

Tired of Britney Spears?

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Under the AFV system, corporations would be less likely to profit from the next bombshell mega star, since they wouldn't have a monopoly over her and her music. So, there would be less mass-market advertising and fewer mega stars. Out of the decline of the mega stars would arise thousands of mid-level musicians of all styles and genres.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Would artists and musicians be forced to participate?

A: No, the Artistic Freedom Voucher and the AFV system are completely optional for both artists and taxpayers.

Q: How would AFV affect musical diversity?

A: Musical diversity would drastically increase through the AFV system. As more and more artists are ensured a certain living wage from their art, more and more music will be accessible to the public at no cost. And as alternative routes to audiences are created through the AFV system, the mega music corporations will have less of a role as gatekeeper between musical artists and the listening public.

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Link to the FULL PAPER by Dean Baker

http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/ip_2003_11.pdf

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The Artistic Freedom Voucher

A PLAN TO MAKE MUSIC FREE AND PROVIDE MUSICIANS WITH A SECURE LIVELIHOOD

The copyright system is NOT working. Should kids be arrested for downloading their favorite songs over the internet? Should universities monitor their students' music habits? Should internet service providers keep tabs on their clients' taste in music?

What is the Artistic Freedom Voucher?

The Artistic Freedom Voucher (AFV) would allot about \$20 billion of taxpayer money to be paid to individual musicians or groups and allow the public to exchange, download, reproduce and enjoy creative work legally, efficiently and inexpensively. Every adult could voluntarily give their \$100 voucher to a musician or group of musicians; this is enough to support 500,000 artists with a salary of \$40,000 per year. Musicians would still be able to receive income from concerts and other live performances, where musicians usually make most of their money, anyway.

The AFV is an alternative to the copyright system. The AFV would work with technology and the internet to make music free and downloadable for the public, while at the same time ensure that musicians can make a living as artists rather than living as "starving artists."

Cut Out the Corporate Music Industry:

The AFV could revolutionize the way in which creative artists fund their work; whereas now the corporate music industry holds the rights to most copyrights, musicians rarely see significant royalties from the music they create. The AFV would allow many more musicians a living salary.

Increase Access to Music:

Placing music in the public domain would work with technology and allow more people the opportunity to enjoy music than ever before. People from across the country that never had the opportunity to hear of a little-known group will be able to listen to and support the musicians that choose to be part of the AFV system.

Frequently Asked

Questions

Q: IS IT FEASIBLE TO ALLOT \$20 BILLION IN GOVERNMENT FUNDS?

A: Considering the savings in other areas of the federal budget as well as savings to society in general from the AFV system, the program would more than pay for itself.

Q: WHAT SAVINGS WOULD THE AFV SYSTEM PROVIDE FOR SOCIETY?

A: First, Americans spend over \$245 billion on copyrighted material annually. The AFV system could save consumers up to \$65.5 billion annually. Second, the AFV system would be a big step towards eliminating enforcement costs as well as high music prices. For example, the FBI, individual universities and institutions would not have to spend money on making sure all the music on everyone's computers is legal. Also, the AFV would allow for less expensive and greater access to music products, while creating approximately 500,000 jobs for musicians and artists in the process.

Choose where the government spends our money

The money paid by the AFV system would pay for our free music usage throughout the year as well as provide a livelihood for musicians. The voucher is a tax-funded music and arts program, in which individuals directly choose which musical artists they want to support.

Q: WOULD MUSICIANS STILL MAKE CDS?

A: Musicians would still make CDs, but since the musicians would be supported with funds from the AFV system, they would be far less dependent upon CD sales, and musical production companies, to make a living. With free, downloadable music supported by the AFV system, CD sales would most likely go down, but they would not be the central ingredient to providing a musician with a good livelihood.

DIVERSITY of MUSIC

The AFV would cut out the corporations that stand between the musicians and their listeners. Under the copyright system, corporations tend to act as gatekeepers to a mass audience. Under the AFV system, more musicians could earn a living and more music would be accessible to the public, improving the diversity and quality of music. Anyone could distribute their music around the country for free. More listeners also means more concerts and other possibilities of performing live.

Q: WHO WOULD LOSE OUT UNDER THE AFV SYSTEM?

A: The overwhelming losers in an AFV system would be anyone who receives very large profits from the present system: mega music corporations, a small minority of highly commercialized artists, and possibly the advertising industry.

Q: WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE AFV SYSTEM?

A: Small- to medium-sized artists and music groups: an individual who only creates music 10 hours a week but who would like to create music full-time; or a medium-sized group that would gain a national audience and fans through people's increased access to free and downloadable music.

THE AFV PROMOTES OUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE!

The AFV is 100% voluntary:

A musician can choose to be part of the AFV system and receive taxpayer funding or stay in the copyright system. They can choose whichever system would be best for them. No one would be forced to give up their copyright over their songs.

The taxpayers can choose where to send their money: \$50 to a local band and \$50 to Limp Bizkit or Hole. Or \$20 to Offspring, \$40 to a bluegrass band, and \$40 to an up-and-coming solo artist Or even \$100 to an independent record label.

Q: AREN'T THERE A LOT MORE THAN 500,000 ARTISTS IN THE US?

A: The proposal of 500,000 artists supported by the AFV system would be a starting point and goal at the beginning of the AFV program. If the program is successful and the public decides to commit more resources to it, then the funds and the number of artists supported by the AFV program would increase.

Q: WOULD MUSICIANS SOLICIT VOUCHERS FROM FANS?

A: Yes, this is central to an AFV system. Instead of depending on funds from CD sales, for example, fans would allot their voucher to their favorite musicians or group of musicians.