Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

December 14, 2007

Mr. Roger Goodell
Commissioner
National Football League
280 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Commissioner Goodell:

We write to express our concern that many Vermonters may not be able to see the final regular season game of the year between the New England Patriots and the New York Giants on December 29. Under the NFL's current policies, New England Patriots fans in Boston and New York Giants fans in New York City will be able to see the game on free television, but most Vermonters will not.

This is a troubling development because when the NFL testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee in November 2006, the league touted its policy of offering free, over-the-air broadcasting of NFL games. Since Congress passed the Sports Broadcasting Act precisely for that purpose, watching NFL games has become a weekly ritual for millions of Americans each fall. Conversely, a policy that relies on pay television may alienate the fans who have made the NFL so successful.

When the NFL testified last year, they explained that even games televised on pay television "are televised on free over-the-air television in the home cities of the competing teams." The manner by which the NFL is applying the definition of "home cities," however, is unduly narrow. As their team name clearly states, the New England Patriots represent all of New England, and many Vermont fans cheer for the Patriots as their home team. In addition, many Vermonters are dedicated fans of the New York Giants, dating back to the days when they held their summer training camp at Saint Michael's College in Vermont.

We encourage you to recognize the value that NFL team loyalty in Vermont adds to the Patriots, the Giants, and the NFL by ensuring that this potentially historic final game of the season is available over-the-air in Vermont. During this momentous NFL season, the league should not alienate the fans in Vermont who root strongly for their home team.

Sincerely,

PATRICK LEAHY	BERNARD SANDERS	PETER WELCH
United States Senator	United States Senator	United States Representative