



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 13, 2017

NFL Threatens Texas Over Transgender Bathroom Bill

The National Football League — the subject of many controversies, particularly under the leadership of Commissioner Roger Goodell — has now needlessly injected itself into the transgender bathroom debate. The NFL has threatened to punish Texas if it forges ahead with a bill prohibiting transgender individuals from using bathrooms based on their “gender identity.”



Texas Senate Bill 6 would require transgender individuals to use bathrooms in public schools, in government buildings, and on public university campuses according to their biological sex, regardless of whether they identify with a different gender. The bill would also stop cities from passing ordinances that would allow transgender individuals to choose which bathroom to use.

Republican State Senator Lois Kolkhorst filed SB6 earlier this year, citing some of the state’s “divisive ordinances” having to do with transgender bathroom regulations, including a Houston ordinance that would have made it illegal to “discriminate” against someone based on 15 different “protected characteristics,” though that ordinance was nixed by voters.

“I filed this legislation not to start a controversy but to end one,” Kolkhorst explained.

But according to the NFL, it’s game on. NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy has threatened to bar the state of Texas from hosting future Super Bowls if the bill is passed into law.

“The NFL embraces inclusiveness. We want all fans to feel welcomed at our events and NFL policies prohibit discrimination based on age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other improper standard,” McCarthy said. “If a proposal that is discriminatory or inconsistent with our values were to become law there, that would certainly be a factor considered when thinking about awarding future events,” he added, speaking of the new legislation.

According to ESPN.com, the NFL has already selected sites for future Super Bowls through 2021, and Texas is not one of them. However, Dallas did host the game in 2011, and the state of Texas has hosted three since 2004.

It’s worth mentioning that Senate Bill 6 does not impact stadiums or private businesses, thereby leaving it up to them to set their own bathroom policies, a point noted by the *Texas Tribune*, which reported that the bill exempts “convention centers, stadiums, and entertainment venues.”

Additionally, Senator Kolkhorst clarified that the legislation doesn’t apply “if the location owned by a government entity is privately leased to an outside entity.”

Republican Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, who has backed the bill, has spoken out against



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what he claims is “misinformation” about it in the media.

“Despite persistent misinformation in the media, under Senate Bill 6, all Texas teams will be able to set their own policies at the stadiums and arenas where they play and hold their events. There is no conflict with the NFL’s statement today and Senate Bill 6,” said Alejandro Garcia, a spokesperson for Patrick.

Meanwhile, the NBA and NCAA have yet to comment on the Texas bill, though they have been outspoken critics of the North Carolina transgender bathroom law, known as HB2. The NCAA has moved multiple championships from North Carolina over the law, while the NBA moved the National Basketball Association’s 2017 All-Star Game out of North Carolina.

“While we recognize that the NBA cannot choose the law in every city, state, and country in which we do business, we do not believe we can successfully host our All-Star festivities in Charlotte in the climate created by HB2,” the league said in a statement.

Comparisons are being drawn between SB6 and HB2. However, the Associated Press notes, “Unlike the North Carolina law, the Texas proposal stops short of some provisions the NCAA singled out when defending its decision to relocate events last fall. That includes language that invalidates local equal-rights ordinances, although there is separate legislation in Texas that could have similar effects.”

Though the NCAA has not yet issued similar threats to Texas, some lawmakers in the state have voiced concerns over the possibility that the NCAA could pull the 2018 Men’s Final Four from San Antonio in opposition to SB6.

Meanwhile, Governor Greg Abbott weighed in on the NFL’s threat on his Twitter feed, where he mocked the NFL’s poor decision-making: “NFL decision makers also benched Tom Brady last season. It ended with NFL handing the Super Bowl trophy to Brady,” he teased.

As noted by the Daily Wire, this is not the first time the NFL has taken a strong left-leaning political stance. Last year, it awarded San Francisco 49ers Colin Kaepernick the Len Eshmont Award for being “inspirational and courageous” based on his vocal opposition to the National Anthem. The Daily Wire opined, “While the league banned innocuous celebrations and even prevented one player from wearing patriotic cleats in memory of 9/11, it stood firmly behind Kaepernick’s anti-American/anti-law enforcement protest, even while fans made clear how much it turned them off. And yet when the Dallas Cowboys attempted to place an “Arm in Arm” decal on their helmets to honor the five officers killed in Dallas, the NFL stopped it.”

The NFL is notorious for coming down on the wrong side of political issues. Fox News recalls,

This year, Browns running back Isaiah Crowell posted an inflammatory image on Instagram showing what looked like an ISIS terrorist slitting the throat of a police officer. The picture was so offensive, Facebook banned it. Crowell apologized and donated \$35,000 to a Dallas police charity to make the controversy go away. The league did nothing.

And when reports came out stating that the NFL instructed Lady Gaga to avoid politics during the 2017 Super Bowl Halftime Show, the NFL went out of its way to dispute the claims.

“This is unsourced nonsense from people trying to stir up controversy where there is none,” an NFL spokesman announced.

And while Lady Gaga, who is an outspoken critic of President Trump, did seem to stay apolitical for the most part during her halftime performance, the question remains: Wouldn’t it have been better for business if the NFL had instructed her to avoid politics? Why ostracize 50 percent of your fan base by



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bringing politics to a sports arena? The NFL has witnessed a nine-percent decrease in its viewership this season, and a growing number believe it has to do with the league's increased politicization.



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