



Jeff Landry
Governor

State of Louisiana
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April 2, 2024

Mr. Jimmie M. Woods Sr.
LSU Board of Supervisors
104B University Administration Bldg.
3810 W. Lakeshore Dr.
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

RE: Student Athlete Policy Relative to National Anthem

Dear Mr. Woods,

I am writing to express my disappointment regarding a recent incident where the LSU Women's Basketball team failed to be present on the court for the National Anthem during the March Madness Elite Eight tournament.

My mother coached women's high school basketball during the height of desegregation — also a time when women were not afforded the same opportunities as men. Now we have a nationally ranked women's basketball team that is loved and watched by fans and aspiring athletes all across the country. No one holds a greater respect for the sport, these athletes, and Coach Mulkey than I do.

However, above respect for the game is a deeper respect for those that have served to protect us and our freedoms and have united us under one flag. The spotlight during the Elite Eight tournament should have been on how well our team played and fought to the end. Instead, our team was recognized for being absent during the National Anthem.

By choosing to miss the National Anthem, the basketball team showed a lack of respect not only for the values of our country, but for the individuals who hold these values dear, including LSU Alumni, current students, and fans back home and across the country.

Therefore, I urge the board to create a policy that mandates all student athletes to be present on the field, court, etc., for the National Anthem or risk losing their athletic scholarships. A policy like this would ensure that our student athletes and their coaches understand the significance of our anthem and our flag, and work to instill the respect for it within their teams.

Louisiana State University's roots stem from a military academy, and there should be no question about the university's respect for our country.

Sincerely,



Jeff Landry
Governor