

## One woman's take on 'Deflategate'

The NFL has a problem, and I don't have to be a football fan to know it.

I'm not a sports person, but I am a news consumer and a woman. So being told that a slightly deflated football is a greater offense than domestic violence is problematic to me, and the NFL should really start caring about what's problematic to its female fans.

Overall, women make up 46 percent of NFL fans, and about 63 percent of women 12 and older identify as fans, according to a 2014 CBS News article.

Women also represent the fastest-growing demographic of NFL fans. Revenue from female merchandise is on the rise at a higher rate than from men's clothing.

The list of reasons for the NFL to stop making decisions that alienate its female fans goes on and on.

So when I heard that the Patriots were penalized \$1 million, matching the highest fine in the history of the NFL, and docked two draft picks, and that Tom Brady was suspended for four games, my first thought was: "Ray Rice didn't even get a four-game suspension."

Rice was originally suspended for two games and had the support of the Ravens after being arrested for simple assault, later bumped up to aggravated assault, for knocking out his then-fiancee and dragging her by the shoulders from an elevator in February 2014.

There is video evidence of this assault, and while the NFL claims it hadn't seen the video when it doled out the two-game suspension, multiple sources said Rice's story matched the video perfectly.

Also, an anonymous law enforcement source told the Associated Press that the police did, in fact, send the full video of the assault to the NFL in April, before the two-game suspension was given.

And if TMZ can get ahold of it, do you really believe the NFL couldn't? They either didn't try as hard as they should have, or they're lying.

After the video was published by TMZ, Rice was suspended indefinitely, but on appeal it was decided that no new information was actually gained from the video, so the indefinite suspension was invalidated.

Granted, the Ravens let him go as soon as the video came out, and he hasn't signed with anyone since, but as far as the NFL

goes, it dropped the ball with its punishment.

To the NFL's credit (sort of), it did roll out a new domestic violence policy after the Rice debacle. The policy says any player involved in domestic violence will be suspended for six games and suspended indefinitely after the second offense.

That's great, but to this female news consumer, it seems like more of a too-little-too-late PR move than a

real attempt to solve a problem.

And domestic violence in the NFL is a problem. According to an arrest database compiled by USA Today, 85 out of 713 arrests of NFL players since 2000 were for domestic violence; that's almost 12 percent, and that's not even including other forms of assault and battery arrests or the times domestic violence happened without the police getting involved.

I understand that this deflated football controversy involves more than one player. I also understand that it's an example of cheating, which the league should certainly take seriously. And no, it's not the NFL's job to punish crimes; we have a criminal justice system for that. I don't expect the league to single-handedly end domestic violence.

But what I do expect is to feel like the NFL takes violent crime seriously, and also that it is connected to its female fan base.

It's not just a stereotype that football players are often hyper-aggressive and given special treatment when they do mess up. For whatever reason — I'm sure there are many — that culture is a reality, and it's a harmful one that must be dealt with. Rice was accepted into a pretrial intervention program rather than serving jail time, which happened less than 1 percent of the time for domestic violence cases in New Jersey between 2010 and 2013.

Shortly after Rice was arrested, Ravens owner Steve Bisciotti promised the running back would return, saying, "If we're all one strike and you're out, then we're all in trouble."

I'd like to think not all strikes are created equal, and I hope the NFL comes to that realization soon.

*Jessica Cabe, the PI's arts and entertainment editor, wishes everyone would stop adding "gate" to any controversy. She can be reached at [jcabe@postindependent.com](mailto:jcabe@postindependent.com).*



**Jessica Cabe**  
Arts and  
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### GUEST OPINION

## David (and friends) versus Goliath

Alice Brouhard

On April 18, the Post Independent did a story on my daughter Kara and I and our quest to have Apple make changes to their iPad operating system (iOS). This change would better serve those with memory and scheduling problems due to cognitive disabilities.

Kara lives a fairly independent life because of an iPad and a 99-cent app called Aida. She has significant challenges with memory and time management due to a severe traumatic brain injury suffered as a child. Technology is helping her to have a self-determined life. Unfortunately, the Aida app that guides Kara's life underwent revisions from iOS5 to now iOS8. Because of the operating system updates it lost much of its initial usefulness for many people like Kara.

With help from Trinity Services in Chicago, (serving clients with developmental disabilities) and especially Sherry Ladislav from Trinity, I recently launched a petition on change.org trying to get Apple's attention as to how these updates affected people's lives. I have emailed and called Apple many times over the last several years since iOS revisions to try to explain the life-changing aspects that were taken away. No one at Apple listened. I lost hope in capturing Apple's interest in this. Trinity Services gave me a strong foundation again.

PI writer Angelyn Frankenberg did an excellent job in capturing the journey we have been on. On May 4, I emailed a link to the Post Independent article and a link to our change.org petition, "Kara's Own Voice," to Apple Accessibility and to Tim Cook, Apple CEO. And ... Apple is starting to listen!

I received a call this week from a person with Apple Accessibility wanting to learn more about the challenges we're facing. He saw the change.org petition and read the PI article. Many of his questions focused on information he had learned from Angelyn's story written about



PROVIDED PHOTO

Kara Brouhard stands in front of an Apple store holding a sign urging a change to restore functions of an app she uses to help manage her life.

### SIGN THE PETITION

Visit this link <http://goo.gl/O8y9ac> or use Google as a search for "Kara's Own Voice" to take you to the change.org site.

our request to Apple.

We spent 34 minutes discussing the situation and Apple's interest in supporting those with disabilities to lead an independent life. Apple's motto is "We have done everything possible to make anything possible." I told the Apple Accessibility representative that the company had done everything but restore changes to this great app's full potential for those with TBIs, early dementia and other memory/scheduling problems.

Many of you in this wonderful community signed our petition and sent it to others across the country and throughout the world to sign and share.

Although we did not go viral, we have captured the attention of Apple by the petition and with the PI's help.

We still have work to be done — that is to keep sharing this petition and encourage others to sign it. Apple has not yet committed to restoring the lost features, but we made them listen, and they will continue to listen.

So, thank you friends for helping the little guy! Continue to sign, share and add your comments.

*Alice Brouhard is a Glenwood Springs resident and advocate for people with traumatic brain injuries.*

## THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

The Village Smithy turned 40 last week; what's your favorite thing about the place?

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