

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 27, 2019

Mr. Rob Manfred
Commissioner
Major League Baseball
245 Park Avenue, Floor 30
New York, NY 10167-3099

Dear Commissioner Manfred:

In 2017, a tragic incident involving a child being struck by a foul ball at Yankee Stadium helped bring extended netting to all 30 Major League Baseball (MLB) stadiums. This extended netting was a welcome addition to improving fan safety, but it is not enough.

In recent weeks, we've seen more disturbing incidents of fans being hit by foul balls – May 29 at Minute Maid Park and Dodger Stadium; June 10 at Guaranteed Rate Field; and at Dodger Stadium again on June 23. Clearly, more needs to be done to put the safety of fans first.

The Chicago White Sox and the Washington Nationals have taken the first crucial steps to increase fan safety by announcing an extension of the protective netting to the right and left field corners. The Los Angeles Dodgers are conducting a study and plan to announce an extension plan in the coming weeks. Also, the Texas Rangers' new stadium will have this important feature. MLB and every team should expedite plans to extend netting to further protect fans. As several teams have demonstrated, these safety improvements don't have to wait until next season.

Players are hitting balls with a velocity of more than 100 miles per hour onto the field and into the seated areas. A Bloomberg analysis found nearly 1,800 people annually have suffered foul ball-related injuries while attending games. Extended netting could help prevent many of these injuries.

We appreciate the efforts MLB and individual teams have taken so far for the safety of fans. However, it is clear the current extended netting is not sufficient to protect fans from serious injury or death. We hope all teams will follow the leadership of the White Sox, Nationals, Dodgers, and Rangers in this matter.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator