

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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### MEMORANDUM

June 16, 2022

**To: Members of the Committee on Oversight and Reform**

**Fr: Committee Staff**

**Re: Hearing on “Tackling Toxic Workplaces: Examining the NFL’s Handling of Workplace Misconduct at the Washington Commanders”**

On **Wednesday, June 22, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. ET**, the Committee on Oversight and Reform will hold a **hybrid hearing in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building and on the Zoom video platform**. This hearing will examine the toxic workplace culture at the Washington Commanders professional football team and the National Football League’s (NFL) handling of that matter, including the NFL’s role in setting and enforcing standards across the League. The hearing will help inform legislative efforts to strengthen protections for employees across all workplaces.

#### I. BACKGROUND

Over the past several years, press reports have detailed multiple instances of marginalization, discrimination, and exploitation of Commanders employees under the ownership of Daniel Snyder. In July 2020, the *Washington Post* reported on decades-long allegations of discrimination and exploitation of Commanders employees based on interviews with 15 former female team employees.<sup>1</sup>

Following this report, the Commanders commissioned an internal investigation into its own workplace led by attorney Beth Wilkinson. In August 2020, the *Post* revealed new allegations that a former Commanders executive directed the production of lewd videos containing nude footage of cheerleaders, without their knowledge or consent, for Mr. Snyder’s

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<sup>1</sup> *From Dream Job to Nightmare*, Washington Post (July 16, 2020) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/07/16/redskins-sexual-harassment-larry-michael-alex-santos/?arc404=true](http://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/07/16/redskins-sexual-harassment-larry-michael-alex-santos/?arc404=true)).

personal use. Following these additional revelations, the NFL assumed control over the investigation.<sup>2</sup> After a ten-month investigation, the NFL declined to release the full findings.<sup>3</sup>

On October 21, 2021, the Committee sent a letter to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell requesting that the NFL produce documents and information regarding workplace misconduct at the Commanders and the NFL's response to the matter.

On February 3, 2022, the Committee held a roundtable with several former Commanders employees to examine issues of workplace misconduct at the team and the NFL's response.

The Committee uncovered evidence that the NFL and the Commanders signed a legal document called a common interest agreement shortly after the NFL took over the Wilkinson investigation, which ensured the Commanders retained the ability to prevent the disclosure of information collected during Ms. Wilkinson's investigation.<sup>4</sup>

## II. HEARING PURPOSE

The purpose of the hearing is to examine the workplace culture at the Commanders, the failure of the team and the NFL to address widespread misconduct, and the need to strengthen workplace protections for all employees.

## III. WITNESSES

**Roger Goodell**  
Commissioner  
National Football League

**Daniel Snyder (Invited)**  
Co-Owner and Co-Chief Executive Officer  
Washington Commanders

Staff contacts: Chioma Chukwu, Peter Kenny, Arthur Ewencyk, and Will Ryan at (202) 225-5051.

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<sup>2</sup> *Lewd Cheerleader Videos, Sexist Rules: Ex-Employees Decry Washington's NFL Team Workplace*, Washington Post (Aug. 26, 2020) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/08/26/redskins-cheerleaders-video-daniel-snyder-washington/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/08/26/redskins-cheerleaders-video-daniel-snyder-washington/)); National Football League, *Press Release: NFL Taking Over Investigation of Washington Football Team* (Aug. 31, 2020) (online at [www.nfl.com/news/nfl-taking-over-investigation-of-washington-football-team](http://www.nfl.com/news/nfl-taking-over-investigation-of-washington-football-team)).

<sup>3</sup> National Football League, *Press Release: NFL Announces Outcome of Washington Football Team Workplace Review* (July 1, 2021) (online at [www.nfl.com/news/nfl-announces-outcome-of-washington-football-team-workplace-review](http://www.nfl.com/news/nfl-announces-outcome-of-washington-football-team-workplace-review)).

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney, Committee on Oversight and Reform, and Chairman Raja Krishnamoorthi, Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy, to Commissioner Roger Goodell, National Football League, Inc. (Feb. 4, 2021) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2022-02-04.CBM%20RK%20to%20Goodell-NFL%20re%20Document%20Request.pdf>).