



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
16 DECEMBER 2021

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FOP National President Issues Statement on the NFL's Support for Anti-Policing Efforts through the "Inspire Change" Initiative

Washington, DC – Patrick Yoes, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, responded to recent coverage of the National Football League's (NFL) "Inspire Change" initiative and the revelations that the league has funded groups and organizations that promote "defunding the police" and that envision a world "without prisons, policing, prosecution, surveillance or any form of detention or supervision" with the following statement:

"I find it incredibly ironic that NFL teams travel and play every week under the protection of local law enforcement; we have officers in stadiums, parking lots, and even on the sidelines to ensure the safety of the players, team personnel, and of course, the fans. The NFL pays for this security because they want their venues and attendees to be safe. Now, we learn they are sending thousands of dollars to groups whose mission is to end policing and our system of justice.

"How irresponsible is this? If it weren't such a serious issue, we would just laugh at them and go about our business. But make no mistake, this is a very serious issue. Our nation is experiencing a crime wave unlike any other in recent history and one of our nation's largest sporting leagues is paying for campaigns to keep criminals and offenders on the streets? Proudly funding a group that advocates for pulling officers out of our neighborhoods and communities—maybe even—God forbid—football stadiums? Performative displays of wokeness like this are shameful. Maybe Commissioner Goodell should take a timeout and reconsider this decision.

"Is this the kind of change the NFL wants to inspire—the false narrative that police officers and policing are bad and that crime in our society will just end of its own accord? Would players take the field if police officers were not protecting those stadiums? Would fans risk going to games knowing that there would be no police presence? Of course not.

"What is even worse is that by funding groups like this, the NFL sends a clear message that they are on the side of the offenders when instead they could shine a spotlight and provide help and support to crime victims and their families. That's the kind of change we would find inspiring. In fact, rather than supporting efforts to further divide police officers from the communities they protect, the NFL should focus on how to heal the wounds in these communities by collaborating with the FOP to rebuild trust and respect between police officers and the people they serve. To this end, the FOP reached out to

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the NFL and had several meetings to explore this kind of cooperation, but the NFL ultimately refused.

“The NFL can inspire whatever change it chooses—but that doesn’t mean they have to fund the kind of change that makes them and all of us less safe. And it certainly doesn’t mean it is morally right to fund groups who want to make America less safe while at the same time the NFL relies on the brave men and women of law enforcement to make stadiums safe places to turn monstrous profits.”

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Founded in 1915, the Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, with more than 364,000 members. With national offices in Nashville, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C., the FOP is committed to improving the working conditions of law enforcement officers and the safety of those served through education, legislation, information, community involvement, and employee representation. Please visit <https://www.fop.net> for more information.