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Received & Inspected

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

FCC MAIL ROOM

2-11-12 12-3

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. Dortch,

Please be advised that when the Buffalo Bills black out the games they do not sell out that is when I stop going to all games for the rest of that season. I have friends who do the same. I have been following the Buffalo Bills since their inception in the 60's. Please change the law/rule so the NFL television contracts can no longer bar local stations from airing the home games that are not sold out 72 hours before kickoff. The NFL makes millions, maybe billions, so please let the fans see all their home team games on t.v. Thanks, Jen Batt

Goalie Felix Elicier never played floor hockey before. Gifts from the Sabres Foundation
Camille Reid with help from Ann Marie Hernandez, after-school teacher at the Aloma I



Photos by Mark Mulville/Buffalo News

After Terry Pegula bought the Sabres, he and aide Cliff Benson discussed programs to get children involved in hockey.

By DEIDRE WILLIAMS
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

It's been a disappointing hockey season so far for the Buffalo Sabres, but that hasn't stopped the team from scoring major points with some inner-city neighborhoods.

With a mission of providing diverse opportunities to underserved children, the club recently donated street hockey equipment for black and Hispanic

youth at a downtown and gave ice hockey gear at an East Side church while offering free lessons for its kids.

And at a Sunday service last month at the East Side church, Sabres helped distribute 200 shirts to students who were organized for good school dance. The Sabres specifically designed the shirts for the

All of the gifts — would cost several th

Blackout rules for NFL games studied by FCC

Critics urge Bills fans to support policy changes

By JERRY ZREMSKI

NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF

WASHINGTON — Fans of the Buffalo Bills and other teams frequently subjected to television blackout rules soon may get a reprieve — and critics of the rules are encouraging fans to make their voices heard in support of changes in a longtime federal policy that prevents satellite and cable broadcasters from airing games that are not sold out.

Doing so could make a difference as the Federal Communications Commission considers altering or eliminating its four-decade-old blackout rules, said Brian Frederick, executive director of the Sports Fans Coalition.

"For the next month, fans will have the opportunity to speak up about blackouts and actually be heard," Frederick said on his organization's website this week.

See **Blackout** on Page A2

WEB SAMPLER



Review highlights of Friday's high school basketball games with PrepTalkTV at video.buffalonews.com.

INSIDE THE

Internet bill fizzles

WASHINGTON — Campaign by Internet service providers to get Congress to postpone legislation on online piracy of movies

Health insurance

WASHINGTON — Major health care reform legislation will have to cover employees under health care administration and religious organizations. St

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WEATHER

Some a.m. snow; clearing low 17. Details on Page



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7

Since it had no hard evidence, the investigative team decided to try a high-stakes confrontation with White.

New York State criminal profiler Edward

could have closure for his family and for the families of the victims."

The database Fallon used can be accessed at: www.scrippsnews.com/projects/serial-killers.

But before any of the events can happen, adult organizers said the children will have to learn everything about the

team. Now called I (Inclusion Creators) the program was

Higgins sends letter supporting exemptions

BLACKOUT • from A1

The FCC announced last week that it is reconsidering its rule that forces cable and satellite TV providers to black out sporting events if games don't sell out. Rep. Brian Higgins, D-*Buffalo*, also asked fans to contact the federal agency to tell officials what they think.

"I sent a letter to the FCC chairman asking that he eliminate this unfair rule, which does not provide for individual solutions to different local markets," said Higgins, D-*Buffalo*. "The FCC has opened a public comment period on this matter, and I urge fans who feel similarly to do the same."

The NFL's television contracts bar local stations from airing games that are not sold out 72 hours before kickoff. Since 1973, the FCC has had a rule in place that bars cable and satellite broadcasters from airing

games locally if they are not sold out.

But FCC Commissioner Robert M. McDowell said in a statement that it's time to take a fresh look at that rule.

"We now live in a world with not only local broadcast stations, but also cable, satellite, the Internet and wireless, and where television and merchandising revenues exceed ticket sales," McDowell said. "It is appropriate for us to re-examine the rule in light of marketplace changes."

In a letter to the FCC, Higgins noted that Bills fans are hit more than those of other teams by the blackout rules. That's because Ralph Wilson Stadium has an unusually large capacity of 73,000 — 6,000 more than the average league attendance — making it more difficult to get a sellout.

"Last year almost half of Bills home games were blacked out," Higgins said on the House floor. "This is unacceptable."

Higgins encouraged fans to comment on the blackout rule to the FCC electronically at <http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs2/>.

Alternatively, letters can be sent to:

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

The FCC is seeking comments through Feb. 13 — and the NFL and other sports leagues are sure to oppose any changes.

Last summer, the NFL told the FCC in a filing that changes "would gut the purpose of the rule and create perverse incentives for (cable and satellite TV providers) to engage in brinkmanship tactics in order to take advantage of the proposed exception to the sports blackout rule."

email: jsremaki@buffnews.com

Correcti

A meeting Teacher Guild was at Southtowns on Tuesday night of the school torn off in a school officials the damage the erroneous information by the Cath Buffalo, an article correctly report was in the school and the damage until school Wednesday morning.

The Nature in Sunday's News stated that power had stopped a Power generation

CHARLESTON, S.C. — On the eve of a Southern showdown, Mitt Romney conceded Friday he's in a tight race with Newt Gingrich for today's South Carolina primary in a Republican campaign suddenly turned turbulent. It's "neck and neck," Romney declared, while a third presidential contender, former Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, attacked both men in hopes of springing yet another campaign surprise as he did in the Iowa caucuses. Several days after forecasting a Romney victory in his state, Sen. Jim DeMint said the campaign's first Southern primary was now a two-man race between the former Massachusetts governor, who has struggled in recent days with questions about his personal wealth and taxes, and Gingrich, the former House speaker from Georgia who has been surging in polls at

ASSOCIATED PRESS

By DAVID ESPO

South Carolina primary now appears undecided

