

Letter from Fourth and Goal's Bruce Laird

The NFLPA active player reps are headed to Hawaii for their annual meeting, and the NFLPA has e-mailed chapter officers to ask what they would like Steering Committee President Jean Fugett to present to active player reps on behalf of retired players. In fact, Fourth & Goal has been talking about, writing about, speaking out about, publicizing, and advocating for what retired players need (improved pension and disability benefits) and what retired players want (representation) for years now.

There are many examples of how retired players have tried to reach out to the NFLPA. More than 18 months ago, Baltimore Ravens' player rep Matt Stover asked the NFLPA's Director of Retired Players, Andre Collins, to build a bridge between the union and retired players. At Matt's request, Fourth & Goal President Bruce Laird spoke with Andre regarding how the two groups could work together to build that bridge. Bruce sent Andre an outline of what we would like to discuss with the union, and followed up with several e-mail messages to Andre. There was no response – that is, until Bruce saw Andre at the Congressional hearings last June, and he told Bruce the union has “nothing to discuss with retired players...too many issues...”

Even with these setbacks, progress is being made. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell formed a new alliance to begin to address long-ignored retired players' issues. Disability issues began to be openly discussed, and steps began to be taken to fix the badly-broken disability system.

However, retired players have a long way to go – they are not considered to be union members, they have no vote and they have no representation.

To learn more about retired NFL players' concerns and struggles, please contact Jason Policastro at (410) 727-6855 or via email at jpolicastro@stantoncomm.com. Thanks for your consideration.