

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6515

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development

FROM: Committee Majority Staff

DATE: June 6, 2025

RE: Subcommittee Hearing Titled: “Beyond the Ballpark: The Role of Minor League Baseball in Economic Growth”

On **Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 2:00 PM ET** the Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development of the Committee on Small Business will hold a hearing titled **“Beyond the Ballpark: The Role of Minor League Baseball in Economic Growth.”** The meeting will convene in room 2360 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The purpose of this hearing is to examine the important role of minor league baseball in building communities and supporting small businesses across Main Street America.

I. Witnesses

- **Mr. Pat Battle**, CEO, Diamond Baseball Holdings
- **Mr. Lou Ciampi Jr.**, President, Independent Graphics Inc.
- **Mr. Reid Ryan**, CEO, Ryan-Sanders Baseball Inc.
- **Mr. Joe Chamberlin**, CEO & Managing Partner, West Michigan Whitecaps and Traverse City Pit Spitters

II. Background

Minor league baseball has played a significant role in shaping American national culture—extending the reach of the sport beyond the major urban centers that host Major League Baseball (MLB) teams to 120 more places.¹ Since its inception in 1901, minor league baseball has served as a bridge between local communities and the broader cultural identity attached to baseball.²

¹ *MiLB Team*, MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL (Last visited Jun. 6, 2025) available at <https://www.milb.com/about/teams>.

² Lauren Jennings, *History, Communities, Politicians looking to Save Minor League Baseball*, THINK BLUE L.A. (Nov. 27, 2019).

While primarily intended to be a place for future MLB players to cut their teeth, minor league baseball also helps make the national pastime more accessible to more people throughout the country. Additionally, minor league baseball has helped revitalize and support small businesses in towns and cities across the country.

Minor league teams have a history of working with the local community in supporting greater economic development, contributing to hundreds of millions of dollars in local investment.³ Not only do minor league teams fuel local small businesses through opportunities to be a vendor, provide facility maintenance, or fulfill other operations necessary for sporting events, the area surrounding minor league ballparks are ripe for development, presenting ample opportunities for entrepreneurs to start a business.

In addition to supporting small businesses in their communities, most independent minor league teams also operate as a small business. This means that many teams must navigate common hurdles such as access to capital, employee retention, and selling their product to consumers. Small minor league teams also face unique challenges, such as no input in on-field talent. With over 100 games in one season and constantly shifting players, ensuring a steady flow of fans can be challenging for these teams.

The unique nature of minor league baseball teams poses opportunities for efficiency, creativity, and innovation, whether through marketing or engagement with the community.⁴ Further, minor league teams must build out large networks of local suppliers and supporters to better integrate themselves in the communities to ensure their team's success. As part of this effort, minor league teams often support and highlight local little league teams, first responders, and charities.

III. Conclusion

In a rapidly changing landscape, minor league baseball continues to represent tradition and a sense of local community pride. Minor league baseball not only strengthens the fabric of our communities, but it also plays a vital economic role by driving local business growth, creating jobs, and stimulating tourism. This dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation helps sustain the economic vitality of towns across the country. In doing so, minor league baseball is a key partner for local communities across America.⁵

³ *MiLB's Economy: Insights & Impacts*, HISTORIC BASEBALL (Last visited Jun. 6, 2025) available at <https://historicbaseball.com/milbs-economy-insights-impacts/>.

⁴ Benjamin Hill, *Choosing the Decades Best Minor League Promos*, MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL (Jan. 5, 2021).

⁵ Thomas Johnston, *Youth seasons getting underway as Greenfield Minor League baseball opening day parade kicks off Saturday*, GREENFIELD RECORDER (Apr. 18, 2025).