

HEY COMMISH ROB: KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL, NOT POLITICS



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

Commissioner Rob Manfred,

The Job Creators Network (JCN), a leading small business advocacy organization, is outraged over the recent decision to relocate the Major League Baseball All Star game to Denver. The local government in Georgia—the predesignated location for the event—estimates the exit will amount to a loss of \$100 million in tourism spending.

For small businesses that have disproportionately suffered through government-imposed pandemic lockdowns over the past year, the financial loss is a punch to the gut and will have an outsized impact on minority-owned businesses. As Sen. Tim Scott points out in a tweet¹, Atlanta has a majority African American population, while Denver boasts a nine percent make-up. Your decision is punishing the very group you claim to be defending.

We demand that you reverse the decision.

Giving your organization the benefit of the doubt, the MLB's choice to relocate the All Star game is based on a misunderstanding of the facts. The recently passed voting rights law in Georgia, which your group has argued applies "restrictions to the ballot box," is the target of an intense smear campaign perpetuated by activist groups. Regardless of what the legislation actually does, their goal is demonization. The artificial outrage will prove useful when attempting to federalize elections in the form of HR1, legislation that is unconstitutional.

Leaders of major American companies and organizations—you among them—have a responsibility to verify the truth, rather than simply echo unfounded accusations. Let me share with you the facts.

Despite urban legend and your previous statement, the Georgia law makes it easy to vote and hard to cheat. It shouldn't be controversial. Compared to pre-pandemic standards, the law expands voter access, increases the number of early voting days and permits no-excuse absentee ballots. Even states like New York, Connecticut and President Biden's home state of Delaware require a valid excuse to cast an absentee ballot.

And no, it doesn't ban people from quenching their thirst in line. Poll workers are more than welcome to set-up self-service beverage stations and others can distribute water outside of the pre-designated voting area.

To help curtail fraud and electoral abuse, current Georgia law requires residents to present a form of identification prior to voting, which can include a driver's license, free state-issued ID, utility bill, bank statement, government check, or even a paystub. You need identification to buy alcohol, go to the doctor or even pick-up MLB tickets at will call. It's not racism, but a smart security measure that everyone acknowledges is beneficial in one scenario or another. In fact, in a poll by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, nearly three-fourths of Georgia voters, almost two-thirds of African Americans, and nine in ten residents making under \$25,000 per year in the state support voter ID rules.² The new law simply applies that standard to mail-in voting as well.

Voter ID laws are so popular that a majority of states utilize a form of the practice to safeguard their election process. Puzzlingly, Colorado—the newly picked location for the All Star game—is among this group. Colorado even has fewer days of early in-person voting compared to Georgia. The selective outrage from your office and others is backwards.

Even a former MLB commissioner acknowledges that your decision was a mistake. Fay Vincent recently noted, "Major League Baseball can't become a weapon in the culture wars, a hostage for one political party or ideology."³

Small businesses in Georgia are hurting and you pulled a multi-million dollar rug out from underneath them. On behalf of our members, JCN demands you reconsider your decision and return the All Star game back to the Peach State. Don't let activist groups weaponize America's pastime to push radical ideas that MLB fans don't support.

Sincerely,

Alfredo Ortiz
President & CEO
Job Creators Network

Find out more, at:

MLBfail.com

¹<https://twitter.com/SenatorTimScott/status/1379428145451782149>

² Poll of 858 Georgia Voters Conducted Jan 17-28 by the University of Georgia's School of Public and International Affairs

³<https://www.wsj.com/articles/rob-manfreds-all-star-error-11617726664>