

Jackie Robinson West  
US Little League Champions  
PO Box 19704  
Chicago, Illinois 60619

March 12, 2015

Stephen D. Keener  
President & CEO  
Little League International  
539 US Route 15 Hwy, P.O. Box 3485  
Williamsport, PA 17701-0485

Dear Mr. Keener:

We are writing to convey our disappointment and disagreement with Little League International's decision to punish the children of Chicago's Jackie Robinson West Little League baseball team (JRW), United States Little League Champions.

These young men were able to achieve such success and garner overwhelmingly positive media coverage. This, during a time when most African American young men are being portrayed negatively in the news, particularly in their hometown of Chicago, where street violence runs rampant. JRW not only reignited America's past-time, the love of baseball back into the hearts of the African American community; just as their namesake, they crossed racial "boundaries" and became the pride of America, a testament of the American dream of being rewarded for honest, hard work.

We remain very concerned about the fairness of your supposed investigation that was held to uncover these alleged violations. Were all Little League International play-off teams investigated in the same manner, after vetting by the League throughout the season and paly-offs? Why were the children of JRW singled out for such an investigation? Were the findings of this investigation so egregious that these children should have everything they worked so hard for stripped from them; after all the wins? Does this punishment fit the alleged violation that you admit does not represent wrongdoing on the part of the children?

How is it that JRW played 22 games last season, complying with all league certifications without incident, and the alleged violations were not uncovered until 168 days AFTER the Little League World Series? How did Little League International not know of these supposed violations that would so significantly affect the outcome of a championship playoff? In fact, there were *reports* that you *investigated* the claims of Chris Janes (now undergoing legal battles of his own) and found no infractions, so why did you later strip the champions of their hard earned title? It appears, there was no due process in this matter, as Little League International decided to inform its partners and the news media of its decisions before presenting any evidence or notifications to JRW officials, parents or the children affected by this the most. These actions assassinated the character of these children, without their knowledge or ability to defend until this crushing news

was spread through social media, traditional media and worst of all, from the negative response garnered from their peers at school. The psychological and emotional ramifications have yet to be fully realized.

We could understand if this was about performance enhancing drug use or age misrepresentation, but this was about boundaries. Our children have overcome so many obstacles; distressed communities, a city wracked with violence and school closings, to have reached this pinnacle of success, a decision of this magnitude has caused irreparable psychological and emotional damage.

We strongly urge you to reconsider your decision and immediately restore the United States Championship to Jackie Robinson West

Sincerely

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Name

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Address

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Email

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Telephone