



## **President James Donio Advocates for LGBT Equality in Music Biz 2016 President's Address**

### ***GLAAD and Nielsen presentations examine post-marriage-equality landscape and reveal data on how music can fight for LGBT rights***

May 17, 2016 – LGBT issues took center stage today at the Music Biz 2016 convention in Nashville, hosted by the Music Business Association (Music Biz). Music Biz President James Donio concluded his President's Address at this morning's Awards Breakfast & Presentations with a personal plea.

"As a gay man, I cannot help but think that I might not be delivering this speech today if new state laws that allow various kinds of discrimination against people for who they are, how they live, who they love, or what they believe – and that are being considered in far too many other states – were in place when I was building my career here," said Donio. "Fortunately, I had some strong and enlightened advocates who guided and fostered my journey so I could have the chance to be where I am today. My fervent hope is that the journeys of those in the worldwide LGBT family can receive that same acceptance and encouragement, in the face of extremely troubling judgment and narrow-mindedness that I feel simply cannot be allowed to prevail."

The conversation continued with the "Accelerating Acceptance: Music and the Importance of LGBT Fans" panel, where Zeke Stokes, Vice President of Programs at GLAAD, and Matt Yazge, Director of Branded Partnerships for Music and Film at Nielsen, provided an overview of the post-marriage-equality landscape and revealed new data from an upcoming Harris Poll study, to be released later this week, that illuminates the role music has and can continue to play in the fight for equality.

The study shows that most Americans (60%) are familiar with musicians and comedians canceling concerts in states with laws like "Bathroom Bills" or "Therapist Bills," more so than various other forms of protest. In addition, Bruce Springsteen fans are 64% more likely to consider him influential when compared to other artists' fans, according to Nielsen N-score, indicating that his decision to cancel a concert in North Carolina to protest the state's transgender bathroom bill was a major factor in the chain reaction of cancellations the state experienced in its wake, even reaching beyond music. Thus, a single influential musician can make a massive impact.

The Harris Poll study also shows that artists who protest discriminatory legislation have the support of a majority of Americans, with 60% saying they support musicians who advocate for the LGBT community, 51% citing concert cancellations as an effective form of protest, and 50% saying they would try to attend a concert at another venue if an artist cancelled a show in protest. In fact, 23% of adults residing in

Western states are more likely to listen to the music of artists that protest (much more so than those residing in other regions), and over 70% of Americans said they would be more or equally as likely to attend an artist's concerts, support artists, buy an artist's albums, and listen to an artist's music.

This Harris Poll was conducted online, in English, within the United States between May 11 and 13, 2016 among 1,424 adults (aged 18 and over). For complete research method, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact The Harris Poll at [Press.TheHarrisPoll@nielsen.com](mailto:Press.TheHarrisPoll@nielsen.com).

Music Biz 2016, taking place now through May 18 at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel in Nashville, is the music industry's premier event, giving the commerce and content sectors a place to meet with trading partners, network with new companies, and learn about new trends and products impacting the music business. Registration remains open both online and on-site. For more information or to sign up for the conference, visit [www.musicbiz2016.com](http://www.musicbiz2016.com).

#### **About the Music Business Association**

The Music Business Association (Music Biz) is a membership organization that advances and promotes music commerce — a community committed to the full spectrum of monetization models in the industry. It provides common ground by offering thought leadership, resources and unparalleled networking opportunities, all geared to the specific needs of its membership. Music Biz brings a unique perspective and valuable insight into the trends and changes that innovation brings. Today, we put our collective experience to work across all delivery models: physical, digital, mobile, and more. Music Biz and its members are committed to building the future of music commerce — together.

To apply for press access to Music Biz 2016, fill out the form at <https://musicbiz.wufoo.com/forms/music-biz-2016-editorial-press-application>.

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