

National Black Church Initiative

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The National Black Church Initiative Implores NFL to Coach Players Off the Field *Domestic Violence Statistics Alarming, Need to Be Addressed by League*

Washington DC – The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a faith-based coalition of 34,000 churches comprised of 15 denominations and 15.7 million African Americans, today is offering its partnership to the National Football League (NFL) in an effort to curb alarming rates of domestic violence associated with its players.

On December 1 the NFL received its latest wake-up call in Kansas City, when linebacker Jovan Belcher took his own life along with his family's in a tragic murder-suicide. Sadly Belcher's case is not unique – in 2012, 21 of 32 NFL teams employed a player with a domestic violence or sexual assault charge on his record which represents nearly 2 percent of the entire roster for the season. These incidents represent a significant portion of the staggering 1.3 million women who are impacted by domestic violence each year in the U.S.

These numbers only tell a part of the story – not only do nearly 45 percent of domestic violence incidents go unreported, but professional athletes have notoriously low conviction rates. A Los Angeles Times investigative report found that athletes charged with domestic violence were only convicted 36 percent of the time, compared with a 77 percent general conviction rate.

“What happened to Jovan Belcher and his family is both horrendous and preventable, and our prayers are with their loved ones” said Rev Anthony Evans, President of NBCI. “NFL players’ contribution to domestic violence rates in American is alarming, but thankfully it can also be addressed with the help of surrounding faith communities and league leadership.”

NBCI is pledging to work hand in the hand with the NFL and the young men it employs to address the root of the problem and connect players with the strength of the black faith community. Staff and volunteers will create programs to be a ready and willing resource to guide affected families and equip them with the communication and life skills they need to win off the field.

“For the sake of every family member and stakeholder involved, we hope that the NFL will be a willing partner in this effort to curb domestic violence. In the aftermath of each tragedy lies an opportunity, and we hope that leaders will work with us to make sure to take every step possible to avoid another Jovan Belcher tragedy.”

About NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI’s mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI’s programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work. Visit our website at www.naltblackchurch.com.