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CANADIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

United States National Football League— Playing of Games in Toronto

Statement by:

The Honourable Larry W. Campbell

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

THE SENATE

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UNITED STATES NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE—PLAYING OF GAMES IN TORONTO

Hon. Larry W. Campbell: Honourable senators, I am sure that when the word "culture" is mentioned, the name "Senator Campbell" does not spring to mind. However, I rise today to speak on culture.

In February, it was announced that the Buffalo Bills of the National Football League intend to play eight games in the beautiful city of Toronto over the next five years. This is viewed by many as the first step toward either moving an existing franchise to Toronto, or awarding the city an expansion team.

What would be the result? It would be a few people turning a \$1-billion investment into a \$6-billion windfall at the expense of the Canadian Football League. If this plan were to come to fruition, I, together with many others, believe that the CFL's future would be in significant peril. As proud Canadians and fans of the CFL, we must make every effort to defend our own brand of football.

The Canadian Football League has existed for over 100 years, many times longer than the National Football League, and has provided Canadians of all ages with sporting memories that will last a lifetime. It is a league that is uniquely Canadian in both its rules and support. It is a league that generates hundreds of jobs across Canada and millions of dollars in related revenue for each member city. In 2005, the Grey Cup had an economic impact on the city of Vancouver to the tune of approximately \$48 million over that weekend. It is a league that gives back to the communities in which it thrives through dozens of programs and monetary donations. It is a league that, through decades of existence, has produced hundreds of local and national sporting heroes for the young people of Canada. It is a league that millions of people have grown up with, supported and loved. What is perhaps most important, it is a league that holds our country together: Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and, soon, the Schooners from the East Coast.

As Canadians, we must ensure that this great cultural icon does not become extinct over the wishes of one city and one group of people in this country. I urge honourable senators to support the Canadian Football League and its existence.