



FREEDOM ALLIANCE®

“THE PRICE OF LIBERTY IS ETERNAL VIGILANCE”

Oliver L. North
Founder & Honorary Chairman

Thomas P. Kilgannon
President

September 6, 2016

Mr. Roger Goodell
Commissioner, National Football League
345 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10154

Dear Commissioner Goodell,

I write to express my concern about anti-American protests that are taking place in the National Football League, and I do so on behalf of those we represent at Freedom Alliance – military heroes and their families.

Freedom Alliance is a charitable organization which has awarded more than \$10 million in college scholarships to the children of military personnel who have sacrificed life or limb for our country. We also help injured troops rehabilitate and support military families struggling to overcome the wounds of war.

These honored Americans are insulted by Mr. Colin Kaepernick’s protests of our national anthem and our country. His campaign – by virtue of the time and manner in which it takes place – is not personal. His protests are carried out as a representative of the National Football League and we believe it is time for the Commissioner to put an end to these anti-American demonstrations during NFL games.

To allow them to continue is to treat the men and women of our military as punching bags. Active duty military personnel routinely appear at NFL games for pre-game and half-time ceremonies. While these young men and women are in uniform, they are not permitted to engage in political commentary or social protest. They are asked by NFL teams to enhance the game day experience, but then subjected to premeditated demonstrations the League otherwise prohibits.

By contrast, the NFL does not allow antagonism toward any of its own. Excessive demonstrations are not permitted. “Insulting language or gestures at opponents, game officials, or representatives of the League,” are not tolerated according to NFL rules.

The NFL routinely enforces policies governing the conduct of players, coaches, officials, teams and their representatives on and off the field, telling them it is “a privilege to be part of the National Football League.” The NFL Personal Conduct Policy states that those who are in the League “must strive to conduct ourselves in ways that favorably reflect on ourselves, our teams, the communities we represent, and the NFL.” It goes on to state that representatives of the

League “are all held to a higher standard and must conduct ourselves in a way that is responsible, [and] promotes the values of the NFL...”

These standards are admirable, but why are they not enforced during the national anthem? Do anti-American protests such as those carried out by Mr. Kaepernick promote “NFL values”? Do you believe these protests reflect favorably on the League?

As citizens, Mr. Kaepernick and other players have the right to protest, but it is inappropriate for them to exploit the resources of the National Football League to cultivate anger and resentment against the nation. Mr. Kaepernick admitted as much when he said his dispute “is bigger than football.” That being the case, his grievances should remain outside the stadium.

I respectfully offer these suggestions which would prohibit unsportsmanlike protests or demonstrations during the national anthem, yet permit players to air their grievances at a time that does not imply an endorsement from the NFL or those in attendance at the games.

1. NFL teams, at their discretion, may establish “Protest Zones” outside the stadium in the parking area so players, fans or others may come together at a designated time, before or after the game, to express concerns they may have toward their country, community or other cause.
2. Allow, and even encourage, free and robust debate by players and other league representatives from their personal social media platforms and media appearances at times when they are not representing the NFL or making use of its resources.
3. If the NFL chooses to indulge players who wish to protest their country, such demonstrations should take place at the conclusion of the game. In this way, fans, coaches and other players may exercise their freedom to exit the stadium or remain, as they see fit, so they are not forced to give witness to political demonstrations.

I believe the adoption of one or more of these suggestions will accommodate players like Mr. Kaepernick who wish to voice controversial opinions while preserving the integrity of the NFL and the enjoyment of the fans.

I look forward to your response and am happy to discuss with you or your representatives at your convenience. I can be reached in my office at 703-444-7940. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Tom Kilgannon
President