

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 1, 2012

Mr. Gary B. Bettman
Commissioner
National Hockey League
1185 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036

Mr. Donald Fehr
Executive Director
National Hockey League Players' Association
20 Bay Street Suite 1700
Toronto, ON M5J 2N8
CANADA

Dear Commissioner Bettman and Mr. Fehr:

We are disappointed by your decision to cancel the National Hockey League (NHL) preseason in its entirety and urge you to act without delay to negotiate an agreement that allows the regular season to go forward as scheduled.

The cancellation of the preseason will negatively affect workers, businesses, and families in our state, and a failure to resolve this dispute in time for the regular season would impose an even greater hardship. Dozens of businesses and hundreds of workers in Newark depend on the hockey season for their livelihood. Last week, we saw an example of the NHL's economic impact in Newark when the Brick City opened its first new hotel in 40 years adjacent to the Prudential Center. The Devils' continued presence is critical to the success of the city's downtown revitalization effort.

A delayed or canceled regular season would be a major setback for Newark. It could mean millions of dollars in lost economic activity, and more people out of work when our state unemployment rate is already at a 30-year high.

In addition to being a positive economic force, the Devils are an important point of pride for Newark and New Jersey. Over the last two decades, the Devils have posted one of the most impressive records in all of professional sports and the NHL has developed a devoted fan base in Newark and across our state. Moreover, the Devils have been a strong supporter of Newark's children, partnering with a youth hockey program that gives local urban children an opportunity to enjoy the sport.

Newark is not unique—communities across the country have tied their economies to professional hockey. As you consider your next steps, we encourage you to keep in mind the communities, workers and families that would be hurt by a further disruption in the season.

Businesses, workers and hockey fans played no role in causing this dispute, and it is unfair for them to have to bear this burden. The Senate has jurisdiction over interstate commercial activities, including professional sports, and will keep a close eye on your negotiations with hope that you will work diligently and quickly to resolve this matter.

Sincerely,


FRANK R. LAUTENBERG


ROBERT MENENDEZ