

EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER
First District of Georgia

ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

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July 18, 2022

The Office of the Commissioner of Baseball
1271 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY, 10020

Dear Robert D. Manfred Jr.:

As the 2022 Major League Baseball (MLB) All-Star Game approaches next week, we write to you to understand how MLB will redress the harm caused to the state of Georgia by moving the 2021 MLB All-Star Game out of Georgia in reaction to baseless attacks on the state's Election Integrity Act.

The May 2022 primary elections were the first state-wide elections held in Georgia since the passage of the Election Integrity Act. Despite false allegations that it was a racist law designed to suppress voter turnout, with President Biden himself deeming it "Jim Crow 2.0," these elections actually saw a record turnout. Meanwhile, California saw a low voter turnout during this year's primary elections even with some of the most permissive voting laws in the country.

According to Georgia's Secretary of State, more than 850,000 Georgians cast a ballot in person or returned an absentee ballot. Compared to early-voting turnout in recent primaries, this voter turnout represented a 168% increase over the 2018 election, which was the last gubernatorial primary. In fact, the primary turnout represents a 212% percent jump above the last presidential primary year in 2020 where increased turnout is typical. Finally, Black voters cast even more early vote ballots during this year's primary election than in 2018, which proves that election security increases the public's faith in elections and makes all Americans more likely to vote.

Democrats, President Joe Biden, and the woke mob lied about the Election Integrity Act. The law expands early voting to 17 days, including at least two Saturdays, and codified the use of drop boxes for the first time. It also specified minimum hours of early voting from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and gives counties the flexibility to keep the polls open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Better yet, the Election Integrity Act expanded the forms of acceptable voter identification to include a utility bill, bank statement, government check or paycheck. Compared to other states, like New York where MLB is headquartered, Georgia has more early voting days and does not require an excuse to vote absentee.

Based on these facts and the lack of any specific criticism in your statements, it is evident that you either did not fully review the text of the Election Integrity Act or willfully mischaracterized the law. This carelessness contributed to the further politicization of sports – America's "pastime" that has long served as a unifying force– and harmed Georgians.

It is estimated that moving the game from the state cost local businesses, many of which are minority-owned businesses and faced significant hardship recovering from the pandemic, more than \$100 million.

While we are pleased that the Atlanta Braves ultimately overcame this politicization and claimed the 2021 World Series, we are saddened that MLB fell victim to the lies spread about what our state law truly does and were bullied into moving the All-Star game out of Georgia. To quote the Braves organization, “Unfortunately, business, employees and fans in Georgia are the victims of this decision.” Any voter suppression claims have been thoroughly debunked, yet your organization has failed to take any responsibility for the damage your mischaracterizations caused.

As such, we request that you provide answers to the following questions:

- When will the MLB All-Star Game return to Atlanta?
- What – if anything – does MLB intend to do to remedy the harm caused to the state of Georgia, the City of Atlanta and its surrounding communities, and baseball fans?
- Did you or MLB engage with members of the Georgia General Assembly, the Governor of Georgia, the City of Atlanta, or the local communities around Truist Park before reaching your decision to move the 2021 All-Star Game?
- Will you commit to thoroughly examining future legislation and policy proposals and engaging with lawmakers before making similarly impactful moves in the future?
- What steps will you take to depoliticize baseball and ensure all political viewpoints feel welcome watching and enjoying MLB baseball?

In your statement last year announcing that MLB would move the game from Atlanta to Denver, Colorado, you said “Major League Baseball fundamentally supports voting rights for all Americans and opposes restrictions to the ballot box...Fair access to voting continues to have our game’s unwavering support.”

As the elected representatives of Georgia, we wholeheartedly agree with those words. Your organization, on the other hand, violated those beliefs, perpetuating a false narrative that invalidated the legitimate election integrity concerns of thousands of Georgians.

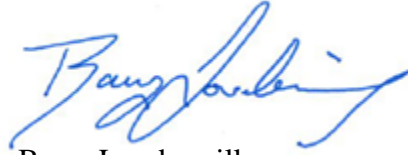
The MLB let the liberal mob dictate business decisions in a shameful and despicable manner. It is shameful that MLB caved to cancel culture and punished the residents and business owners of Georgia. This decision by the MLB was predicated on a lie – it is only right for you to make amends.

In closing, Georgians have a deep love for the sport of baseball, but this move from the MLB is an attack on both our state and true voter integrity. Going forward, we hope that MLB decides to be a force that chooses to unite Americans rather than divide them.

Sincerely,



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress