

Bands backing out of SXSW

Erin Jones , KVUE 10:17 PM. CST March 03, 2017



(Photo: AFP, AFP/Getty Images)

As tens of thousands of people from all over the world prepare to embark on Austin for South by Southwest, a long list of scheduled artists say they won't be attending anymore.

More than 50 bands have signed a letter saying they're backing out of SXSW. This comes after one musician said he was pulling out of the conference because he was upset over a clause in his contract.

Told Slant said on Twitter that after looking at his contract, he decided to cancel his performance at SXSW. He posted a photo of a portion of the contract that said the conference reserves the right to alert U.S. immigration authorities about international artists if they violate their performance agreement.

If SXSW determines, in its sole discretion, that showcasing acts or their representatives have acted in ways that adversely affect the viability of their official SXSW showcase, the following actions are available to SXSW:

- Artist will be removed from their official showcase and, at SXSW's sole option, replaced.
- Any hotels booked via SXSW Housing will be canceled.
- Artist credentials will be canceled.
- SXSW will notify the appropriate U.S. immigration authorities of the above actions.

International Artists entering the country through the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), B visa or any non-work visa may not perform at any public or non-sanctioned SXSW Music Festival DAY OR NIGHT shows in Austin from March 13-19, 2017. Accepting and performing unofficial events may result in immediate deportation, revoked passport and denied entry by US Customs Border Patrol at US ports of entry. For



Told Slant
@Felixix666

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After looking through this contract sent to me by sxsw I have decided to cancel Told Slant's performance at the festival

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"This goes into a wacky extreme that I've never seen," said entertainment lawyer Brian Goldstein.

Goldstein said he has been working with international musicians, actors and live performers for more than 20 years and regularly looks over performing contracts for his clients.

"We're particularly known for international touring," Goldstein said. "That's something that we've sort of been at the forefront of for a long time. What's typical is, whether it's an opera company or an orchestra, to put something in the contract that says you're responsible for making sure you get your visa and you're legally authorized to perform and if we discover that you're not authorized we have the right to cancel the show with no damages. If they find out they have an illegal, they get rid of them. It's very rare, especially in the arts, that you say 'and we're going to rat you out.'"

SXSW released a statement saying the conference takes a public stance against President Trump's travel ban and Senate Bill 6. The release goes on to say the conference has never reported anyone to immigration authorities and that the clause has been in the contract since 2013.

"I think this is typical of a lot of organizations where the artistic administration has no idea what's in their own agreements," Goldstein said. "This was probably drafted by some corporate attorney that has no idea what they were talking about and no one has paid attention until now because everyone is up in arms, understandably, about the current immigration situation"

While it appears there will be no change to this year's artist contract, a SXSW representative said they will be reviewing it and amending it for 2018 and beyond.

Goldstein advises international artists to look at some of the websites, like [artistsfromabroad.org](http://www.artistsfromabroad.org/) (<http://www.artistsfromabroad.org/>) and [afm.org](http://www.afm.org/) (<http://www.afm.org/>) that give information and advice on contracts before signing one.

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