Senator Spars With RIAA Over 'Seven-Year Rule'

The California senator who introduced legislation to repeal the recording industry’s exemption to the "seven-year rule" on personal-services contracts is lashing out at the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), Billboard Bulletin reports.

The RIAA last week issued a statement outlining five concessions it claimed had been made by labels in their ongoing talks with artists’ groups over the seven-year rule. According to Sen. Kevin Murray (D-Culver City), what the RIAA called "compromises" -- including midterm contract renegotiations, damages for only limited numbers of undelivered albums, and repayment of advances to labels for undelivered albums -- actually represent labels’ demands, not concessions.

"For the RIAA to present their demands as compromises or concessions was an insult to the recording artists, attorneys, and managers that have been working for months to resolve this issue," says Murray in a statement. He also says the current impasse in negotiations on the seven-year rule has hardened artists’ resolve to repeal the current law.

In response to Murray’s statement, RIAA chairman/CEO Hilary Rosen says only that a compromise would be in the best interest of all parties. "I hope we can get there," she says.

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**Last week**, Recording Artists Coalition co-founder Don Henley told Billboard that negotiations to resolve the issue had reached a stalemate. "The labels really didn’t give us anything we thought was fair," he said. "So now two things will happen: We will continue to press forward with the hearings on [label] accounting practices, and we will go for a straight repeal."

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*Erik Gruenwedel, L.A.*