

United States Senate

September 3, 2014

Mr. Roger Goodell
Commissioner
National Football League
345 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10154

Mr. DeMaurice Smith
Executive Director
NFL Players Association
1133 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Commissioner Goodell and Executive Director Smith:

With the new National Football League (NFL) season set to kick off tomorrow night, I write to express profound disappointment that random testing for human growth hormone (hGH) has still not been implemented in the NFL despite all sides committing to it more than three years ago in the 2011 collective bargaining agreement. This inexplicable failure should be embarrassing to both owners and players, as it erodes fans' confidence in the integrity of a great American sport, and sends a dangerous message to young athletes that there are no consequences for hGH use by the NFL players they admire and seek to emulate.

Adding to the urgency of this situation is a new [national study](#) published in July by the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids finding that experimentation with hGH among American teenagers has doubled in the last year. According to the study, in 2013 "11 percent of teens in grades 9-12 reported 'ever having used' synthetic human growth hormone without a prescription, up dramatically from just 5 percent in 2012." The study further finds that teens are increasingly aware of online marketing of steroids and synthetic hGH, and less likely to believe there is significant risk in using performance-enhancing drugs. Worse, given the high cost of genuine hGH, the report highlights the risk of teens using fake products, noting, "it is difficult if not impossible to know what exactly is contained in these products teens are consuming."

This study should serve as a wake-up call to the entire NFL community, that it must fulfill its responsibilities to set the standard for clean competition and serve as a positive, healthy example to young athletes across the country and the world.

As I indicated three years ago in my September 2011 letter congratulating you for your commitment to testing, private sector negotiations like the NFL's collective bargaining agreement should not involve Congress. However, the standards that the NFL and other sports leagues set for our young athletes with regard to performance-enhancing drugs implicates public safety and is in the public's interest.

As the league appears set to begin another season without testing, I hope all parties will renew their commitment to it and do everything in their power to reach an agreement this year. If the NFL fails to act, Congress will examine this issue. In reply to this letter, please state your current position on hGH testing and your plans for working to reach agreement on implementation this year. Following through on your commitment will be part of the legacy you leave this great game.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John McCain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "McCain".

John McCain
United States Senator