

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To keep professional sports franchises in their home communities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MURPHY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To keep professional sports franchises in their home communities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Home Team Act of
5 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Professional sports franchises have a signifi-
9 cant economic and cultural impact on their local
10 communities.

1 (2) The relocation of a professional sports fran-
2 chise abandons the home community and fan base of
3 the franchise that is largely responsible for the
4 growth and development of the franchise.

5 (3) The use of public funds, through a nego-
6 tiated relocation or threat to relocate of a profes-
7 sional sports franchise, to pay for new sports sta-
8 diums have a substantial and detrimental effect on
9 State and local governments and their taxpayers.

10 (4) The building of a stadium to secure a fran-
11 chise in their new community may displace local
12 residents with little consideration to their needs.

13 (5) Article I, section 8, clause 3 of the Con-
14 stitution of the United States grants Congress the
15 power to regulate interstate commerce.

16 (6) Professional sports franchises have a sub-
17 stantial and direct effect upon interstate commerce
18 because—

19 (A) professional sports games are broad-
20 cast on television and streamed around the
21 country and across the world;

22 (B) visiting teams and fan bases travel
23 from State to State to compete in or watch
24 games, purchasing tickets for travel, lodging,
25 food, and other items; and

1 (C) American professional sports leagues,
2 recognizing the interstate nature of the reve-
3 nues generated by the professional sports busi-
4 ness, have agreed to revenue sharing models,
5 whereby the revenue generated from a local
6 game is shared amongst all the sports fran-
7 chises in the league across States and for Cana-
8 dian sports franchises as well.

9 **SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP BANS**
10 **AND OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE.**

11 (a) PROHIBITION.—A league, operating in or affect-
12 ing interstate commerce, may not, as part of league re-
13 quirements or agreements—

14 (1) prohibit ownership of a franchise by a gov-
15 ernment entity or members of the general public; or

16 (2) prohibit the transfer of a franchise to a gov-
17 ernment entity or members of the general public.

18 (b) OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with para-
20 graphs (2) and (3), a franchise owner may not move
21 the franchise from their home community, move the
22 franchise across State lines, or eliminate the fran-
23 chise unless the franchise owner offers an entity
24 specified in paragraph (2) a fair opportunity to pur-
25 chase such franchise.

1 (2) PRIORITY.—A fair opportunity to purchase
2 a franchise pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be pro-
3 vided, in descending priority, to the following enti-
4 ties:

5 (A) A local government entity or a home
6 community cooperative.

7 (B) A nonprofit organization that operates
8 in the community or a public-private partner-
9 ship composed of a local government entity or
10 State government entity with a home commu-
11 nity cooperative or nonprofit organization
12 headquartered in such unit of local government
13 or State.

14 (C) A private person, private consortium,
15 or company that resides in the community or
16 operates in the community.

17 (3) FAIR OPPORTUNITY.—In carrying out this
18 subsection, a franchise owner shall—

19 (A) provide proper notice regarding the
20 proposed new location of the franchise or pro-
21 posed franchise elimination;

22 (B) offer the franchise for purchase for
23 fair market value; and

24 (C) accept an offer made by an entity de-
25 scribed under paragraph (2) if that offer is the

1 amount that is a fair price as determined under
2 subsection (c) or more than that amount.

3 (c) APPRAISERS.—

4 (1) APPRAISERS.—The Secretary of the Treas-
5 ury shall establish a team of professionally trained
6 appraisers to evaluate a fair price for a franchise.

7 (2) DEDUCTION.—The evaluation of a fair price
8 undertaken pursuant to paragraph (1) shall deduct
9 from the appraisal amount the total amount of any
10 government payment, credit, or subsidy provided for
11 the construction of any stadium where the franchise
12 played the majority of their home games.

13 (d) ENFORCEMENT.—

14 (1) CIVIL PENALTY.—The Attorney General
15 shall assess against a franchise owner in violation of
16 this section a fine of \$30,000 for each day the owner
17 is in violation of this section.

18 (2) PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION.—A unit of
19 local government or a State may bring a civil action
20 for violation of this section in an appropriate district
21 court against a franchise owner for injunctive and
22 monetary relief.

23 (e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act shall be
25 construed to preempt, diminish, or interfere with the

1 right of employees to collectively bargain over terms
2 and conditions of employment.

3 (2) EXISTING AGREEMENTS.—Nothing in this
4 Act shall be construed to preempt, diminish, or
5 interfere with a collective bargaining agreement that
6 is in place on the date of the enactment of this Act.

7 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 (1) COMMUNITY.—The term “community”, with
9 respect to a franchise, means the metropolitan sta-
10 tistical area, as determined by the Office of Manage-
11 ment and Budget, in which the franchise plays the
12 greatest number of regular season home games with-
13 in its league.

14 (2) CONSORTIUM.—The term “consortium”
15 means a group of private investors created specifi-
16 cally for a particular transaction of acquiring a
17 sports franchise.

18 (3) FRANCHISE.—The term “franchise” means
19 a member professional sports team of a league.

20 (4) FRANCHISE OWNER.—The term “franchise
21 owner” means a person who owns a franchise.

22 (5) HOME COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE.—The
23 term “home community cooperative”, with respect to
24 a franchise, means an autonomous association of
25 persons united voluntarily to meet their common

1 economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations
2 through a jointly owned and democratically con-
3 trolled enterprise that is based in the community in
4 which the franchise plays the greatest number of
5 regular season home games within its league.

6 (6) LEAGUE.—The term “league” includes the
7 National Football League, the National Basketball
8 Association, Major League Baseball, the National
9 Hockey League, Major League Soccer, the Women’s
10 National Basketball Association, and the National
11 Women’s Soccer League.

12 (7) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITY.—The term
13 “local government entity”, with respect to a fran-
14 chise, means any unit of local government with juris-
15 diction over land use decisions in the location in
16 which the franchise plays the greatest number of
17 regular season home games within its league.

18 (8) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The term
19 “nonprofit organization” means any organization
20 registered as a public charity by the Internal Rev-
21 enue Service.

22 (9) PRIVATE COMPANY.—The term “private
23 company” means a business entity the securities of
24 which do not trade on public markets.

1 (10) PROPER NOTICE.—The term “proper no-
2 tice”, with respect to proposed relocation or elimi-
3 nation of a franchise, means notice that is provided
4 not later than one year prior to the commencement
5 of the season in which the franchise is to play home
6 games in the proposed new location or the date of
7 franchise elimination to all interested parties, the
8 news media, and on all social media platforms of the
9 franchise, and includes—

10 (A) identification of the proposed new
11 home location, if applicable;

12 (B) a summary of the reasons for the pro-
13 posed relocation or franchise elimination; and

14 (C) the date on which the proposed reloca-
15 tion or franchise elimination would be effective.

16 (11) SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM.—The term “so-
17 cial media platform” means a website or internet
18 medium that—

19 (A) permits a person to become a reg-
20 istered user, establish an account, or create a
21 profile for the purpose of allowing users to cre-
22 ate, share, and view user-generated content
23 through such an account or profile;

1 (B) enables one or more users to generate
2 content that can be viewed by other users of the
3 website or medium; and

4 (C) primarily serves as a medium for users
5 to interact with content generated by other
6 users of the website or medium.