



December 14, 2019

Robert D. Manfred Jr.  
Commissioner of Baseball  
Major League Baseball  
245 Park Avenue, 31st Floor  
New York, NY 10167

Dear Commissioner Manfred:

I'm outraged to hear of your threat to eliminate the entire existing Minor League Baseball system. When we last met, you gave me your word that you would be negotiating in good faith with Minor League Baseball to preserve professional baseball in the communities that currently have it. Threatening to walk away from the entire minor league system is the exact opposite of negotiating in good faith.

As a former mayor of Burlington, Vermont who helped bring minor league baseball to my city, I fully understand the very important and positive impact that professional baseball has had in my community and communities throughout the country.

The American people don't look at professional baseball as just another corporation. There is a reason why baseball is considered a national pastime. There is a reason why the president of the United States throws out the first pitch of the season. There's a reason why millions of Americans pay close attention to the stats of their favorite baseball players and teams.

At a time when our nation is becoming increasingly divided politically, millions of Democrats, Republicans and independents are united in their love of baseball and come together to root for their favorite teams and players.

As you know, Major League Baseball made a record-breaking \$1.2 billion in profits last season and the overwhelming majority of major league teams are owned by billionaires who are collectively worth \$75 billion. Interestingly, in the last several weeks, we have seen major league teams sign contracts with star ballplayers for as much as \$324 million.

What the American people have a hard time understanding is how major league teams can afford to spend hundreds of millions on one superstar, but somehow cannot afford to pay minor league players a minimum wage of more than \$1,160 a month and prevent 42 minor league teams from being eliminated.

Major League baseball is a business that uniquely receives an antitrust exemption from the United States Congress. Over the past two decades, about a dozen major league teams received over \$1.5 billion in

corporate welfare from American taxpayers in communities all over this country to build massive stadiums.

If you think that Congress is going to sit idly by and let Major League Baseball threaten to eliminate the entire Minor League system after the taxpayers of this country have funded major league stadiums in some of the biggest cities in this country, you would be sadly mistaken.

The time has come for Major League Baseball to stop these bogus threats, withdraw your proposal to eliminate 42 minor league teams, negotiate in good faith and pay minor league players a living wage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bernie Sanders". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bernie Sanders