September 29, 2014

Commissioner Roger Goodell
National Football League
280 Park Avenue, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Re: NFL Game Changer: Comprehensive Community Engagement Campaign to End Violence Against Women and Girls

Dear Commissioner Goodell:

As leaders, activists, and advocates across the country working to end violence against women and girls, we know violence against women and girls is preventable. Violence is not something that is specific to the NFL, nor its players, but exists in all of our communities. What is unique about this moment in time is the NFL’s ability to be a catalyst for deep, long-lasting systemic change in ending violence against women and girls.

We strongly support the work of our colleagues and leaders like Tony Porter of A Call to Men, Kim Gandy of the National Network to End Domestic Violence, and Esta Soler of Futures Without Violence and are pleased to see them at the table. However, there is a lack of meaningful inclusion of African American women and men in the group of individuals upon whom you are relying on for advice and counsel. In a league made up predominately of African American men, engaging the leadership of African American women and men at all levels is a critical correction needed for the team you have assembled.

We acknowledge your efforts to fund the National Domestic Violence Hotline and rape crisis lines in response to the increase in hotline calls as result of the recent NFL incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault. While we support your commitment to do something to address the demand that is created by increased awareness, we hope that when the NFL and individual teams invest in services, you will also do so in a meaningful way to truly meet the overwhelming need at the local level.

We are writing today because we see the real opportunity for the NFL to partner with state and local experts to engage communities in cultural transformation to address that demand in another way: ending violence against girls and women through prevention and public education efforts, engaging men and boys. We call upon the National Football League to be proactive and bold by making a significant investment in a long-term comprehensive community engagement campaign focused on ending violence against girls and women – to be a Game Changer.

As the most powerful brand in the United States of America, the NFL is uniquely situated to do something bold. Every Sunday, Monday and Thursday family, friends, and communities gather together to root for their favorite players, support their teams and be part of the NFL magic. Boys and young men aspire to become the men they see on the field. Fans proudly wear team jerseys and feel part of an incredibly strong community. The NFL has the power and the responsibility to influence culture like no other organization in the country. As Cris Carter recently said, “If the NFL focused the NFL magic on ending violence against women and girls, it could be transformative.”

As part of the NFL response, we want to see a well-funded, long-term commitment to a community engagement campaign and a focus on prevention to shift the culture in this country and help us to end
violence against girls and women. We urge the NFL to wholly support and engage in the following strategies, including but not limited to:

- **Comprehensive media effort** – Take advantage of the incredible opportunity to reach millions of fans at every game to create awareness and shift attitudes to encourage healthy and safe communities for all its players, their families and their fans.

- **Engage Players and Leverage Popular Culture Influencers** – Create an initiative that engages players in demonstrating their commitment to respecting girls and women and ending violence against them and promoting healthy masculinity. Leverage popular culture influencers associated with the NFL to speak out against abuse and rape and promote healthy relationships for all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation, class, or ability and safe, thriving communities. This could range from individual speaking events to entire Pop Warner football camps that engage NFL players as role models to speak about healthy relationships, respect, and communication.

- **Invest in Prevention** - Invest heavily in and support national, state, and local community engagement programming like that of A Call to Men, Futures Without Violence’s *Coaching Boys Into Men*, Green Dot, etcetera, Mentors in Violence Prevention, Men Can Stop Rape MOST Clubs, Men Stopping Violence’s *Because We Have Daughters, Bringing in the Bystander*, and many other programs that work with college and/or high school athletes. The problem begins long before the players arrive at the NFL. Be part of shifting the culture of sport earlier to create a pipeline of players who won’t make this choice and a culture of boys who understand what healthy manhood looks like.

- **Model Leadership** - Be a model for other professional sports leagues, and encourage owners of leagues to build meaningful relationships with state and tribal domestic and sexual violence coalitions and community programs to develop and implement comprehensive prevention programs and provide funds for the increased demand in intervention and response services.

We also are encouraged that the NFL is moving forward in the development of an effective response to address violence against women and children by NFL players and employees as they arise through early intervention and response strategies. We look forward to the changes that have been recommended by our national partners:

- **Policy** - Develop a strong policy that sends the clear message that the NFL does not tolerate violence against girls and women. We believe it is possible for the NFL to do this in a way that allows you to call on your players to be their best selves as men - rather than cast them out; to support them in rejecting what they may have been taught as young men and athletes, and to make the choice to value and respect women and to not engage in violence against them. When an instance of violence against women and girls from one of your players comes to your attention, it is crucial that you have a clear policy that articulates your response. Such a policy could include mandatory programming for the player, prevention training, and engaging and working with the player’s entire team.

- **Workplace Education and Training** - Develop workplace education and training for the Administration and team management, including coaches, doctors, etc. to support the League as a whole to better understand the issue of violence against girls and women, to develop appropriate workplace policies and services both for the players and their significant others.

- **Player Education** - We applaud the NFL for the leadership it has already taken by working with A Call to Men to bring training on violence against girls and women into its rookie programming. We honor their leadership on this front and would like to see you dramatically expand this work to ensure that every player receives ongoing training and support.
Thank you for your efforts and commitment to leveraging your unique role in our culture, as well as offering concrete resources to this effort. As a nonprofit organization earning over 9 billion a year in revenue, the NFL has the power and the responsibility to influence culture like no other organization in the country. We look forward to joining you in this work as partners who long to see the NFL be a place that encourages healthy and safe communities for all its players, their families and their fans.

Sincerely,

[Insert Organizational Signatures]

Cc: NFL Sponsors