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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
 AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <https://commerce.senate.gov>

November 14, 2025

Robert D. Manfred, Jr.
 Commissioner of Baseball
 Major League Baseball
 1271 Avenue of the Americas
 New York, NY 10020

Dear Mr. Manfred:

Game fixing allegations are not new to baseball. 105 years ago, a Chicago grand jury indicted eight Chicago White Sox players for allegedly rigging the 1919 World Series.¹ Labeled “the Chicago Black Sox” in the press, the players were eventually acquitted by a Chicago jury, even though some had earlier confessed, and all eight were banned from baseball for life.²

Major League Baseball (MLB), and American sports generally, are facing a new integrity crisis. Last week, prosecutors in the Eastern District of New York unsealed an indictment against two pitchers for the Cleveland Guardians, accusing them of rigging their own pitches to make a profit.³ That indictment comes just a few weeks after prosecutors leveled similar allegations against coaches and players in the National Basketball Association (NBA).⁴ Ranking Member Cantwell and I sent a letter to the NBA requesting documents and information about that matter,⁵ and we now seek information from MLB about how the League is addressing alleged game manipulation and threats to baseball’s integrity.

The recent indictment alleges Cleveland Guardians players Emmanuel Clase and Luis Ortiz purposefully threw certain pitches for balls or strikes.⁶ Both players allegedly told friends of

¹ Associated Press, *Eight White Sox Are Indicted; Cicotte and Jackson Confess Gamblers Paid Them \$15,000*, N.Y. TRIB., Sept. 29, 1920, <https://perma.cc/66QL-KS5L?type=standard>.

² Bill Lamb, *The Black Sox Scandal, in 1919 CHICAGO WHITE SOX ESSAYS*, <https://sabr.org/journal/article/the-black-sox-scandal/> (last visited Nov. 13, 2025).

³ Indictment, *U.S. v. Clase de la Cruz*, No. 25-CR-346, at ¶ 1 (E.D.N.Y. Nov. 5, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/media/1417041/dl?inline>. All statements in this letter relating to Emmanuel Clase and Luis Ortiz alleged actions are only allegations. Clase and Ortiz are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

⁴ Indictment, *U.S. v. Earnest*, 25-CR-323 (E.D.N.Y. Oct. 16, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/media/1416611/dl>.

⁵ Letter from Ted Cruz, Chairman, Senate Comm. On Com., Sci., and Transp. and Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Senate Comm. On Com., Sci., and Transp., to Adam Silver, Comm’r, Nat’l Basketball Ass’n (Oct. 28, 2025), <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/services/files/AED531B8-B7E2-4C2A-B448-CABFC2316367>.

⁶ Indictment, *Clase de la Cruz*, *supra* note 3, at ¶ 1.

their plan and to place prop bets beforehand.⁷ Clase allegedly even made some bets himself.⁸ Perhaps most shockingly, this scheme lasted *more than two years* before MLB found out. On May 19, 2023, Clase, pitching in relief against the New York Mets, allegedly informed friends he would throw a pitch faster than 94.95 mph.⁹ He did, and his accomplices won \$27,000.¹⁰ Clase would go on to blow a save opportunity as the Guardians lost, 10-9, in extra innings.¹¹

In June 2023, Clase flung a pitch into the dirt in two separate games, well short of the strike zone.¹² While Cleveland fans were shouting in frustration, Clase was apparently cashing in. In both games, he allegedly sent texts notified his friends that he would throw balls.¹³ They placed prop bets on his pitches, winning a combined \$96,000.¹⁴ Across other games from 2023 to 2025, Clase and his accomplices are accused of winning at least \$400,000 through fraudulent bets.¹⁵

The indictment alleges that Clase flagrantly broke MLB rules for years. He allegedly often texted or called his accomplices during games,¹⁶ a practice specifically banned by MLB rules.¹⁷ On at least one occasion, he allegedly transferred money electronically through a go-between who then sent it to Clase's accomplices to bet.¹⁸ But Clase did not stop there. According to the indictment, in 2025, Clase recruited another Cleveland Guardians pitcher, Luis Ortiz, to rig pitches, too.¹⁹ Across at least two games in June, Ortiz is accused of deliberately throwing balls instead of strikes.²⁰ Clase allegedly told his friends beforehand, and the conspiracy made \$60,000 in fraudulent winnings.²¹

This is markedly more serious than other recent sports betting incidents in MLB. In 2024, for example, the league found that utility infielder Tucupita Marcano had placed 387 bets on baseball totaling more than \$150,000.²² For this, Marcano received a lifetime ban from MLB—

⁷ *Id.* at ¶ 13.

⁸ *Id.* at ¶¶ 13, 25.

⁹ *Id.* at ¶ 15

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Guardians 9, Mets 10, There's Mets magic in Lindor's walk-off winner*, MLB (May 19, 2023), <https://www.mlb.com/video/game/718119>.

¹² Indictment, *Clase de la Cruz*, *supra* note 3 at ¶¶ 16–17.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.* at ¶ 29.

¹⁶ *Id.* at ¶¶ 19–20, 22.

¹⁷ Statement of the Comm'r, *In re Houston Astros Decision*, at 3 (Jan. 13, 2020), <https://img.mlbstatic.com/mlb-images/image/upload/mlb/cglrhmlrwwbkacty2717.pdf> (discussing MLB Regulation 1-1, which prohibits the use or possession of telephones “in or near the dugout, in the bullpens or on the playing field once batting practice has begun.”).

¹⁸ Indictment, *Clase de la Cruz*, *supra* note 3, at ¶ 24.

¹⁹ *Id.* at ¶ 30.

²⁰ *Id.* at ¶¶ 31–33, 37, 39.

²¹ *Id.* at ¶¶ 30–40.

²² Ronald Blum, *MLB bans Tucupita Marcano for life for betting on baseball, four others get one-year suspensions*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (June 4, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/mlb-gambling-marcano-ban-948cce07c953494e7c7621e47692e1ba>.

the first active player in a century to receive a lifetime sanction.²³ An MLB investigation, prompted by a tip from a legal sportsbook and reportedly flagged by new monitoring measures put in place by MLB, found that 25 of Marcano's bets involved wagers on Pittsburgh Pirates games while Marcano was on the team's roster.²⁴

While the Pirates claimed there was "no evidence of any games being compromised, influenced, or manipulated" by Marcano,²⁵ the evidence of game manipulation this time around is clear. Which raises the question: how did MLB catch Marcano and ban him for life but failed to notice Clase allegedly rigging pitches for two years? The integrity of the game is paramount. MLB has every interest in ensuring baseball is free from influence and manipulation. As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Commerce Committee, we share that interest. But in light of these recent developments, MLB must clearly demonstrate how it is meeting its responsibility to safeguard America's pastime. To that end, as detailed below, we request that MLB provide documents and information on how it is addressing the allegations against Clase and Ortiz, as well as its broader approach to preventing manipulation in the sport.

An isolated incident of game rigging might be dismissed as an aberration, but the emergence of manipulation across multiple leagues suggests a deeper, systemic vulnerability. These developments warrant thorough scrutiny by Congress before misconduct issues become more widespread.

The Standing Rules of the Senate provide the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation the authority and duty to "review and study, on a continuing basis" issues relating to sports and commerce.²⁶ We request that you provide written responses to the questions below, as well as requested documents, no later than December 5, 2025, and in accordance with the attached instructions. All document requests refer to documents created between January 1, 2020, and the present.

1. How and when was MLB made aware of suspicious betting and game manipulation activity by Emmanuel Clase or Luis Ortiz? Provide documents sufficient to support your response.
2. Provide documents sufficient to show MLB's policies and procedures relating to sports betting, gambling, or game rigging by MLB or an affiliated team's players, coaches, employees, or owners.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ S. Rules XXV(1)(f); XXVI(8)(a)(2).

3. List any investigation into an MLB or affiliate team's players, coaches, employees, or owners for violating MLB rules relating to sports betting, gambling, or game rigging or related criminal conduct between January 1, 2020, and the present.
4. Provide all documents related to any investigation listed in response to Request 3, including:
 - a. Procedures and policies used to conduct any relevant investigation;
 - b. Documents received by third parties or otherwise collected by MLB during any relevant investigation; and
 - c. Findings, conclusions, and actions taken as a result of any relevant investigation.
5. Provide communications between MLB and any sports betting platform or sports gambling integrity monitor regarding suspicious or flagged sports wagers:
 - a. Placed by MLB's or an affiliated team's players, coaches, employees, or owners; or
 - b. Placed on MLB games or propositions related to MLB games, players, or teams.
6. Explain the extent to which MLB has addressed and plans to further address the alleged instances of sports betting, gambling, and game rigging that have occurred including:
 - a. How, if at all, MLB plans to revise its rules, policies, procedures, or enforcement structure;
 - b. How, if at all, MLB plans to revise or enforce its rules relating to cellphone use during games; and
 - c. How MLB plans to ensure players, employees, coaches, and owners do not have ties to organized crime.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Sean Brebbia (majority) and Peter Rechter (minority) on the Committee staff.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
Chairman



Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member