FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
May 20, 2020  
Contact: Linda Chavez  
(703) 442-0066 ext 115

CEO Condemns Rooney Rule Changes
NFL invites litigation with new changes on minority hiring

(Falls Church, VA) The Center for Equal Opportunity (CEO) today strongly condemned changes to the NFL’s Rooney Rule requiring teams to interview more minority candidates for head coach openings, coordinator jobs, general manager positions, and requirements for the league office and clubs to now interview minorities and/or females for any senior level position.

CEO executive director Rudy Gersten said: “The Rooney Rule has always been problematic and this week’s changes make them more so. The Rooney Rule violates Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibiting racial discrimination in private employment. The statute covers hiring and makes it illegal for an employer to ‘classify his . . . applicants for employment’ in a way that denies equal treatment on the basis of race.”

CEO chairman Linda Chavez added: “The NFL is inviting court challenges to the Rooney Rule. Racial classifications in hiring are always wrong. If the requirement was that at least one white candidate always be interviewed by teams, an uproar would ensue, and rightly so. We urge the NFL to do the right thing, abolish the Rooney Rule, and treat all applicants for employment equally regardless of race.”

The Center for Equal Opportunity, founded in 1995, is a national, nonprofit research and educational organization that studies issues related to civil rights, bilingual education, and assimilation.

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