



Contact:

Songwriters Guild of America, Inc.  
210 Jamestown Park Road Suite 100  
Brentwood, Tennessee 37027-750  
615-742-9945

**SONGWRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA ISSUES STRONG STATEMENT OF  
SUPPORT FOR INTRODUCTION OF THE  
SMALL CLAIMS ENFORCEMENT (CASE) ACT OF 2019**

**May 1, 2019, Washington, DC.** The Songwriters Guild of America, Inc. (SGA), America's largest and longest established songwriter and composer organization run solely by creators themselves, today applauded Reps. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), Doug Collins (R-GA), Hank Johnson (D-GA), Martha Roby (R-AL), Judy Chu (D-CA), Ben Cline (R-VA), Ted Lieu (D-CA) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) for their introduction of the "Copyright Alternative in Small Claims Enforcement (CASE) Act of 2019". "SGA has been actively advocating for this important legislation for well over a decade," states hit songwriter and SGA president Rick Carnes, "and we are gratified and thankful that the CASE Act co-sponsors have taken the lead in pushing to make the crucial protections this bill would provide for music creators a reality."

It has long been SGA's position, dating back to active advocacy which began prior to 2008, that a small claims system is an indispensable step toward helping music creators and other authors to regain the ability to enforce their rights against infringers in a cost-effective way. The organization believes that the new bill strikes the proper balance between consumers and creators, establishing an alternative, opt-in arbitration system to resolve copyright infringement cases, without necessitating the time and expense to creators of filing a formal lawsuit.

"How many times," Carnes continued, "have you heard someone say, 'let's not make a Federal case out of this.' Everyone knows that the enormous cost and energy it takes to prosecute a case in Federal Court is beyond the means of most citizens, and rarely makes financial sense, except as to those rare claims for damages in the millions of dollars. But 'making a Federal case of it' is exactly what an individual songwriter must currently do under the law if his or her song is used without permission and infringed."

Carnes recalled with great dismay the day he first saw his songs being streamed on YouTube, Spotify and other digital distribution networks without consent, and realized

the futility of sending take-down notices to protect his rights. According to him, when he sent the notices, another unlicensed copy appeared within minutes of the first one being taken down. And then another. And another.

Faced with playing an unwinnable game of 'Whack-a-mole' with infringers, Carnes stated, "I realized that my only other recourse was to file an infringement case in Federal Court which would, ages later, likely end up costing massively more than I could ever collect in damages. The average cost to bring a single, full-blown copyright infringement claim today is estimated to approach \$350,000 in legal fees. At the same time, statutory damages for such infringements are currently capped under the U.S. Copyright Act at less than half that amount per title! The Copyright law is useless to songwriters when the cost of enforcement of our rights far exceeds the compensatory damages able to be recovered against infringers. Every American should have the right to protect his or her property, whether a lawnmower, a bicycle, a photograph, or a song."

SGA believes it is long past time for Congress to give music creators a viable way to seek fair remedies when the rights of songwriters, composers and authors are violated, and thanked Representatives Jeffries and the other co-sponsors for standing up for the smallest of small US business people: American Songwriters. SGA also expressed thanks and support for the US Copyright Office, which will oversee the implementation of the Act upon its enactment.

"The modernization process that is taking place at the Copyright Office is what makes possible the fair benefits this bill will provide to the American creative community," concluded Carnes. "We need to get behind the message that a strong US Copyright Office, with proper resources to manage all of its programs, is something that benefits both every American, and the advancement of American culture itself. We hope it will never be necessary for the Copyright Office to limit the scope and size of the small claims system due to underfunding or otherwise, and we intend to work on that issue with the Register and on Capitol Hill as a regular part of SGA's legislative activities and initiatives in Washington, DC."