



October 16, 2017

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Senate Minority Whip
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Lee
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley, Minority Whip Durbin, Senator Lee, and Senator Whitehouse:

We are writing to offer the National Football League's full support for the **Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2017 (S. 1917)**. We want to add our voice to the broad and bipartisan coalition of business leaders, law enforcement officials, veterans groups, civil rights organizations, conservative thought leaders, and faith-based organizations that have been working for five years to enact the changes called for in this comprehensive legislation.

Football and community are the twin pillars of the NFL. Whether nationally at the league level, locally at the team level, or individually through the volunteerism and philanthropy of owners, players, coaches and club personnel, there exists a powerful NFL-wide commitment to giving back. This commitment is year-round; there is no offseason to the NFL's multi-tiered, ongoing work to strengthen America's communities.

When the hometowns of our players or the 32 communities in which our clubs are located are hurting – whether from natural disasters or those that are man-made – so too are our teams. And like most Americans, our owners, players, coaches and clubs spring into action to help. Over the last two seasons, one particular issue that has come to the forefront for our players and our teams is the issue of justice for all.

Last season, as part of our *My Cause My Cleats* initiative, several players chose to highlight equality and justice on their cleats, while others chose causes related to supporting the difficult work of law enforcement. These expressions of player advocacy aptly capture the challenges we currently face as a nation – ensuring that every American has equal rights and equal protection under the law, while simultaneously ensuring that all law enforcement personnel have the proper resources, tools, and training and are treated with honor and respect.

Recognizing the complexities we face as a society – and professional sports leagues are a microcosm of our society – NFL players and teams have convened discussions and hosted events, both public and private, to encourage greater community dialogue and understanding. For example:

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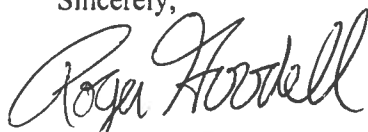
- In Philadelphia, Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie and players Malcolm Jenkins, Torrey Smith, Chris Long, and Rodney McLeod organized a “Listen and Learn” tour last month with Police Commissioner Richard Ross, the Defender Association of Philadelphia, and local community organizations.
- In Dallas, Cowboys players took part in a Community Policing Youth Forum last fall as part of National Community Policing Week, which was designed to “promote cooperation, and help citizens and law enforcement officers get to know one another as partners in our shared efforts to build stronger, safer, and more just communities for every American.”
- Other teams have hosted Town Hall meetings to try to advance the conversation, with our players discussing their personal, familial, and community experiences with law enforcement.
- Several players – including Miami Dolphins players Kenny Stills, Julius Thomas, and Michael Thomas – have also organized ride-alongs with police officers to gain a greater appreciation of the challenges those officers face on a daily basis.

We are very proud of our players and owners who have done the hard work over the past year to listen, understand, and attempt to address the underlying issues within our communities. The bottom line is, that we all want to make our communities better. As Doug stated in a recent memo to owners, this is about “doing the right thing for the right reason...love and empathy are more important attributes than a forty time or route-running ability...yearning for justice and equality is something that all humankind can understand.”

The Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act would address many of the issues on which our players have worked to raise awareness of over the last two seasons. This bill seeks to improve public safety, increase rehabilitation, and strengthen families. If enacted, it would be a positive next step in our collective efforts to move our nation forward.

Ultimately, we all share a responsibility to find a path towards unity, one that goes well beyond sports. The National Football League applauds the introduction of this bipartisan criminal justice reform bill as well as your ongoing commitment to upholding America’s promise of justice for all. We stand ready to work with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Roger Goodell
Commissioner



Doug Baldwin, Jr.
Seattle Seahawks

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cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable John Cornyn
The Honorable Chuck Schumer
The Honorable Paul Ryan
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
The Honorable John Conyers
The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee
The Honorable Cedric Richmond
