



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

ROGER GOODELL
Commissioner

February 7, 2019

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal,

I am writing in response to your letter of December 7, 2018, about the commitment and efforts of the National Football League to address domestic violence and sexual assault. I welcome the opportunity to give you an update about our significant work in this area, as you requested.

The league takes its leadership role as America's most popular professional sports league very seriously. At our best, we set an example and reaffirm values that have a positive impact on our society well beyond professional football. Toward that end, four years ago, we engaged in a serious and extensive effort to revise and update the NFL's Personal Conduct Policy (PCP). The enhanced PCP, among the first by any professional sports organization to address domestic violence and sexual assault directly, was unanimously adopted by NFL owners in December of 2014. The PCP clearly defines the standards of conduct that apply to everyone in the NFL. This includes the specific steps the league will take to promote conduct that is consistent with those expectations and to punish conduct that is inconsistent with those standards.

Employee Education and Training. Our work has focused on several key areas, with education and prevention first among them. During the last four years, we have continued to engage and consult with nationally recognized experts to develop and update our educational programming and outreach related to domestic violence and sexual assault. We provide, on an annual basis, mandatory educational programming on these topics to all NFL personnel, totaling approximately 6,000 people, including league executives and staff, club personnel, coaches and players. In fact, new players – both drafted and undrafted alike – first take part in education sessions related to domestic violence and sexual assault during the Rookie Transition Program, so that all new employees understand the league's standards and expectations. We also make the education session available to the families and significant others of NFL employees as well as to the general public.

The league also provides all personnel with information about, and access to, additional resources, including confidential counseling services and support for families, available through clubs, the NFL, and independent, community-based organizations. Both the league and individual clubs have established and trained Critical Response Teams (CRTs), made up of specially-trained personnel, to provide prompt and confidential guidance or counseling and other intervention to anyone in the NFL family who may have experienced violence. In 2017, the league brought together a group of outside experts to review and audit our Critical Response Team protocols. The experts provided written recommendations and best practices that were then shared with all NFL clubs. The league has already implemented several of the recommendations, including additional training for all CRT members. This combination of education and training is intended not only to raise awareness about issues related to domestic violence and sexual assault, but also to promote a culture of respect and high standards, one that does not tolerate off-field misconduct, including domestic violence, and seeks to prevent violations from occurring.

Employee Accountability. Second, our revised PCP has strengthened the league's investigative capacity and disciplinary process, which has enabled us to better and more consistently hold representatives of the league, including players, to a high standard of conduct. The policy sets out a fair, consistent, and predictable process for investigating allegations and determining disciplinary action when a violation is found.

As shared in previous correspondence, key elements of the PCP include:

- **Prohibited Conduct** – The PCP sets forth a high standard of conduct, and specifically identifies acts that are inconsistent with that standard, including domestic violence and sexual assault. It makes clear that a criminal conviction is sufficient, but not necessary, to result in discipline. The baseline discipline for domestic violence and sexual assault is, for a first offense, a suspension of six games without pay (more than one-third of a player's season and salary), with additional penalties when aggravating factors are present and, for a second offense, removal from the league.
- **Reporting** – All clubs are required promptly to report to the League office any incident that may be a violation of the PCP. We encourage victims and witnesses to report and make sure that clubs and league executives understand their obligation to report incidents.
- **Investigations** – The PCP establishes a separate league investigative process for potential violations of the policy. While we respect and seek not to interfere with the criminal justice system, the league independently initiates investigations and does not rely exclusively on law enforcement and the criminal justice process.

- **Leave with Pay** – The PCP includes leave with pay for individuals charged with crimes of violence, whether misdemeanor or felony. This system of paid leave is uniform and consistent across the league.
- **Discipline** – The PCP establishes a rigorous and transparent process for disciplinary proceedings. The league has appointed leading officials with broad experience in the criminal justice system to oversee and manage our disciplinary process. These officials include Todd Jones, Special Counsel for Conduct, who is the former Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and who previously served as a United States Attorney during the Obama and Clinton Administrations; Lisa Friel, Special Counsel for Investigations, who previously served more than 25 years as a prosecutor in the Manhattan District Attorney's office, the last 10 of which were as the Chief of the Sex Crimes Unit; and Cathy Lanier, Senior Vice President and Chief Security Officer, who previously served as the chief of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia. Together, they fulfill a range of responsibilities, which include assessing reports of violations, initiating and supervising investigations, reviewing investigatory reports and other factual findings, serving as a primary liaison to law enforcement officials, communicating with employees and their representatives and, as the Commissioner's designee, conducting hearings for employees subject to discipline and making initial disciplinary decisions under the Commissioner's authority, subject to the employee's right of appeal.

For your reference, the full revised Personal Conduct Policy (player and nonplayer version) is attached.

Helping Address Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Beyond the NFL. Third, the league has continued its work to advance broad culture change by addressing the problems of domestic violence and sexual assault in society. The league has formed long-term partnerships with key organizations engaged on a daily basis in supporting those affected by relationship violence and abuse. With our financial support during the past four years, the National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline) has surpassed many milestones, including answering more than 4 million contacts and moving to new headquarters located in Austin, Texas – doubling its capacity to answer calls, online chats, and text messages. In addition, our support has helped The Hotline further its policy work in Washington, D.C., to strengthen laws to provide greater protection for victims and survivors of domestic violence.

The league also continues to support Raliance, a national collaborative comprising three leading organizations committed to ending sexual violence in one generation. These organizations include the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, the National Alliance

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Ending Sexual Violence, and the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault's PreventConnect. Raliance makes sexual violence prevention possible through grants for innovative programming, advancing research, informing policy, and supporting services for victims and survivors. Since its inception in 2016, the Raliance Impact Grant program has supported more than 50 projects totaling over \$5.2 million to further sexual violence prevention. In 2017, Raliance launched a new, first-of-its-kind interactive resource center designed to engage the sports community as a partner in ending sexual and domestic violence. The Sports + Prevention Center includes more than 100 resources, best practices, and key action steps to adopting sexual and domestic violence prevention strategies in communities across the country. In addition, as part of Raliance and the NFL's shared commitment to youth empowerment, Raliance hosts youth summits aimed at positively influencing high school students to engage as leaders in sexual violence prevention in their communities.

The NFL has also invested in additional initiatives and programs to provide young people with educational instruction and skills training necessary to build character, develop healthy relationships and improve conflict resolution. In recent years, the league has teamed with United Way and EverFi, Inc., a digital learning company, to launch Character Playbook. This evidence-based, digital education program contains six interactive modules that teach middle school students how to cultivate and maintain strong character and healthy relationships. As a result of our growing partnership, we now are able to offer Character Playbook to any middle school in the country. Moreover, the league, along with the 32-member clubs, is funding the expansion and implementation of the InSideOut Initiative. This initiative builds partnerships with educational leaders and state athletic associations to redefine the role of interscholastic sports and help develop the educational, social, and emotional well-being of each student athlete.

In your letter, you also mentioned Kareem Hunt, who has been released by the Kansas City Chiefs. The league continues to investigate the incidents in which he was allegedly involved, consistent with the standards and procedures set out in our PCP. As the matter is still pending, I cannot presently provide additional details or comments beyond what already has been addressed publicly by our office. However, you should be aware that media reports about the investigation thus far have contained inaccuracies and mischaracterizations. For example, contrary to some reports, the league made multiple attempts through legitimate and customary means to obtain the video footage of the February incident, which later aired on TMZ in November. Unfortunately, the local police department did not have the footage and the private hotel where the incident occurred refused to make it available to us. As you know, as a private entity, the league possesses neither subpoena power nor the authority to compel witnesses to cooperate with our investigation. While these limitations have affected this and other probes, we nonetheless continue to conduct our investigations in as professional and thorough a manner as possible.

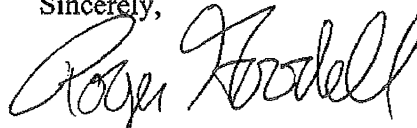
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I expect that our office will complete our investigation related to Kareem Hunt, make a final determination, and impose discipline, if appropriate, well in advance of the coming season. Even though he was released by the Chiefs, Mr. Hunt remains subject to league discipline if the facts and the evidence support such a decision.

The NFL takes seriously our responsibility to ensure that all personnel uphold and embody a standard of conduct that reflects our shared values. We are dedicated to preventing and punishing incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault and will continue to require the commitment of everyone at all levels of the NFL to do so.

Sincerely,



Handwritten signature of Roger Goodell in black ink.

ROGER GOODELL

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