



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

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The NFL Leaves America

“I didn’t leave the Democratic Party,” Ronald Reagan famously said when he began his political career in the 1960s. “The party left me.” Now the same is being said by many former fans about the National Football League. Americans who grew up admiring NFL football in the 1960s, ’70s, ’80s, and ’90s, can candidly observe that the NFL has left them.

Donald Trump, like Reagan, was elected President with the votes of millions of former Democrats, and Trump did NFL football fans a favor by using his bully pulpit (on Twitter) to expose how un-American America’s pastime has become. As with other issues in the public eye, Trump’s smackdown of the anti-American stance by the NFL is welcome change.

Behind the scenes, the NFL had already been pandering to the radical Left for years. Entirely dependent on the liberal media for profits, the NFL cares more about maintaining its massive revenues than it does about American values.

With attendance and viewership in sharp decline, the NFL has increasingly embraced gambling as a way of boosting its own profits at the expense of those vulnerable to that addiction. Its decision to move the Raiders to Las Vegas will make football seem more like a game of roulette or blackjack than family entertainment.

Near Detroit, the now-roofless Pontiac Silverdome sits as a colossal piece of litter that contributes to the blight of that once successful center of automobile manufacturing. Other cities, from Saint Louis to San Diego, have been harmed by the NFL taking big subsidies from local taxpayers and then, before public bonds are paid off, skipping town to a more profitable deal somewhere else.

Halftime performances at the Super Bowl, in front of the largest television audience of the year, have gone the way of commencement addresses at colleges where no conservative performers are allowed and no conservative messages permitted. Bizarre occult themes are imposed on the captive audience during these shows.

This is not the same NFL where Pittsburgh Steelers

owner Art Rooney ordered his head coach not to cut Rocky Bleier from the team after Rocky returned from Vietnam, where he was wounded in combat. That patriotic decision created one of the many genuine heroes who played during the golden era of the game, and Rocky Bleier caught the extraordinary winning touchdown pass in the 1979 Super Bowl.

Today, the NFL is more likely to cut talented players in order to pander to liberals, as in the exclusion of the Bible-quoting Tim Tebow. Burgess Owens, a member of the Super Bowl champion Oakland Raiders in 1981, was a dynamic speaker at our recently concluded Eagle Council in St. Louis where he explained how special the NFL was then, and how different it is now.

Phyllis Schlafly applauded Pete Rozelle, founder of the modern NFL and inventor of the Super Bowl, for respecting our traditions by not scheduling football games on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Rozelle also kept gambling out of football during his nearly 30-year tenure.

The current NFL commissioner, Roger Goodell, has played footsie with gamblers by making deals with weekly fantasy football games, which are thinly disguised gambling, while fans are deciding not to fill stadiums in several major markets like San Francisco and Los Angeles. Goodell’s spokesman is Joe Lockhart, who managed the White House press during Bill Clinton’s impeachment, and who recently sold his 9-bedroom Washington, D.C. home to Barack Obama for \$8.1 million.

Today’s NFL has become a massive entitlement program for billionaires, one of the worst examples of corporate welfare. Like others who enjoy lavish lifestyles based on government handouts, many NFL owners are ungrateful to the American system that makes their success possible.

Of course, not all players put their game above the American flag. Pittsburgh Steelers’ lineman Alejandro Villanueva, a former Army Ranger, gave us all something to cheer about when he stood alone on the field to honor the American flag and the National Anthem while his

teammates covered in the tunnel.

But then even he had to pay a price for being patriotic, as his own head coach and teammates began criticizing him for it. He was apparently forced to apologize for supposedly embarrassing his teammates.

President Trump's Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin summed this issue up well on one of the Sunday morning talk shows, remarking that NFL players "can do free speech on their own time." They do not have to insult our Nation in taxpayer-built stadiums before captive audiences.

Congress should hold hearings on how much taxpayer money is flowing to support the anti-American conduct of the NFL, and state legislatures should consider passing laws to cut off that money at the local level. While people have a right to be unpatriotic, Americans should not be forced to support them.

End NFL Subsidies as It Moves to Gambling

Nearly a billion dollars in taxpayer money is being wasted by the NFL Oakland Raiders' move to Las Vegas. In direct costs are the \$750 million in taxpayer subsidies to build a luxurious new stadium in the desert, plus roughly \$95 million in unpaid debt on the stadium that will be left behind in Oakland.

Oakland taxpayers had already spent \$110 million in improvements to the stadium being abandoned. St. Louis taxpayers are still on the hook for \$85 million of the \$300 million they committed to for the Rams' now-abandoned stadium; San Diego owes \$47 million on the football stadium renovated for the Chargers, who have moved to Los Angeles.

That is pricey litter by the billionaire NFL owners, which blights our struggling cities. Where are the environmentalists when we need them?

Overall, an estimated \$6.7 billion in public money props up NFL stadiums today. In addition, the NFL receives tax breaks and free public services, and demands massive sales taxes refunds from locations that host the Super Bowl.

Now the NFL has gone from bad to worse. Nearly every NFL owner approved the move of the Oakland Raiders to Las Vegas, cozying up to gambling.

Former NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle would roll over in his grave if he knew. Rozelle, a long-time admirer of Phyllis Schlafly, prohibited the playing of NFL games on Christmas to avoid interfering with the holy day.

Pete Rozelle built the NFL for 29 years into the success it is today by defending its integrity against the corrupting influence of gambling. The NFL had even prohibited visits to Las Vegas during the football season, and had banned advertisements to promote Vegas during the Super Bowl.

The NFL still publicly pretends to disfavor gambling on its games, yet nearly all of its teams have signed

lucrative, multi-million-dollar deals for "fantasy football" to encourage gambling by fans. As Phyllis Schlafly walked around Cleveland Browns stadium last summer for her pro-life event during the Republican National Convention, she faced many banners promoting fantasy football.

This is not Pete Rozelle's NFL any more, but "fantasy football" is profitable for it. Now, with the move of one of the most widely followed franchises to the gambling capital of the United States, there can be little doubt where the NFL really stands. Yet hypocrisy lingers as the NFL still publicly opposes betting on its games. Its real underlying issue probably has more to do with whether it profits from the gambling.

Betting on NFL games already constitutes more than 40% of all the lawful sports betting in Nevada. In addition, the American Gaming Association estimates that \$150 billion is spent annually on illegal sports betting. So why are taxpayers subsidizing the corporate welfare to the NFL as it moves towards gambling? We should not be footing the bills for the billionaires who are profiting from the massive taxpayer subsidies to the NFL.

The NFL has abandoned numerous stadiums to depress the downtowns of multiple cities. In addition to forcing taxpayers to pay massive costs for these stadiums, many have been financed with tax-exempt bonds.

A study by the Brookings Institute revealed that 36 of the 45 stadiums built or significantly renovated since 2000 used tax-exempt municipal bonds, which indirectly cost federal taxpayers \$3.7 billion. Meanwhile, "abandoned stadiums" as an internet search yields nearly a half-million website displays of dilapidated structures left behind as billionaires found new cities to fleecy.

Oklahoma congressman Steve Russell has introduced H.R. 811, the No Tax Subsidies for Stadiums Act, to close the tax exemption for financing these stadiums. His bill would "amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat obligations financing professional sports stadiums as private activity bonds if such obligations meet the private business use test."

This bill could go further and end the tax write-offs for the luxury boxes purchased by corporate executives in these wasteful stadiums. States could also pass laws prohibiting sales tax refunds to the NFL for the Super Bowl, which amount to millions of dollars.

New Jersey ended up paying so much to the NFL after hosting the Super Bowl in 2014, without a significant boost to local commerce, that 55% of its business leaders surveyed said they do not want the Super Bowl hosted in their state again. Yet the NFL uses the Super Bowl to threaten state legislators against enacting conservative legislation, as it did earlier this year to Texas.

Fortunately, the public is waking up. Voters are increasingly rejecting demands by the NFL for greater

subsidies, and rightly so; Las Vegas raided its taxpayers' pockets for the Raiders only by persuading the state legislature to pony up the money. Television ratings for the NFL were down last season after years of boundless growth. Despite the most exciting finish ever, more people decided not to watch the Super Bowl.

Congress Should Hold Hearings on Fantasy Football

A new form of gambling has suddenly appeared in America, and the outfits raking in the money claim that what they're doing is perfectly legal. In the last four years, two recently formed companies, DraftKings and FanDuel, have collected billions from the mostly young men who place bets on their smart phones on what's called fantasy football.

Many people first heard about this when a DraftKings employee won \$350,000 for coming in second place in a FanDuel contest that cost \$25 to enter and featured \$5 million in cash winnings, including \$1 million to the winner. The New York Attorney General investigated whether the employee benefited from inside information, but the bigger question is the eye-popping jackpot.

Fantasy football means imaginary games played by imaginary teams in imaginary leagues, which are made up of real players whose playing statistics are compiled from real football games. So instead of betting on the actual NFL games, fantasy football participants bet on something that depends on the actual NFL games.

It's illegal in most places to bet on actual NFL games, but fantasy football enables participants to do something similar by betting on fantasy teams that win or lose based on how real NFL players perform each week in real NFL games. Participants then boost the audience for sports channels by wasting untold hours watching out-of-town teams that affect the outcome of their bets on fantasy football.

The National Football League has long sought to protect football's reputation as America's most popular sport by prohibiting legal bets on real football games, except in Las Vegas where heavily regulated oddsmakers calculate point spreads. But the opportunity of drawing a new audience of obsessive football fans to cable TV was irresistible for the NFL, which has made deals with the fantasy football industry.

The National Basketball Association and Major League Baseball have also been seduced by the lure of the fantasy sports gambling business, which hooks new participants so rapidly. As M.L.B. executive Robert Bowman explains, "It's daily. It's quick. You know quickly if you've won or lost. It seems so obvious. How did we miss this?"

Gambling in America has always been strictly limited

to state-sponsored lotteries and state-regulated casinos and horse racing. State-based gambling is reinforced by federal laws that prohibit any form of interstate gambling where bets are placed by telephone or through the mail.

In 2006, the outgoing Republican Congress voted overwhelmingly to extend the federal interstate gambling ban to the internet, which was then becoming widely available. This federal ban on internet gambling, however, contained a loophole for "fantasy sports" gambling schemes that supposedly contain some elements of skill.

Through this loophole, billions of dollars are being bet on football, to the point where it overshadows sports betting in Las Vegas. In less than a decade the number of those enticed to play fantasy football has skyrocketed to more than 50 million.

Hard-sell television ads entice viewers to participate in fantasy football games that can cost them many hundreds or thousands of dollars, and even addict them. Average American football fans, mostly men, are transformed into gamblers by get-rich-quick promises using these fantasy sports schemes.

The NFL heavily promotes this because the more that people bet on fantasy football, the higher their television ratings and the greater their revenue. The advertisements for this during football broadcasts amount to money in the bank for the NFL, and nearly every team in the NFL now has its own deal to profit from fantasy football.

The chairman and CEO of one of the biggest Las Vegas casinos, Jim Murren, observed in 2015 that politicians are "absolutely, utterly wrong" in pretending that fantasy football is not gambling. "I don't know how to run a football team," he declared, "but I do know how to run a casino, and this is gambling."

Bookmakers from the United Kingdom, where sports betting is legal, are trying to penetrate the U.S. market. "I'm all for daily fantasy betting," said one English bookmaker, "but nobody is in favor of unregulated internet gambling and that is exactly what daily fantasy sports is."

The NFL's chief marketing officer, Mark Waller, told the *Wall Street Journal* that he wants to bring fantasy football into the curriculum of elementary schools. "You should be able to learn a lot, particularly around math. How many points do I need? How many points does this player get?" By hooking children on fantasy football, the NFL hopes to lock in another generation for its television ratings — and some will be hooked on gambling, too.

Most NFL stadiums were built using taxpayer money, and the public should have a strong say in objecting to their use to promote gambling on football. With the NFL trying to push this into the elementary school curriculum, it is time to push back.

The Myths of ‘Diversity’

The world’s fastest human, Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, retired last month from the sport of track and field. He won multiple gold medals in three consecutive Olympic games, setting world records in both the 100-meter and 200-meter events. Like most Jamaicans – and most sprinters – Usain Bolt is of West African descent. No white or Asian man, and no woman of any race, is good enough to compete at his level.

Is it fair that in more than 30 years, no white man has won an Olympic medal in the 100-meter dash? In every Olympics since 1988, every finalist in the 100-meter dash has been a man of African descent.

Usain Bolt’s amazing career provides a useful corrective to the politically correct assumption that all types of human activity must be “diverse.” Wherever competition determines the outcome, we see differences in human achievement.

We can all work to improve our skills with the talents God gave us, but not everyone can excel at the highest level of competition. Talents are not equally distributed, and some human differences are too great to overcome, even with hard work.

The same week that Usain Bolt retired, we learned that a woman dropped out of training to become a Navy SEAL. The unnamed female midshipman (can we still use that word?) failed to complete the initial three-week qualifying course, or “pipeline,” which is followed by six grueling months of training.

No woman has ever been good enough to become a Navy SEAL. Among other things, you have to lift yourself from the ocean into a small boat, a feat that requires upper-body strength that women just don’t have.

Women can excel in many fields that don’t require upper-body strength – writing computer code, for example. But as we learned from the 10-page memorandum written by James Damore, the 28-year-old engineer recently fired by Google, not many women are interested in doing that kind of work.

Google has been under federal investigation to explain why only 21 percent of its technical workforce is female. In his well-researched paper seeking to explain that disparity, Damore mentioned various reasons why more men than women gravitate to tech work.

Researchers have found gender differences in infants, which suggests a biological origin. Baby girls respond more to faces, while baby boys respond to shiny objects. A few years later, girls seek relationships with people, while boys are interested in trucks, battles and adventures.

For a host of reasons, Damore wrote, “women on average show a higher interest in people and men in things. Women on average are more cooperative. Women on average look for more work-life balance, while men have a higher drive for status on average.”

Damore’s memo did not sit well with Google’s vice president for diversity and inclusion, who said it “advanced incorrect assumptions about gender.” The next day Damore was fired for “perpetuating gender stereotypes” and escorted off the premises, known as the Googleplex, with the promise that his personal effects would be mailed to him.

The Google engineer was careful to concede that “I’m not saying diversity is bad, or that we shouldn’t try to correct for existing biases,” but that wasn’t enough to save his job. The feminist dogma is that anything less than 50-50 representation can only be the result of discrimination, oppression and sexism.

Damore pointed out, “When it comes to diversity and inclusion, Google’s left bias has created a politically correct monoculture that maintains its hold by shaming dissenters into silence.” He added that at Google, and presumably other major corporations, there is “an ideological echo chamber where some ideas are too sacred to be honestly discussed.”

The CEOs of some of America’s biggest corporations are “grandstanders,” as President Trump puts it, by quitting his Manufacturing Council in feigned protest over Trump’s supposed lack of sensitivity to diversity issues. But fortunately, Trump does stand up for freedom of speech, and the CEOs of companies like Google that profit from freedom of speech should be the first to defend him. It is ironic that Google wants freedom on the internet and insists on what is called “net neutrality” to defend Google’s own self-interest, but at the same time censors speech among its employees. Google itself would never have become so profitable without the free speech that is allowed on the internet, and yet becomes the censor that it urges government not to be.

The most competitive math contest for college students is the annual William Lowell Putnam Mathematical Competition, sometimes called the “Olympics” of that field. So rarely do any women place among the top contestants that there is a separate award for women who do well on the grueling exam.

Phyllis Schlafly had granddaughters who excel in math and engineering, including two who became actuaries and another two who majored in Mechanical Engineering. But Phyllis Schlafly was always the first to point out that there are important differences between men and women, and boys and girls, and it is harmful to pretend otherwise.

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