

# Don't Be A problem Be A Solution – The NFL On Its Knees

I was note doodling the other day trying to stimulate the brain a little. It's what I do, but in this case, it was not too stimulating. I decided to post my notes to Facebook and take the pulse of my FB friends. I didn't get too many fire bombs thrown at me. I never liked singing to the choir anyway.

**This is what I posted to Facebook:**

The [National Football League \(NFL\) minimum salary](#) for 2018 is \$480,000.00. That means the lowest player on the depth chart who most likely did not graduate from college and may spend an entire season riding the pine makes about [9 times the US median income](#). An Army Private with less than 2 years of active service is paid \$19, 659.00 per year. A West Point graduate entering service makes \$37, 292.00 per year. A Staff Sergeant with 6 years of service and most likely supporting a family makes a whopping \$38,059.00 per year. An Army Major with 6 years of service makes \$74,862.00 per year. The NFL league minimum for 6 years of experience is \$790,000.00.

The combined salaries listed above for active military service is \$169,872.00 per year. That is just a little more than one quarter of the salary of single NFL rookie whose never played a professional down.

I chose the military pay scale for this illustration because that is my background. For the record, the median annual pay for a public school teacher is \$55,259.00. That means half of them make less than that. The average salary for a police officer is \$49,808.00. For a Firefighter its \$45,969.00. The average for an EMT is \$34,000.00. The average for a

Registered Nurse is \$66,640.00. The combined salaries of our nation's most critical servants is \$251,676.00. Just barely more than one half the cost of an NFL rookie.

For \$421,548.00, less than the minimum pay of a first year NFL player, we can field a professional Army a squad willing to put their lives on the line defending us (even football players). We can provide a school teacher for our children, a police officer to protect us, a fire fighter risking life to save our property, and EMT to save our lives on the way to the hospital and a registered nurse to care for us when we get there.

**So, kneeling fist raising NFL player. Tell me again about social justice.**

I'm told to accept that kneeling or whatever other gesture one might make is meant to bring awareness to social justice issues. Social justice can mean many different things and has over time. Equal treatment under the law, etc. When I look at the [data base of NFL players arrested](#) compiled from public records and media reports by USA Today sports writer Brent Schrottenboer, I imagined there may be some personal justice system issues here. But, put that aside and let's not judge.

I know that comparing salaries from different occupations is not a basis for drawing too many conclusions about anything. For me, it illustrates a societal view of the world. Wealthy people, many of whom may be paupers like me within a year or two of leaving the NFL ([Sports Illustrated How and Why Athletes Go Broke](#)), often have a somewhat inflated view of themselves or of their importance to most anything except their exceptional athletic ability. Athleticism and special treatment cultivated from childhood. In this regard, they are not unlike entertainers. For most of their existence, they've existed in a walled off world typically far from reality. It's hard to effect change when life has not taught you where the change needs to start.

Now, let's take this issue back to its origin.

*"I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," Kaepernick told NFL Media in an exclusive interview after the game. "To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder."* Colin Kaepernick

On multiple occasions, I've heard NFL players when challenged declare that this has never been about disrespecting the flag. Doesn't that conflict with their founder's declaration. Regardless, to take a knee or make any other gesture when the national colors are displayed and the national anthem played is disrespectful. No matter the declared reasoning, it cannot be rationalized. It is a display of disrespect and disloyalty to our country. God gave you the free will to choose your way, but He did not relieve you of the consequences of your choices. There are movies I won't go see because the people starring in them have chosen to share their political views while insulting large numbers of people who ultimately pay their exorbitant salaries. Last year I switched off my favorite NFL pre-game show right in the middle of a certain color commentator's comments about the President and the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment. What I wanted to hear was thoughts on football. Last season, I didn't watch their program again or another game. It didn't hurt my wallet one bit. When political activism is divorced from football, I may tune in again. For now, however, I am enjoying baseball and looking forward to the college football season.

I've also heard that it is about freedom of speech. According to some, if team owners forced players to stand for the flag and anthem they would be taking away their freedom of speech. Freedom of speech is guaranteed us by the US Constitution. There is a big however. When paid professional football

players take the field for a game, they are employees. Employees don't have a Constitutional right to free speech or freedom of expression at work. Constitutional right to free speech means the government cannot restrict free speech. It all comes down to what the team owner allows or restricts. But, not to worry most of them straddle the fence as well. If their income takes another big hit this season, we'll see. Leave them be, I say. Let them kneel, fist pump, sit, stay in the locker room. Who cares?

If players have to be forced or coerced to stand for our flag and anthem, I don't want them to stand. I prefer honest disloyalty and disrespect to feigned respect. I prefer to know who they are not who they pretend to be. For me, I have a choice. I choose not to participate in your protests or be a spectator of your entertainment. See how easy this was?

The people mentioned at the beginning of this contribute daily to our country and our communities. They perform invaluable services enthusiastically for a pittance compared to what these protesting athletes get. I have a question for the players who continue to kneel. What have you done for communities in need? Take your wealth and fame and go do something rather than protesting. The government, politicians, and activists are not the solution. Truth be known, they are the problem. Always demanding that someone else do something is the problem. Try doing something rather than demanding that something be done. You know. Don't be a problem. Be a solution.

I wager the next chickenshit move for the NFL is to do away with pre-game posting of the national colors and playing the national anthem. Or at a minimum not televising them.

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