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A M V E T S

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Marion Polk
National Commander

January 22, 2018

National Football League
Attn: Roger Goodell, Commissioner
345 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10154

Dear Mr. Goodell:

American Veterans (AMVETS) appreciated the opportunity to place an ad in the Super Bowl LII program at the invitation of the National Football League (NFL), but that appreciation quickly gave way to deep disappointment when we learned your staff had refused to publish our ad because of its simple, two-word message – “#PleaseStand.”

While we are well aware of the controversy surrounding players kneeling during the National Anthem and the public relations problems this has caused the NFL, our ad is neither a demand nor a judgment upon those who choose to kneel during the National Anthem. It's a simple, polite request that represents the sentiment of our membership, particularly those whose missing or paralyzed limbs preclude standing. We sought to give a new context to the discussion from the perspective of veterans who had been largely disregarded. Your staff's decision to reject the ad, after asking AMVETS to purchase the ad space, serves to make that disregard even more stark and unfortunate.

Mr. Goodell, veterans are good for more than just military aircraft flyovers, photo opportunities during halftime, or props to sell camouflage-style NFL apparel; although, the NFL's stance on not allowing the veterans' unfiltered voice to be heard says otherwise.

Moreover, the fact that the commissioners of the National Basketball Association and National Hockey League have allowed the very same #PleaseStand ad to run in their respective program books only makes the NFL's decision to reject the ad that much more inexcusable.

In closing, freedom of speech works both ways. We respect the rights of those who choose to protest, as these rights are precisely what our members have fought — and in many cases died — for. But imposing corporate censorship to deny that same right to those veterans who have secured it for us all is reprehensible and totally beyond the pale.

The NFL's intention to avoid controversy in this instance by suppressing our voice will have the opposite effect, and it will not be taken lightly by the hundreds of thousands of voices that AMVETS represents.

In service to my fellow veterans,


Marion Polk
National Commander
American Veterans