

## Guest Opinion

By DeMaurice Smith Director, NFL Players Association



### Response to Trump attacks on athlete free speech

The peaceful demonstrations by some of our players have generated a wide array of responses. Those opinions are protected speech and a freedom that has been paid for by the sacrifice of men and women throughout history. This expression of speech has generated thoughtful discussions in our locker rooms and in board rooms. However, the line that marks the balance between the rights of every citizen in our great country gets crossed when someone is told to just “shut up and play.”

NFL players do incredible things to contribute to their communities. NFL players are a part of a legacy of athletes in all sports who throughout history chose to be informed about the issues that impact them and their communities. They chose—and still choose today—to do something about those issues rather than comfortably living

in the bubble of sports. Their decision is no different from the one made by countless others who refused to let “what they do” define or restrict “who they are” as Americans.

No man or woman should ever have to choose a job that forces them to surrender their rights. No worker nor any athlete, professional or not, should be forced to become less than human when it comes to protecting their basic health and safety. We understand that our job as a union is not to win a popularity contest and it comes with a duty to protect the rights of our members. For that we make no apologies and never will.

DeMaurice Smith has served as executive director of the NFL Players Association since 2009. The Players Association is an affiliate of the national AFL-CIO.

## ...Faith group looks at Nabisco outsourcing

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duction. Workers at other Nabisco bakeries, including Portland’s, have suffered temporary layoff as their plants closed down for a week at a time — while shelves remain full of Mexican-made Nabisco products.

The BCTGM contract covering about 2,000 Nabisco work-

ers at five U.S. bakeries expired Feb. 29, 2016, and 19 months later, the union is no closer to agreement with the company. For BCTGM, the sticking points are Mondelēz’ refusal to commit to no further layoffs or plant closures, its plan to diminish health benefits, and its proposal to withdraw from the union-sponsored pension plan, which is headed for insolvency.

The two sides have not met to negotiate since mid-2016. Yet there’s been no work stoppage — neither strike nor lockout. Nor has Mondelēz unilaterally implemented the final offer it presented last December. For the time being, Mondelēz is continuing to abide by the terms of its previous collective bargaining agreement with BCTGM.

BCTGM leaders hope a new Mondelēz CEO will break the stalemate: Dirk Van de Put, who is currently CEO of Canadian french fry giant McCain Foods, will replace Mondelēz CEO Irene Rosenfeld in November.

## ...NLRB nominee has ties to PATCO

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ing requirements.

Days before Emanuel’s confirmation, Trump also nominated former federal management-side labor lawyer Peter Robb to be the NLRB’s general counsel, its top enforcement officer.

Robb, now an attorney in Vermont, wrote the briefs and made the arguments to get President Ronald Reagan to fire the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) members after they went on strike in 1981 over safety issues.

Robb has been critical of recent NLRB decisions including protecting workers’ rights to use social media, the Board’s recently enacted rules removing some employer roadblocks to union representation elections, and a policy pushed by Griffin to hold both franchise holders — your local McDonald’s — and parent firms — McDonald’s headquarters — jointly responsible for obeying or breaking labor law.

If confirmed, Robb would succeed Richard Griffin, whose term expires in November. Before entering the NLRB post during the Obama Administration, Griffin was general counsel for the International Union of Operating Engineers.

No hearing date has been set.

(Editor’s Note: Press Associates Inc. contributed to this report.)





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