

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051  
MINORITY (202) 225-5074  
<https://oversight.house.gov>

### **Opening Statement of Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney Roundtable Entitled “Examining the Washington Football Team’s Toxic Workplace Culture” February 3, 2022**

Welcome everyone. Today, we are examining a serious issue with a goal that I hope all of us can agree on: the need to finally end sexual harassment and misconduct in the workplace.

**Just yesterday, Mr. Snyder sought to rebrand his team as the Commanders. With due respect, it’s going to take more than a name change to fix that broken culture. In this roundtable I hope to learn, who was the Commander of seeking non-disclosure agreements after woman were harassed? Who was the Commander of taking of taking secret videos of woman? Who was the Commander of ensuring the Wilkinson report stayed secret?**

**We should be able to agree on the fact that sexual harassment will not stop—and workplaces like the Washington Commanders will not improve—unless there are clear consequences for those who engage in this unlawful behavior and try to cover it up.**

No individual, no corporation, and certainly no employer should be able to bully or threaten victims into silence. But without transparency, this conduct will continue unabated.

Recent events have laid bare how much remains to be done to protect people from sexual harassment in the workplace.

In 1964, Congress passed Title VII of the Civil Rights which banned sex discrimination in the workplace. But nearly three decades later, the MeToo movement exposed that sexual harassment in the workplace is still occurring and that many victims go years without justice or accountability.

Powerful men like Harvey Weinstein and even former President Trump have used non-disclosure agreements to conceal their sexual misconduct and buy victims’ silence. Many large employers have done the same to cover up sexual harassment and other illegal workplace abuse.

According to the National Women’s Law Center, more than one-third of American workers are bound by some form of non-disclosure agreement.

**It is time for Congress to empower victims and make it harder for serial harassers to hide.**

**Today, we will hear from six courageous people who decided to speak out about the toxic work environment they experienced at their former employer, the Washington Football Team.**

**We will hear first-hand accounts of how, for nearly two decades under the leadership of team owner Daniel Snyder, women were touched inappropriately, degraded based on their appearance, and verbally abused on a near daily basis.**

**We will hear that some of this abuse involved senior executives at the Team, including Mr. Snyder himself.**

**And we will hear how women suffered in silence because they feared retaliation or were bound by confidentiality agreements, and because the Washington Football Team and the NFL failed to create procedures to safely report these incidents.**

**Were it not for the courage of these brave individuals in coming forward to tell their stories, this outrageous conduct might still be a secret today, and many more people could be put at risk.**

Ultimately, there must be accountability for these actions. Back in 2014, when an NFL player was caught on video physically abusing his fiancé, the League's Commissioner, Roger Goodell said, quote, "the NFL is held to a higher standard, and properly so" given the League's prominent role in American society.

But after 20 years of sexual harassment and abuse at the Washington Football Team, the Team and the League have tried to sweep all of this under the rug. After an investigation by a respected lawyer found rampant and serious abuses at the Washington Football Team, the NFL covered it up. In a break from recent precedent, the League refused to release a written report and let Mr. Snyder off with a fine and a slap on the wrist.

That is why this Committee, in partnership with Chairman Krishnamoorthi and the Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy, launched our investigation.

**As one of the most prominent workplaces in America, the NFL's attempt to cover up this conduct and avoid accountability sets a dangerous precedent for workplaces across the country.**

The Committee has requested documents from the NFL so that we can finally learn the truth about what happened, and why the NFL tried so hard to cover it up. But so far, we have been met with delays and finger-pointing. I strongly urge the NFL to end its cover-up, fully cooperate with Congress, and immediately release the findings of their internal investigation.

**Even if the NFL refuses to act, it is my sincere hope the Washington Football Team will commit to stop using tactics, like nondisclosure agreements—now and forever—to silence employees and conceal workplace misconduct.**

**That is why this Committee is exploring legislative solutions to rein in the use of non-disclosure agreements that prevent workers from speaking out about sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. We are also examining ways to promote accountability and strengthen protections for all workers.**

###

---

Contact: Nelly Decker, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181