

Game Change: The Patriots Anti-Violence Partnership

As Prepared for Delivery

Attorney General Healey:

Thank you for joining us today.

We are all excited to be here to announce the formation of “Game Change: The Patriots Anti-Violence Partnership.”

Joining me today are:

- Robert Kraft, who needs no introduction. Owner of the New England Patriots and a driving force for why we are here today.
- Josh Kraft, head of the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation.
- Dan Lebowitz, Executive Director of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University, which runs the Mentors in Violence Prevention program.
- Debra Robbin, Executive Director of Jane Doe Inc.
- Mary Dunne and Malcom Astley, parents of Lauren Dunne Astley, who we lost far too young to relationship violence.

Thank you all.

If there's one thing I've learned about Robert Kraft and his incredible team as we've worked together on this project – it's that they don't do anything half way. They know about winning formulas and how to get results.

And this will be a true game changer in the work to protect young people from violence, particularly relationship violence and sexual assault.

Robert and Josh contacted us a few weeks ago, and they had a clear mission. They wanted to develop a program to keep young people safe. And they wanted to do it in a way that would be thoughtful, innovative, and **effective**.

We believe this new program will accomplish all three.

I want to thank Mr. Kraft and Josh for their partnership, their generosity, and their leadership. This program will make a difference for so many young people and their families across this state, and it would not be possible without them.

The \$500,000 gift the Patriots Foundation is making today toward this Game Change program is just a part of a much broader \$1.5 million commitment to address domestic violence and sexual assault in Massachusetts.

The rest of that gift will go toward a comprehensive training and community building initiative and direct support for advocates and leaders on the frontlines of combatting domestic violence and sexual assault. Remember, I said the Kraft family doesn't do anything half way.

Let me tell you why today's announcement is so important.

One in three young people has experienced physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse in a relationship.

One in three.

Every 9 seconds in the United States, a woman is assaulted or beaten, making domestic violence the leading cause of injury to women in this country.

The harm caused by that violence – both physical and psychological – can last for a lifetime.

As I mentioned, we are joined today by Mary Dunne and Malcolm Astley. Mary and Malcolm lost their daughter, Lauren, to a senseless act of relationship violence.

Mary and Malcolm have committed their lives to preventing the kind of nightmare that they were forced to endure, and I want to thank them again for being here. They are an inspiration to us all.

The **goal** of this program is to prevent tragedies like what happened to Lauren, and to stop the violence that is happening in our homes, schools, and to our young people every day.

We know that a key to preventing violence is intervening with our **young people** at an early age.

The earlier we can educate young people about healthy relationships, the earlier we can build a sense of dignity and respect in how they treat others, and greater chance we have of making a difference.

That's what this Game Change program is all about.

We also need to teach the adults in their lives – their parents, teachers, and coaches – how to spot those warning signs so that they can help as well.

Because we're all in this together.

So how will this program do that?

It starts with training teachers and coaches. Thanks to the Patriots Foundation, 90 schools, free of charge, will be able to send teachers and coaches to regional trainings run by the Mentors in Violence Prevention program – Dan's team at Northeastern University.

MVP is a world renowned program that we are lucky to have right here in Massachusetts.

Those teachers and coaches will be given an in-depth curriculum on violence prevention. The MVP program is sports-themed, and they employ former college and professional athletes as trainers. The coaches and teachers will then go back to their schools to train their students and their school personnel on what they've learned.

Then they'll have the tools to implement a curriculum year after year, passing their knowledge on to thousands of kids.

That alone will make a difference.

But we heard repeatedly from experts in the field like Jane Doe, that to have an even greater impact, we should focus on doing more in-depth trainings for students, parents, and school personnel.

So this Game Change program will also select 30 of those high schools – across every region – to partner with a local domestic and sexual violence prevention organization to educate school staff, coaches, and parents, and to be available for students and families that need help.

In each of those 30 schools, MVP will train students to become peer leaders. Those students will help teach younger students about healthy relationships and bystander intervention.

We know that on this issue – students listen to other students. And this Game Change program will empower kids to do just that.

This partnership – between schools, the MVP program, and local anti-violence organizations – is truly unique. And we believe it will be enormously effective.

All of this will be offered to the schools for free through the \$500,000 gift from the Patriots Foundation, and \$150,000 my office will be contributing as well.

One young person harmed by relationship violence is too many.

What you see today is a commitment to say – No More.

No more violence. No more abuse.

In Massachusetts, we're changing the game.

That's the goal, and I'm truly honored to be here with so many people committed to that cause.

And of course none of this would be possible without the leadership of Robert and Josh Kraft, and the Patriots Foundation.

I'd like to ask Robert to come to the podium to say a few words.