

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 6, 2019

Robert D. Manfred Jr.
Commissioner of Baseball
Major League Baseball
245 Park Avenue, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10167

Dear Commissioner Manfred:

We write to express our opposition to Major League Baseball's recent proposal to eliminate the Major League affiliations of dozens of Minor League Baseball clubs, including the Lowell Spinners club, the Class A Short Season New York-Penn League affiliate of the Boston Red Sox. This scheme would cause significant economic damage to the City of Lowell, eliminate an important piece of the community's cultural footprint, and disappoint baseball fans of all ages – all while doing long-term damage to the game's ability to keep and grow its fan base.

For over 20 years, the Lowell Spinners have brought fun and entertainment to baseball fans across the City of Lowell, the Merrimack Valley region, and the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The team's important affiliation with the Red Sox, and its proximity to Boston and New Hampshire, have allowed Red Sox fans from all over the region to enjoy a Spinners game and see players that will move on to play for the Red Sox and other Major League Baseball teams. The Lowell Spinners provide an affordable family outing and have remained a strong partner for the entire community. The team's name pays homage to the City's history as the home of the American Industrial Revolution, and the mascot, the Canaligator, references Lowell's six miles of canals.¹

In addition to the local cultural importance of the Lowell Spinners, the club has maintained a vital economic partnership with the City. The team has also made numerous charitable contributions across the community and to little league baseball teams all over the region. The park is centrally located near the University of Massachusetts Lowell campus and close to the City's downtown area. The Lowell Spinners and LeLacheuer Park employ nearly 200 workers – many of whom are from the region – who would also be harmed if this proposal were to go through.

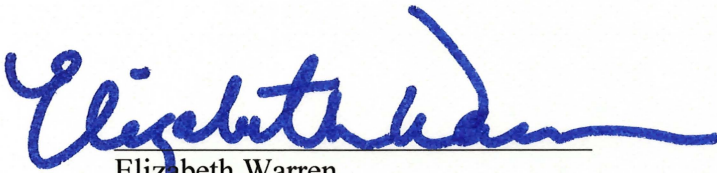
Major League Baseball's threat to end the Major League affiliations of the Spinners and 41 other teams is a slap in the face to Lowell, and to communities across the country. In 2017, the

¹ MiLB.com, Gator aid; Lowell puts fresh spin on logos, Feb 1, 2017, <https://www.milb.com/milb/news/gator-aid-lowell-puts-fresh-spin-on-logos/c-214817394>.

Spinners and the City of Lowell invested almost \$1 million to upgrade the field's lights and the playing surface and make other improvements to ensure that stadium quality exceeded the requirements for a minor league team affiliated with the Red Sox.² And Congress, in May 2018, created a minimum wage exemption for Minor League Baseball players – which we continue to oppose – ostensibly to help reduce costs and ensure the viability of minor league teams across the country.³

On behalf of our constituents in Lowell and baseball fans across the Commonwealth, we ask you to strongly reconsider this ill-advised proposal. The economic and cultural damage from this proposal will be felt by the teams, their employees, baseball fans, and local communities that have remained strong local partners to these teams for decades. We reiterate our strong opposition to any efforts to eliminate or disaffiliate the Spinners and dozens of other Minor League teams.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

² The Lowell Sun, Lowell Spinners out to win with ballpark upgrades, Oct. 1, 2017, <https://www.lowellsun.com/2017/10/01/lowell-spinners-out-to-win-with-ballpark-upgrades/>.

³ Boston.com, Minor league baseball players to lose minimum wage protection, March 23, 2018, <https://www.boston.com/sports/mlb/2018/03/23/minor-league-baseball-minimum-wage-protection>.