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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 23, 2005

Mr. Allan H. "Bud" Selig
Commissioner
Major League Baseball
245 Park Avenue, 31st Floor
New York, New York 10167

Dear Commissioner Selig:

It has recently come to my attention that several Chicagoans with a great interest in baseball have organized a petition drive seeking the posthumous re-instatement of George "Buck" Weaver into baseball. As you know, Mr. Weaver was an outstanding shortstop and third basemen who played for the White Sox on the south side of Chicago.

In the 1919 World Series, Buck Weaver played a flawless third base and hit for an average of .324. Late the next season, reports surfaced that the Series between the White Sox and the Cincinnati Reds was thrown in a conspiracy among eight players and professional gamblers. Charles A. Comiskey, owner of the White Sox, removed all of the players allegedly involved from participation in the late season pennant race, consequently eliminating the White Sox from contention. In October of 1920 the press reported the confessions of outfielder "Shoeless Joe" Jackson and pitcher Eddie Cicotte. Later the state of Illinois indicted the eight players on conspiracy charges.

At trial, the jury acquitted all of the players. It is interesting to note that the trial judge, Hugo Friend, declared that he would not allow a conviction of one of the defendants, Mr. Weaver, even if the jury came back with that determination. Following the jury's verdict in August of 1921, your predeccesor, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, permanently banned the players from professional baseball.

At the time of the 1919 World Series, the indictments, the trial, and for years following, there has been no evidence that Buck Weaver participated in fixing the 1919 World Series. There is evidence that he was present at two meetings -- one at the Ansonia Hotel in New York City, and one at the Sinton Hotel in Cincinnati -- at which Weaver expressed his skepticism of the scheme. The rule which Commissioner Landis used to ban Weaver was an edict that he unilaterally created the day after the acquittals and which was not in existence at the time of the offense. Also, this arbitary pronouncement was inapplicable to others who may have known about the fix but were absent from meetings.

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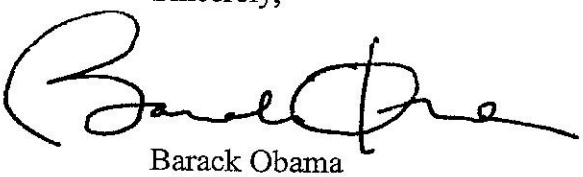
Contemporary news accounts, interviews, and reports as well as serious historical research has reached a consensus that Buck Weaver was innocent of conspiring to fix the 1919 World Series. Subsequent to Mr. Weaver's banishment, he made several attempts to secure a formal hearing before the Commissioner's office to clear his name. Efforts to gain re-instatement were all ignored by the authorities of Major League Baseball. On January 31, 1956 Buck Weaver died of a heart attack on a street on the south side of Chicago still believing in his own innocence and fundamental honesty.

I respectfully request that your office conduct a posthumous investigation and hearing of the claims of Mr. Weaver's family and those interested Chicagoans and others who believe fervently that this honorable man was treated unjustly. I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



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