



STATE OF FLORIDA

JAMES UTHMEIER ATTORNEY GENERAL

June 19, 2026

Robert D. Manfred, Jr.
Commissioner
Major League Baseball
1271 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Dear Mr. Manfred:

Major League Baseball (“MLB” or “the League”) just warned three San Francisco Giants pitchers for etching Bible verses on their caps.¹ Landen Roupp, one of the pitchers who received MLB’s warning, said the Bible verses on his hat were “about God’s covenant and ... his faithfulness and his mercy.”² The verses describe God establishing the rainbow as a sign of His covenant with all humanity.³ MLB claims that Roupp’s actions violated the League’s rules.⁴ But it appears that MLB has a history of selectively enforcing its rules; players who promote secular messages get a pass, while players who promote religious messages get a reprimand. If this pattern or practice of religious discrimination is true, then it could amount to a de facto League policy, which would violate Florida law. My office will not tolerate religious discrimination against any players in Florida.

The Florida Civil Rights Act prohibits employers from discriminating against an employee with respect to “compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment” because of the employee’s “religion.”⁵ The Act also prohibits employers from “limit[ing], segregat[ing], or classify[ing] employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment

¹ Karl Rasmussen, *MLB Warns Giants Pitchers Who Wore Bible Verses on Caps During ‘Pride Night,’* SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (Jun. 15, 2026), [si.com/mlb/giants/giants-pitchers-warned-bible-verses-on-caps-during-pride-night](https://www.si.com/mlb/giants/giants-pitchers-warned-bible-verses-on-caps-during-pride-night).

² *Id.*

³ See Genesis 9:12-16.

⁴ *MLB warns players about altering uniforms after Giants pitchers add Bible verses on Pride Night,* AP NEWS (Jun. 16, 2026, 11:30 AM), apnews.com/article/giants-mlb-caps-pride-night-2055e9e6cadb11033c0afcee68fd66bc.

⁵ § 760.10(1)(a), Fla. Stat.

opportunities” or adversely affect their status as an employee based on, among others, their religious beliefs.⁶

Likewise, MLB’s Workplace Code of Conduct says that “MLB does not tolerate harassment or discrimination based on ... religion.”⁷ Discrimination, the League claims, is “against MLB’s values and will not be tolerated anywhere in the Major or Minor Leagues.”⁸ The Workplace Code of Conduct defines “discrimination” as including “any adverse job-related decision or less favorable treatment of an individual because of a protected characteristic,” which includes religion.⁹ It says bullying—“abusive or intimidating behavior based on ... religion”—may be harassment or discrimination.

A pattern or practice of selectively enforcing its rules to benefit favored secular beliefs over disfavored religious beliefs would not only potentially violate Florida civil rights law, but it would also violate the League’s own policies. And a practice of claiming not to discriminate based on religion while discriminating based on religion could further amount to an unfair or deceptive trade practice in violation of the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act.¹⁰

In a statement, MLB defended its actions by claiming that it violates the League’s rules for players to write on their uniforms or equipment, regardless of the content of the message.¹¹ MLB claims its actions are a “routine” warning and had nothing to do with the content of the message.¹² Yet anyone who watches baseball knows these warnings are anything but routine. And content surely matters. MLB regularly allows players to write on their equipment, even if on paper, players are not allowed to do so. In 2019, for example, a Cincinnati Reds player wrote on his cap in tribute to a nearby mass shooting.¹³ And in 2020, MLB evidently added new, sweeping exceptions to its uniform rules by allowing players to “support social justice and diversity and inclusion.”¹⁴ These policy changes included permitting players to add Black Lives

⁶ § 760.10(1)(b), Fla. Stat.

⁷ MLB-MLBPA WORKPLACE CODE OF CONDUCT, img.mlbstatic.com/mlb-images/image/upload/fl_attachment/mlb/xgx4wn1jayqocaa7gvtu.pdf (last visited Jun. 18, 2026).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ See § 501.201 *et seq.*, Fla. Stat.

¹¹ *MLB warns players about altering uniforms after Giants pitchers add Bible verses on Pride Night*, *supra* note 5 (“We respect players’ right to free expression. However, writing of any kind, with any message, is prohibited per Major League Baseball’s Uniform Regulations which provides in part that, ‘(a) Player may not write, attach, affix, embroider or otherwise display nicknames or messages on apparel or playing equipment....’”).

¹² Lilia Wood and David Li, *MLB warns players not to deface uniforms in wake of silent Pride Night protest*, NBC NEWS (Jun. 16, 2026, 5:00 PM), [nbcnews.com/news/us-news/mlb-warns-players-not-deface-uniforms-wake-silent-pride-night-protest-rena350382](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/mlb-warns-players-not-deface-uniforms-wake-silent-pride-night-protest-rena350382).

¹³ Sarah Brookbank, *Cincinnati Reds’ Joey Votto honors Dayton following mass shooting*, CINCINNATI ENQUIRER (Aug. 7, 2019, 1:07 PM), [cincinnati.com/story/news/2019/08/07/dayton-shooting-reds-joey-votto-hat/1942305001/](https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2019/08/07/dayton-shooting-reds-joey-votto-hat/1942305001/).

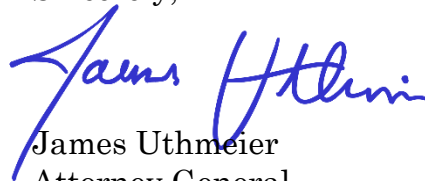
¹⁴ Alyson Footer, *Nats, Yanks unify to promote social justice*, MLB (Jul. 24, 2020) mlb.com/news/mlb-players-social-justice-inclusion-diversity.

Matter patches to their sleeves.¹⁵ MLB allowed Black Lives Matter to be etched into the pitcher’s mound.¹⁶ The changes also permitted players to use their cleats to display social justice messages and causes.¹⁷ As a final example, in 2021, several pitchers from the Toronto Blue Jays and Los Angeles Dodgers wrote “51” on their caps to honor a fellow player.¹⁸ Another player wrote on his bat knob, which has now been memorialized in a baseball card.¹⁹

MLB therefore appears to applaud—even change its rules for—the ideological beliefs it prefers, but targets players who express religious views the League doesn’t like. The MLB’s apparent history of selective nonenforcement suggests that it applied its uniform rule uniquely against Roupp and the other pitchers simply because they expressed a religious belief. A League-wide practice of this sort is both wrong and may violate Florida law.

Florida is home to two MLB teams, and half of MLB’s teams do their spring training in Florida.²⁰ Any religious discrimination by MLB occurring in Florida against any of the players on those teams must cease. Because the League’s erratic enforcement of its rules appears discriminatory, my office is issuing the attached subpoena. We look forward to your cooperation.

Sincerely,



James Uthmeier
Attorney General

¹⁵ *MLB to allow Black Lives Matter, social justice jersey patches*, ESPN (Jul. 22, 2020, 6:36 AM), [espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/29519284/mlb-allow-black-lives-matter-social-justice-jersey-patches](https://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/29519284/mlb-allow-black-lives-matter-social-justice-jersey-patches).

¹⁶ *Black Lives Matter/MLB stencil will debut on the mound Thursday when Nationals host Yankees*, ESPN (Jul. 22, 2020, 3:23 PM), [espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/29518115/black-lives-matter-mlb-stencil-debut-mound-thursday-nationals-host-yankees](https://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/29518115/black-lives-matter-mlb-stencil-debut-mound-thursday-nationals-host-yankees).

¹⁷ *MLB LIFTS CLEAT RESTRICTIONS FOR 2020 SEASON (ONLY)*, WPW (Jul. 23, 2020), [whatproswear.com/baseball/news/mlb-lifts-cleat-restrictions-for-2020-season-only](https://www.whatproswear.com/baseball/news/mlb-lifts-cleat-restrictions-for-2020-season-only).

¹⁸ Keegan Matheson, *With No. 51 on caps, Blue Jays relievers join Dodgers in honoring Vesia’s family*, MLB (Nov. 1, 2025), [mlb.com/news/blue-jays-honor-alex-vesia-on-caps](https://www.mlb.com/news/blue-jays-honor-alex-vesia-on-caps).

¹⁹ Larry Holder, *Eagles fan Mike Trout wrote Super Bowl LIX score on his bat knob — now it’s in a baseball card* (Jun. 5, 2025), [nytimes.com/athletic/6405609/2025/06/05/mike-trout-eagles-super-bowl-card/](https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6405609/2025/06/05/mike-trout-eagles-super-bowl-card/).

²⁰ *MLB Spring Training Grapefruit League*, MLB, [mlb.com/spring-training/grapefruit-league](https://www.mlb.com/spring-training/grapefruit-league) (last visited Jun. 18, 2026).