

PRESS
RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
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DURBIN ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL NFL REFORMS RELATED TO BOUNTIES AND PLAYER SAFETY

[WASHINGTON, D.C.] – Assistant Majority Leader Dick Durbin (D-IL) announced that he would withhold a hearing into bounty programs in the NFL and other sports leagues after meeting with NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and discussing steps the League will take, at Durbin’s request, to protect player safety and football’s integrity.

“The NFL has taken the issue-of bounties in professional football seriously and has been open and willing to take additional steps to protect player safety and football’s integrity,” Durbin said. “Because of that willingness to address the issue, and due to the reforms the league is announcing after meeting with me today, I will withhold congressional hearings on this matter and continue to work with the League and its players to ensure the League’s rules are sufficient and that nothing like these bounty programs ever happens again.”

NFL Commissioner Goodell told Durbin that the League would implement the following reforms:

- Commissioner Goodell will write a letter to all league employees, team employees and players regarding bounties.
- Inclusion of a new “bounties section” in the NFL Players Handbook. Each NFL player receives the handbook and is required to acknowledge receipt.
- Creation of an-anonymous hotline to encourage players to report issues relating to bounties. Posters in team locker rooms will address bounties and include the hotline information.
- An email sent to all registered NFL fans – estimated to be more than 5 million people – discussing bounties, player safety and integrity of the game.
- Commissioner Goodell has committed to ensuring that the NFL’s policies – including its bylaws and constitution – sufficiently prohibit bounty programs from a safety perspective.

These reforms are part of Senator Durbin’s efforts to ensure that younger audiences and children who look up to the NFL and its players understand that this conduct and its safety consequences are unacceptable. In addition to today’s meeting with the NFL, and working with the other sports leagues, Durbin has held talks with the NCAA about what steps they are taking to prevent bounties in college football and to protect their student athletes from injury. The NCAA is also taking steps to address Senator Durbin’s concerns. Those reforms include:

- The two NCAA committees dealing with health, safety, and ethics will issue a statement on the NCAA's bounty position and encourage its nearly 1100 member institutions to investigate and prevent bounty programs.
- These Committees have pledged to examine whether a clarification of NCAA rules is appropriate.
- NCAA will partner with the American Football Coaches Association, and its 11,000 members, to raise this issue with coaches of all levels.
- The NCAA will encourage the reporting of bounty programs through an anonymous phone number.

Today's meeting comes after reports that New Orleans Saints team members were rewarded for purposely injuring opposing players in a bounty program that spanned a number of seasons. In March, the NFL announced the suspensions of the team's head coach, defensive coordinator and general manager for their involvement in the bounty program. The team was also fined \$500,000 and lost second-round draft picks for two years. Four individual players were suspended for their alleged participation. Also in March, Durbin announced that he would investigate the issue of bounties in sports and look at steps to help ensure player safety and the integrity of the game.