

BOB DOLE
1ST DISTRICT, KANSAS

243 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
AREA CODE 202
225-2715

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

DISTRICT OFFICE:
210 FEDERAL BUILDING
HUTCHINSON, KANSAS 67501

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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BARTON JEWELL RENO
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STATEMENT OF HONORABLE BOB DOLE

to

THE ANTITRUST SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

October 13, 1966

Mr. Chairman and members of the Antitrust Subcommittee.

I appreciate an opportunity to present my views and to urge this Committee to act promptly and favorably on my bill, H. R. 18145, or any similar proposal, which would authorize a merger of two or more professional football leagues and which would protect football contests between secondary schools from professional football telecasts. In my opinion, enactment of this legislation would make possible a plan for major league professional football, which has the support of millions of sports fans. It would also be beneficial to the colleges and high schools as well. There is strong interest in this legislation throughout Kansas. Professional football fans, particularly in Eastern Kansas, have a great interest in Lamar Hunt's Kansas City Chiefs.

If legislation is not enacted, there will be great reluctance among the presidents of the twenty-four clubs comprising the National Football League and American Football League to proceed with any plan to develop a single league. There are many benefits this single-league plan will bring to the public, fans of professional football clubs, the players and other interested parties.

The basic purpose of this legislation is to clarify the status under the anti-trust laws of the announced plan to bring into existence a single, nationwide professional football league, consisting of all present clubs of both the National Football League and the American Football League. My bill, and other similar ones, would accomplish this objective by declaring that the simple act of all clubs involved in bringing their operations under a single league will not, in itself, be subject to challenge under the anti-trust laws.

The report which accompanies the Senate-passed bill, S. 3817, indicates that no anti-trust immunity would be extended to the proposed single league that does not now apply to the existing professional football leagues. The only item omitted from application of the anti-trust laws would be the agreement among the member clubs of the two leagues to combine into a single league. All other applica-

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tions of the anti-trust laws to professional sports, which various versions of the "Sports Bill" have attempted to clarify, would remain as they are. Others who have testified are in agreement in this respect.

There is little question that Professional Football has widespread public support. Pro football executives feel their plan meets the basic demands of the fans and the objectives outlined by interested parties in both the American and National Football Leagues. According to their testimony, professional football operations will be preserved in the 23 cities and 25 stadiums where such operations are presently being conducted. Without the plan, it is felt franchise moves and/or franchise failures will occur as a matter of course within the next few years, and a contraction rather than expansion would be the ultimate result.

A significant provision of my bill, and one of particular interest to every high school official, would extend to the high schools of America the same protection against Friday night or Saturday telecasts of professional football games as is presently given college football. The provision is as follows:

"Section 1 of this Act shall not apply to any joint agreement described in section 1 (a) of this Act which permits the telecasting of all or a substantial part of any professional football game on any Friday after 6 o'clock postmeridian or on any Saturday during the period beginning on the second Friday in September and ending on the second Saturday in December in any year from any telecasting station located within seventy-five miles of the game site of any intercollegiate or interscholastic football contest schedule to be played on such date if ---

"(1) such intercollegiate football contest is between institutions of higher learning, both of which confer degrees upon students following completion of sufficient credit hours to equal a four-year course, or

"(2) in the case of an interscholastic football contest, such contest is between secondary schools, both of which are accredited or certified under the laws of the State or States in which they are situated and offer courses continuing through the twelfth grade of the standard school curriculum, or the equivalent, or

"(3) such intercollegiate or interscholastic football contest and such game site were announced through publication in a daily newspaper of general circulation prior to March 1 of such year as being regularly scheduled for such day and place."

In view of these and other obvious benefits to be derived, I strongly urge the Committee to act favorably and immediately.

Thank you.