



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

NFL SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

On and off the field, the NFL supports the men who have played the game, who play the game now and who will play the game in the future. While national news interest in player expressions of advocacy seemingly reached a fever-pitch last season, a number of players had been working together [since 2015](#) to address racial inequality and social injustice. During the 2016 season, the Commissioner quietly joined the dialogue with players to identify meaningful additional ways to strengthen our communities and make society better. At the urging of players, the Commissioner and a number of league executives began a variety of listening and learning conversations – with public officials, law enforcement, military, veterans, academic institutions, as well as a host of other individuals and organizations – to gain a better understanding of the complex societal issues facing many of the communities where we have teams and to think of ways that the league could use its platform, both directly and in partnership with players, to help. For your reference, here are several examples:

- Miami Dolphins [Townhall on Race Relations](#) (September 2016)
- “Sideline Racism” [theme](#) during inaugural My Cause, My Cleats Campaign (December 2016)
- Dolphins players join Broward Sheriff’s Office in [ride-along](#) (December 2016)
- Formal [request](#) from players regarding league social justice efforts (August 2017)
- Players [announce](#) formation of Players Coalition (September 2017)
- Eagles, Goodell participate in Philadelphia “Listen & Learn” [meetings](#) (September 2017)
- Seahawks players [launch](#) equality, social justice fund (September 2017)
- Doug Baldwin Jr., Goodell [endorse](#) U.S. Senate criminal justice reform legislation (October 2017)
- Falcons form [players committee](#) to address social justice (October 2017)
- Browns players [ride along](#) with local police officers (October 2017)
- Dolphins, Goodell take part in [community event](#) with police (October 2017)
- Ravens players [team up](#) with local police to reach the city’s youth (October 2017)

While we are not a social justice organization, the NFL recognizes the platform that the league and players have to effect positive, constructive and meaningful change in our country. We also recognize that such change requires committed, sustained, thoughtful and strategic engagement. Therefore, in December 2017, the NFL [announced](#) a new and expanded program of community engagement aimed at featuring and supporting the positive efforts of NFL players who are making a difference on social justice issues in communities across the country. As part of this partnership, the NFL rolled out [Let’s Listen Together](#) and [formed](#) a joint player and ownership committee focused on social justice.

The joint committee includes Arizona Cardinals owner **Michael Bidwill**, Atlanta Falcons owner **Arthur Blank**, Cleveland Browns co-owner **Jimmy Haslam**, Jacksonville Jaguars owner **Shahid Khan** and Miami Dolphins owner **Stephen Ross**. The player representatives are New York Jets offensive tackle **Kelvin Beachum**, NFL Legend **Anquan Boldin**, New York Jets quarterback **Josh McCown**, Washington Redskins cornerback **Josh Norman**, and NFL Legend **Aeneas Williams**. This groundbreaking endeavor represents the first of its kind among professional sports leagues.



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August 2018

Let's Listen Together, our first campaign on social justice, highlighted conversations and community engagement activities among NFL players, owners and community leaders across the U.S.; it allowed fans to gain insight into the league-wide effort to listen to and learn from one another, and to collaborate to strengthen our communities. The NFL used its full complement of media assets – digitally, socially and on the NFL Network – to highlight this effort and the critical issues raised by NFL players. This ongoing promotional support will be prominent as the league and players continue to build on this social justice initiative.

We are keenly aware that social justice may mean different things to different people and organizations. The NFL-Players Coalition partnership dedicated to social justice encompasses programs and initiatives that reduce barriers to opportunity, with a priority on supporting improvements in three key areas:

- 1. Education and Economic Advancement**
- 2. Improving Community-Police Relations**
- 3. Criminal Justice Reform**

We will also focus on reducing poverty, promoting racial equality, and workforce development. We are executing our social justice work in three main ways (underlined below):

Dedicated financial resources from the league, clubs, and players to nonprofit organizations. Since announcing this platform in January, the NFL and NFL Foundation have already made significant contributions to worthy non-profits and advocacy organizations.

- The NFL Foundation has started issuing funds as part of two new grants available to [club foundations](#) and to active or retired [players](#) who either develop social justice programming or partner with local non-profit organizations committed to this work. Thus far, the NFL Foundation's matching and club grants total nearly \$750,000 based on applications from approximately 90 current and former players.
- In addition, [in March](#), NFL owners approved team-based funds, up to \$250,000 annually, to match contributions from current and former players in support of community improvement, social justice and law enforcement relationships. This funding comes in addition to many NFL teams' ongoing financial support of local social justice initiatives.
- Individually, clubs and club foundations have committed millions of dollars to local programs that focus on reducing barriers to opportunity, whether through education, criminal justice reform, or improving police-community relations. Examples include the [Atlanta Falcons](#), [Baltimore Ravens](#), [Cleveland Browns](#), [New York Giants](#) and [Miami Dolphins](#).



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League-wide amplification of inspiring stories of players making a difference in their communities and society.

- The 2017 My Cause, My Cleats campaign highlighted the nearly 1,000 players who are dedicated to a breadth of important community causes, including [social justice](#). My Cause My Cleats will be back this season with an expanded timeframe in weeks 13-15, in-stadium branding and new content to highlight the causes that players are supporting.
- Each year, we [announce](#) the 32 nominees for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award, many of whom were nominated for their work on social justice issues in 2017. This year's Man of the Year nominees will be announced in early December.
- Throughout the offseason, we continued to use the league's media resources to amplify player community efforts focused on social justice. Examples include these NFL Network [features](#) highlighting three players and the work they are doing across communities: Philadelphia Eagles' [Malcolm Jenkins](#), New England Patriots' [Devin McCourty](#), and Seattle Seahawks' [Doug Baldwin Jr.](#)
- During the 2018 season, new content, including a documentary series, will be created for each of the NFL's media platforms. A social, digital and TV campaign focused on social justice specifically will be highlighted throughout January and February.

Deployment of public policy and government affairs resources at the local, state, and national levels. At the national level, the NFL's Public Policy and Government Affairs team continues to encourage passage of the bipartisan Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act ([S. 1917](#)). The department also provides support to players and clubs interested in developing a local public policy engagement plan around criminal justice reform. Additionally, our government affairs and security teams are conducting outreach to law enforcement leaders across the country to develop collaborative solutions for improving community-police relations in our club markets and beyond. Clubs and players are already making an impact:

- In Massachusetts, Devin McCourty, Jonathan Kraft and Robert Kraft wrote an [op-ed](#) in support of juvenile justice reform earlier this year, followed by player [lobbying](#) in the state. Ultimately, several juvenile justice provisions were included in the bill [signed into law](#) by Governor Charlie Baker (R) in April. The Patriots have continued [efforts](#) to raise awareness about criminal justice reform.
- In New York, after a series of Listen & Learn meetings in the Bronx, Jets executives and players [met](#) with Governor Andrew Cuomo (D) on criminal justice reform and have penned an [op-ed](#) on key issues as well as a [letter](#) on bail reform.
- In Ohio, the Browns supported [Senate Bill 66](#), which has passed both state houses and is now headed to Governor John Kasich (R) for signature.
- In Pennsylvania, the Eagles and Steelers organizations joined [Eagles players](#) in pushing for clean slate legislation, which was ultimately [signed into law](#) by Governor Tom Wolf (D) on June 28.