



TEXAS HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES

Chris Turner

State Representative, District 101

April 19, 2017

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

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL: officeofcommissioner@nfl.com

Dear Commissioner Goodell:

Today, the Texas House of Representatives Committee on State Affairs will hold a hearing on House Bill 2899, a far-reaching measure that would bar any local government from enforcing measures "that protect a class of persons from discrimination to the extent that the order, ordinance or other measure regulates access to multiple-occupancy restrooms, showers, or changing facilities." The several Texas cities that have already adopted such anti-discrimination ordinances would see their efforts preempted by the state. I write today to make the National Football League aware of this ill-advised, intolerant legislation so that you have the opportunity to weigh in.

Laudably, the NFL has taken a strong stance over the last several years in opposing similar discriminatory measures. Last year, NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said, "NFL policies emphasize tolerance and inclusiveness, and prohibit discrimination based on age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other improper standard. Whether the laws and regulations of a state and local community are consistent with these policies would be one of many factors NFL owners may use to evaluate potential Super Bowl host sites." (*Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 3/18/16)

The same month, you said, "Anything that discriminates is something that we oppose, and we will continue to fight..." in response to North Carolina's so-called bathroom bill. (*Charlotte Observer*, 3/24/16)

Under your leadership, the NFL has taken a strong stance against discrimination, and you are to be commended for that. In keeping with this stance, it seems natural you would also strongly oppose HB 2899. This measure is antithetical to the NFL's stated goals of tolerance and inclusiveness and is inconsistent with your league's policies. Additionally, any measure that upends non-discrimination protections is, by definition, inherently and unambiguously discriminatory.

It has been represented in the news media that the NFL, as well as other sports leagues, will not oppose HB 2899, an assertion that is inconsistent with your statement that "anything that discriminates, we oppose..." In fairness, however, I have not seen any official statement or comment from your league on this important matter, which is why I write to you directly and request you clearly state your organization's opposition to HB 2899.

I request this information both in my capacity as Chair of the Texas House Democratic Caucus and as a representative for the City of Arlington, home to the Dallas Cowboys and AT&T Stadium, the site of Super Bowl XLV and hopefully, future Super Bowls.

Thank you again for your strong statements in the past condemning discriminatory laws similar to HB 2899. We both agree that discrimination against any group of people has no place in American society and efforts to discriminate must be categorically rejected. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chris Turner
State Representative
Chair, Texas House Democratic Caucus