

November 13, 2017

Robert D Manfred, Jr.
Commissioner of Baseball
Major League Baseball
Office of the Commissioner of Baseball
245 Park Avenue, 31st floor
New York, NY 10167

Dear Commissioner Manfred:

We write to express our appreciation for taking swift action against Houston Astros' player Yulieski Gurriel after he made a racist gesture and slur against Los Angeles Dodgers' pitcher, Yu Darvish. However, we are concerned that in deferring Gurriel's five game suspension until next season, Gurriel and the Astros suffer no immediate consequences. We believe this sends an unfortunate mixed message to Asians and Asian Americans that while it is wrong to ridicule us, it is not so wrong as to merit immediate punishment.

As Asian American civil rights organizations dedicated to the promotion of positive and uplifting images of our community in all aspects of media, we were shocked to see the slanted eye gesture that Houston Astro Yuli Gurriel directed at Los Angeles Dodger Yu Darvish during the World Series on Friday night. This image was broadcast to over 15 million viewers.¹ When Gurriel pulled back his eyes, he disrespected not only Darvish but millions of Asian Americans, for whom that is perhaps the most commonly experienced racist gesture. Ironically, Gurriel and Darvish represent teams from two of the most diverse cities in the country, both with significant Asian American populations.

During a time when Major League Baseball (MLB) is attempting to recruit international players and build a wider audience, the responsibility on MLB to ensure that players and fans from all communities are treated with respect is at a heightened level. As organizations deeply focused on building communities of trust and channels of open communication between communities, we welcome the opportunity to speak to MLB and the Houston Astros about issues of racial sensitivity, particularly involving Asians and Asian Americans.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you seek further information about our affiliation, and our activities to ensure inclusion of diverse communities.

Sincerely,

John Yang
President & Executive Director
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Stewart Kwoh, Esq.
President & Executive Director
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles

¹ <http://variety.com/2017/tv/news/world-series-game-2-ratings-1202599898/>