review flagged accounts within 15
553 business days. Delays or silence beyond this period will be
554 considered negligent under this Act.

555 **4.6 — False Positive Accountability**

556 If an artist is found innocent after being flagged for fraud, they are
557 entitled to:

- 558 - Full restoration of royalties and visibility
- 559 - A formal apology
- 560 - Compensation for proven career damages
- 561 - Public correction of fraud designation

562 **4.7 — Ban on Passive Enforcement**

563 Platforms may not use passive enforcement tactics like
564 shadowbanning, silence, or indefinite withholding of royalties
565 without formal communication, review, and the option for appeal.

4.8 — Economic Safeguards

Wrongful takedowns that result in lost royalties impact not only the artist, but also the broader economy. NOMES will track all such cases and include lost taxes and unpaid royalties in national music economy reports.

4.9 — Indicators of Cultural Negligence and Required Investigation

Public-facing behavior from DSP CEOs and distributors during mass takedown periods may reveal deeper issues of negligence, mismanagement, or lack of oversight.

This negligence is not isolated — it reflects a deeper cultural problem within the music tech elite. Spotify CEO Daniel Ek, whose company dominates global streaming, has openly referred to music as “just content” and publicly questioned, “What even is music?” These statements, coming from the highest levels of power in the industry, betray a fundamental misunderstanding — or outright disregard — for the cultural, emotional, and economic value of music as art. When both DSPs and distributors normalize this detachment from the art itself, it reinforces the urgency for federal oversight, artist protections, and legally enforceable standards.

These attitudes extend beyond Spotify. The CEO of DistroKid, one of the largest independent distributors, has publicly downplayed artist concerns and mocked complaints about fraud, takedowns, and metadata issues across social media. When top executives treat artist livelihoods like memes or marketing talking points, the message is clear: the people profiting from the music economy have little respect for the people creating it.

594

595 In January 2021, during a widespread wave of artist removals from
596 major streaming platforms, representatives of a leading U.S.-based
597 distributor made light of the situation on social media platform
598 Twitter (now known as X), posting the following:

599

600 “What food goes with whiskey? Planning my night.” — @DistroKid,
601 January 4, 2021, 4:55 PM (Twitter for iPhone)

602

603 Amid numerous artist complaints about withheld royalties,
604 wrongful removals, and unanswered support tickets, a public reply
605 stated:

606

607 “You should plan on either responding to my email and paying me
608 what’s owed or getting a defense lawyer because I’m going to be
609 owning a part of distrokid by the time I’m done.” — @PrestoX2,
610 January 4, 2021

611

612 Days later, the distributor followed up with:

613

614 “Sometimes I want to ask a question or advice here on Twitter, but
615 too scared it’ll get misconstrued & turn into a huge Twitter pile-on
616 (has happened). Is there a Twitter without pitchforks where
617 people (or companies) can be more open?” — @DistroKid, January
618 9, 2021, 12:06 AM

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620 These public statements, issued during a period of industry-wide
621 disruption, reflect a concerning disregard for professional
622 responsibility and artist welfare.

623

624 As a distributor entrusted with the delivery and monetization of
625 American music — and thus with direct influence over U.S.
626 intellectual property, royalty flow, and creative labor — DistroKid
627 and other involved parties are expected to uphold the highest
628 standards of transparency and conduct.

629

630 Behavior like this, particularly when paired with mass removals
631 and lack of due process, constitutes a red flag for mismanagement
632 of American revenue, metadata, and artist rights. NOMES shall treat
633 such conduct as justification for formal audit and review.

634

635 Mandated Investigation

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637 NOMES shall launch a retrospective investigation into the
638 coordinated or simultaneous artist removals that occurred in and
639 around January 2021, with specific attention to:

- 640 - Spotify (as the primary platform where many removals occurred),
- 641 - DistroKid (as the distributor named in numerous public
642 complaints), and
- 643 - Any additional DSPs or distributors shown to have participated in
644 mass content purges without notice, evidence, or appeal access.

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646 This investigation shall include review of:

647 - Internal communications

648 - Fraud flag criteria used at the time

649 - Support system activity logs

650 - Royalty records before and after removals

651 - Third-party contractor involvement or playlist suppression

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653 This clause is not solely based on online documentation or
654 community reports — it is also informed by the direct experience
655 of the bill’s author, Kenan Ali Erkan (Ali Prod), who was among the
656 artists purged during this 2021 takedown wave without notice or
657 due process.

658

659 The goal of this investigation is to determine whether artists were
660 wrongfully removed, defrauded of royalties, or suppressed through
661 collusion between DSPs and distributors — and to recommend
662 corrective actions or criminal referrals where applicable.

663 **Section 5 — National Oversight for Music Economic Safety**
664 **(NOMES)**

665 This section introduces NOMES, a federally established agency
666 responsible for auditing, investigating, and enforcing industry-wide
667 compliance in matters relating to artist royalties, fraudulent
668 takedowns, distributor negligence, metadata tampering, and
669 streaming fraud.

5.1 — NOMES Overview and Mission

NOMES (National Organization for Music Economic Safety) will serve as a neutral body for protecting independent artists, investigating fraud, and ensuring the fair and accurate distribution of music royalties across platforms and distributors. It will operate with government backing to audit, arbitrate, and intervene in cases of suspected abuse or misconduct.

5.2 — Audit Powers and Reporting Timelines

NOMES will audit all U.S.-based and international music distributors servicing American citizens, with mandatory reviews every 3–6 months, aligned with royalty reporting periods. Investigations will assess compliance with artist rights, proper royalty payments, copyright integrity, and ecosystem transparency.

5.3 — Enforcement and Penalties

Distributors, labels, or DSPs found to have committed fraud, withheld royalties, or manipulated copyrights without cause will be subject to federal penalties, including seizure of relevant financial data, reimbursement of artist damages, and referral to the DOJ or IRS for criminal review.

5.4 — Clean Platform Standard (Anti-Bot Mandate)

DSPs must maintain a clean digital ecosystem. Failure to remove known bots, phone farms, or fraudulent playlists will result in NOMES-led investigations, and possibly FTC referral for deceptive business practices.

5.5 — Distribution Takeover Clause

If a distributor or DSP is found unfit to manage artist royalties for U.S. citizens, NOMES may assume oversight of their American-

facing catalog and facilitate temporary distribution through a government-supervised portal or verified domestic partner.

5.6 — Copyright Integrity and Metadata Safety

NOMES will maintain secure logs of artist metadata (credits, splits, copyright ownership) to prevent unauthorized tampering. Any distributor that removes, edits, or misattributes this data without consent will be held accountable.

5.7 — National and International Scope

NOMES protects American artists both domestically and abroad. It will investigate cases where international distributors, labels, or platforms extract value from U.S. audiences while violating artist rights. All U.S.-based royalty flows, regardless of destination, fall under NOMES jurisdiction.

5.8 — Payment Verification and Tax Compliance

To ensure accurate royalty tracking and federal taxation, NOMES will verify royalty disbursements through social security numbers and IRS channels. This ensures artists receive what they're owed, while strengthening national economic visibility.

5.9 — Emergency Oversight Trigger

In the event of mass artist takedowns, catalog disappearances, or widespread fraud, NOMES may trigger emergency oversight procedures to freeze further removals, secure artist data, and initiate federal inquiries.

Section 6 — Platform Accountability & Transparency Standards

This section outlines the legal responsibilities of digital streaming platforms (DSPs) and distributors to maintain fair, transparent, and non-exploitative environments for artists. Platforms cannot simultaneously profit from creators while punishing them for systemic issues beyond their control.

6.1 — Clear Takedown Protocols

Platforms must clearly define their takedown processes in public documentation. These processes must include:

- A notice to the artist before any removal.
- An explanation of the reason.
- A chance to appeal within a specified timeframe.
- Human review before a final decision.

Failure to provide these steps may result in a NOMES-led audit and government intervention.

6.2 — Fraud Flag Disclosures

Artists must be informed of:

- The precise stream(s) and date(s) triggering a fraud flag.
- Any suspicious playlists or traffic sources.
- Whether the distributor or DSP initiated the fraud report.

This protects against false claims and gives artists the ability to correct the record or appeal via NOMES.

6.3 — Anti-Gaslighting Clause

If an artist is removed for 'fraudulent streaming' yet receives no proof and no platform or partner claims responsibility, then NOMES will investigate for collusion or coordinated negligence. Platforms may not obscure responsibility or deny knowledge if

they participate in data handling or revenue withholding. These actions are subject to investigation.

6.4 — Platform Contradictions Must End

Platforms like Spotify promote themselves as empowering artists, while issuing vague fraud takedowns and charging \$10 per track for 'artificial streaming'.

This bill directly challenges that contradiction: platforms cannot profit from artists, offer playlist pitching, and sell ads to them while removing their work without due process.

6.5 — National Economic Impact of Platform Negligence

Unlawful takedowns and account deletions:

- Undermine U.S. labor and innovation
- Remove taxable income from the national economy
- Create economic loss for independent creators and future entrepreneurs

Congress must treat this issue as a matter of national economic security.

Section 7 — Oversight, Enforcement & Artist Cooperatives

This section defines enforcement mechanisms, outlines investigatory powers, and introduces collective protections for artists through cooperatives. It prioritizes transparency, legal oversight, and shared governance to ensure accountability across all levels of the music distribution ecosystem.

7.1 — Federal Oversight & NOMES Authority

The National Oversight for Music Economic Standards (NOMES) will have investigatory authority over:

- 774 • Distributors
- 775 • DSPs (Digital Service Providers)
- 776 • Music labels and platform intermediaries
- 777

778 Investigations will occur every 3–6 months and include:

- 779 • Audits of royalty payments
- 780 • Examination of metadata integrity and catalog ownership
- 781 • Review of artist account lockouts, shadowbans, or takedowns

782 NOMES shall be established within 12 months of the Act’s passage,
783 with operational intake and artist appeal systems active within 18
784 months.

785 **7.2 — Enforcement Measures**

786 If NOMES determines there has been:

- 787 • Fraud
- 788 • Royalty theft
- 789 • Copyright manipulation
- 790 • Unlawful shadowbanning
- 791

792 Then the distributor, label, or DSP may face:

- 793 • Federal charges
- 794 • Mandatory royalty reimbursement
- 795 • Public accountability, including apology statements and reversal
- 796 of punitive actions

797 **7.3 — Economic Safeguards for American Consumption**

798 NOMES may take temporary control over U.S.-based distributions if
799 providers are unable to comply with fair royalty practices. This
800 includes:

- 801 • Redirecting royalty payments to verified American artists

- 802 • Ensuring tax accountability
- 803 • Preventing international misallocation of U.S.-earned revenue

804 **7.4 — Distribution Failures and Emergency Support**

805 In cases of mass lockouts or platform negligence, NOMES will serve
806 as an emergency distribution hub or assign a verified domestic
807 partner under federal supervision to ensure artists retain access to
808 streaming platforms and royalties.

809 **7.5 — Artist Cooperatives & Legal Standing**

810 Creators may form registered artist cooperatives, including shared
811 legal teams, indie labels, or unions.

812 These cooperatives:

- 813 • May join the NOMES registry
- 814 • Have legal standing in appeals and investigations
- 815 • Can file class-action claims on behalf of members

816 **7.6 — Executive-Level Oversight Inquiry**

817 Given potential national economic harm, NOMES will suggest an
818 oversight inquiry into the leadership of:

- 819 • Major DSPs (e.g., Spotify)
- 820 • Prominent music distributors (e.g., DistroKid, Tunecore, Horus
821 Music)
- 822 • Leading music label conglomerates

823

824 If fraud or negligence is confirmed, referrals may be made to the
825 DOJ and IRS for appropriate legal action.

826 **7.7 — Legal Aid Fund for Artists**

827

NOMES shall establish and oversee a federally supported Legal Aid Fund to provide independent artists with access to legal representation in cases involving wrongful takedowns, royalty theft, metadata tampering, or platform retaliation. This fund will cover services including arbitration counsel, fraud appeal support, contract review, and class action participation. The goal is to ensure that artists are not silenced or bankrupted simply because they cannot afford private legal defense.

Eligibility will be based on income thresholds, with priority given to artists who are locked out of their accounts, facing repeated fraud flags, or subject to mass catalog removals. The Legal Aid Fund may be financed through a combination of public funding and civil penalties collected from platforms and distributors found to have violated this Act. Legal representation may be provided through a network of vetted attorneys, nonprofit law centers, or government-assigned counsel specializing in creative rights and digital labor protections.

7.8 — Transparency & Oversight

NOMES shall publish an annual public report detailing the scope and outcomes of its investigations. This shall include: the number of fraud cases reviewed, takedowns reversed, royalty repayments issued, class action activity supported, and repeat offenders identified among DSPs or distributors. The report shall be made accessible on a public government website and shared with congressional oversight committees to ensure ongoing accountability.

Section 8 — Playlist Ecosystem & Platform Accountability

This section addresses the need for transparency, fairness, and accountability in the playlist ecosystem, where algorithmic and editorial decisions significantly impact artist exposure, income, and career opportunities.

8.1 — Playlist Transparency Requirements

DSPs must provide artists with access to detailed data regarding playlist placements, including:

- Playlist name and curator identity
- Date of addition and removal
- Engagement statistics (e.g., saves, skips, streams)

8.2 — Ban on False Justifications

Distributors and DSPs may not cite repeated fan listening (e.g., someone listening on repeat at the gym or a club DJ playing a track several times) as evidence of fraud unless confirmed to be artificial.

This clause protects cultural phenomena such as Kendrick Lamar's repeated performance of 'Not Like Us' and Jay-Z & Kanye West's record-setting repetition of 'N****s in Paris.'

8.3 — Clean Platform Standard

DSPs must actively monitor and remove:

- Bot-created playlists
- Pay-for-playlists operated by fraudulent third parties
- Internal promotional playlists misrepresented as 'organic growth'

Failure to maintain a clean ecosystem will result in:

- NOMES-led audit of all playlists operated on the DSP
- Referral to the FTC for deceptive practices or artist defrauding

8.4 — Algorithmic and Editorial Accountability

DSPs must disclose:

- The logic behind editorial and algorithmic placements
- Whether a playlist features real engagement or bot traffic
- Any removal rationale that affects artist placement

Verified editorial or algorithmic playlists may be prioritized in artist transparency dashboards.

8.5 — No Penalty for Personal Playlists

This bill does not penalize personal playlists created by users. It only targets malicious or misleading playlist ecosystems.

8.6 — Fraudulent Playlist Investigations

NOMES will investigate any playlist ecosystem—especially internal distributor playlists (e.g., 'DistroKid Artists' on Spotify)—that appears to generate artificial streams or is tied to royalty fraud.

DSPs and distributors must cooperate fully.

8.7 — Fraudulent Ad Disclosure Requirement

Any individual or company promoting playlist inclusion, stream boosting, or music exposure services through paid advertisements — particularly on social media platforms — must clearly disclose whether their playlists and traffic sources are verified and organic. Ads that promote playlists tied to bots, phone farms, or artificial stream inflation are considered fraudulent advertising under this Act.

When such campaigns result in artificial traffic to a DSP, both the digital platform (DSP) and the advertiser are subject to

investigation. The DSP is responsible for maintaining a clean ecosystem and must proactively detect and block traffic stemming from fraudulent advertisements. The advertiser, not the artist, shall be treated as the party attempting to commit fraud.

NOMES shall treat repeated inaction by DSPs, or repeated offenses by advertisers, as grounds for fraud referral, financial penalties, and potential FTC investigation. Independent curators operating in good faith, with no use of artificial traffic, are not subject to this clause. This provision targets deceptive marketing practices that mislead artists and corrupt platform integrity

Section 9 — Metadata Integrity, Sampling Clarity & Legacy Rights

Section 9 outlines protections for artist metadata, ensures clarity around derivative works (such as covers and samples), and secures rights for families of deceased artists.

9.1 — Metadata Protection

It is illegal to alter, erase, or overwrite artist metadata — including name, credits, and royalty splits — during or after takedown, without formal NOMES approval.

NOMES will maintain a verified archive of metadata history to prevent tampering and ensure artists can recover misattributed or stolen work.

9.2 — Reinstatement & Visibility Rights

If an artist is exonerated following a fraud claim, the platform must fully restore their prior standing. This includes:

- Playlist positions
- Stream counts

- 940 • Algorithmic ranking
- 941 • Artist dashboard access and visibility

942 **9.3 — Legacy Artist Protections**

943 Families of deceased artists may register with NOMES to protect
944 the legacy of the artist and prevent wrongful takedowns or
945 metadata tampering. They are entitled to:

- 946 • Receive any withheld royalties
- 947 • Challenge fraud flags or removals
- 948 • Request takedown of false or misattributed works

949 **9.4 — Covers, Samples, and Derivatives**

950 This bill affirms that remixes, covers, and sampled works must
951 follow existing copyright law. Distributors and platforms:

- 952 • May not remove such works without verifiable evidence of
953 infringement
- 954 • Must review derivative works under NOMES guidance before
955 any takedown
- 956 • Cannot auto-flag creative reinterpretations such as
957 transformative lofi covers without due process

958 **9.5 — International Protections & Reciprocity**

959 While this Act is grounded in U.S. law, it encourages international
960 collaboration in the enforcement of artist rights. NOMES shall work
961 to establish data-sharing and reciprocal protection agreements
962 with allied nations to ensure that foreign artists using U.S.-based
963 DSPs and distributors receive the same due process and fraud
964 protections outlined in this bill. U.S. artists using international

distribution services shall also be covered through reciprocal agreements where available.

Section 10 — Final Summary & Call to Action

This Act was not written out of abstract theory or speculation — it was written in response to real harm, experienced by real creators, inside a system that currently lacks accountability.

From unauthorized catalog removals to shadowbanning, from royalty theft to the unchecked rise of artificial streaming fraud, this legislation identifies core vulnerabilities in the modern music ecosystem and offers bold, balanced reforms.

We now live in an era where independent creators are the backbone of culture and commerce. Yet, they are the most vulnerable to abuse by platforms, labels, and distributors. Without legislative protection, American innovation, labor, and economic value will continue to be lost to systemic negligence.

By establishing NOMES (National Oversight for Music Economic Safety), this Act provides due process, transparency, data integrity, and financial oversight — while incentivizing platforms and distributors to clean up their practices or face consequences.

The Artist Rights & Platform Accountability Act is not just a call for justice — it is a national economic intervention. Billions in revenue, jobs, and creative exports are on the line. The time to act is now.

994

995 We urge lawmakers, artists, industry professionals, and the public
996 to support this legislation in defense of creative freedom, economic
997 fairness, and the soul of the American music industry.

998 Closing Statement

999

1000 “An artist’s duty is to reflect the times in which we live.”

1001 — Nina Simone

1002

1003 The Artist Rights & Platform Accountability Act was written in
1004 response to a growing crisis facing the independent music
1005 community — a crisis of invisibility, exploitation, and digital
1006 erasure. When artists can be silenced by automated fraud flags,
1007 denied royalties without cause, and removed from platforms
1008 without explanation, the very foundation of cultural production is
1009 at risk.

1010

1011 This legislation is not a demand for favoritism — it is a call for
1012 fairness, transparency, and due process. It challenges the toxic
1013 belief that music must go viral to have value, and reminds
1014 lawmakers that behind every song is a human being, a taxpayer,
1015 and a citizen with rights.

1016

1017 But this is not only a cultural emergency — it is an economic
1018 one. Misapplied fraud flags, missing royalties, and metadata
1019 erasure have real financial consequences — not just for
1020 creators, but for the U.S. economy. When platforms and
1021 distributors mishandle revenue, it disrupts IRS oversight,
1022 reduces taxable income, and allows offshore laundering to thrive
1023 unchecked.

1024

1025 If passed, this Act would lay the groundwork for a more ethical,
1026 accountable, and artist-centered digital economy. It affirms that
1027 music is not disposable content — it is art, and it deserves to be
1028 treated with dignity under the law. By enforcing transparency and

protecting digital labor, the Act also strengthens the nation's creative workforce and ensures that American-made culture continues to generate value — not just artistically, but economically, for the country as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,
Kenan Ali Erkan
Artist Name: Ali Prod™
Date: May 2025
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A Note from the Author

This Act represents a foundational shift in how artists are treated by the platforms that profit from their work — but it's only the beginning.

Future legislation — including proposals like the Artist Economic Reparations and Credit Act — will aim to recover lost royalties, create credit systems for removed artists, and build long-term financial protections for creators harmed by digital negligence.

For press or legislative inquiries, contact: AliProd.Net@gmail.com

For artist support or testimony, please include “ARTISTS RIGHTS” in your subject line.

Author's Note on Process and Authorship

This legislative proposal was not written in isolation, nor generated in a single pass. It was created through a deliberate,

1063 multi-stage process combining lived human experience with
1064 artificial intelligence — not as a shortcut, but as a tool for deep
1065 research, structured debate, and accelerated ideation.

1066

1067 Since first integrating AI into my creative workflow, I've spent
1068 over 120 hours using ChatGPT not just as a co-author, but as a
1069 real-time career strategist, branding advisor, and thought
1070 partner. Across over 2,200 messages, I've used this tool to
1071 reflect on personal experiences in the music industry, test ideas
1072 for my business, analyze my work, develop content strategies,
1073 build out website language, and refine my artistic identity as Ali
1074 Prod™.

1075

1076 That foundation of career-based dialogue gave me the clarity
1077 and confidence to begin building this legislation. More than 100
1078 of those hours were ultimately dedicated to this bill — developed
1079 through daily conversations, structured ideation, and focused
1080 collaboration.

1081

1082 I, Kenan Ali Erkan (Ali Prod), worked with the model in real-time
1083 dialogue, building this legislation section by section, one idea at
1084 a time. Each clause was debated, clarified, and refined under my
1085 full creative and intellectual supervision. Every theme, safeguard,
1086 and policy solution was rooted in my lived experience as an
1087 independent artist navigating systemic abuse in the modern
1088 music economy.

1089

1090 Importantly, this document could not have been created by
1091 simply “asking AI to write a bill.” If a random person attempted to

1092 generate this same policy using their own AI, the result would
1093 reflect their level of experience and the quality of their own
1094 discourse — not mine. AI does not generate conviction, nuance,
1095 or urgency. It reflects it.

1096

1097 I used AI to compress and organize complex information, but the
1098 logic, framework, and voice behind the Artist Rights & Platform
1099 Accountability Act are mine. The document is human-led from
1100 start to finish.

1101

1102 The Artist Rights & Platform Accountability Act is more than a
1103 policy proposal — it is a blueprint for artist empowerment and
1104 platform reform, made possible by blending firsthand struggle
1105 with modern tools. This method of authorship — tech-assisted
1106 but experience-led — is part of the message.

1107

1108 — Kenan Ali Erkan

1109 Ali Prod™

1110 May 2025

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1112

1113 And yes — this was also AI-generated... through debate and
1114 discourse.

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