

# [***Matt Gaetz Refuses to Watch Super Bowl Because of Black National Anthem***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9M-F8B1-DY68-1000-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** The Kansas City Chiefs will face the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday to crown the 2023 season's champion.

**Body**

Ahead of Super Bowl LVIII, Representative [*Matt Gaetz*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/matt-gaetz?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), a Florida Republican, said on Sunday he will not watch the game because of a scheduled performance of the Black National Anthem.

The Kansas City Chiefs will face the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday to crown the 2023 season's champion. As the game is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. ET, fans across the country will tune in. This year at the start of the game, in addition to country music singer Reba McEntire singing the National Anthem, singer Andra Day will also perform "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which is often known as the Black National Anthem.

The song was a hymn written as a poem by National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) leader James Weldon Johnson in 1900 and was later adopted by the NAACP and prominently used as a rallying cry during the civil rights movement. The song became a landmark of African American culture. According to *Time* magazine, it was performed during meetings in which civil rights leaders planned the Montgomery Bus Boycott and has been quoted in speeches by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In a post on X, formerly [*Twitter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/twitter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), Gaetz noted an exchange he had with his wife about this year's Super Bowl.

"Wife: Today is the Super Bowl! Me: We aren't watching. Wife: Why? Me: They're desecrating America's National Anthem by playing something called the 'Black National Anthem.' Wife: Does that mean Cardi is performing?" the congressman wrote.

*Newsweek* has reached out to Gaetz and the NAACP via email for comment.

This is not the first time "Lift Every Voice and Sing" has been performed in conjunction with the Super Bowl or other [*National Football League*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/national-football-league?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) ([*NFL*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nfl?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)) games as it was previously performed in 2020 before all 16 of the Week 1 games, according to the NFL. The song was played during a time, the league said it was working to "amplify work done by its players and the families who are trying to address social justice issues" amid the height of the [*Black Lives Matter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/black-lives-matter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) movement (BLM).

"[The song] has encouraged generations of Black people that God will lead us to the promises of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness," the NFL's Troy Vincent said at the time. "It's as pertinent in today's environment as it was when it was written."

Following the 2020 racial protests after the murder of [*George Floyd*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/george-floyd?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) at the hands of police, the NFL sought to confront what many players have described as systemic racism following years of protests.

In addition, Grammy award-winning singer Alicia Keys preformed the song in a pre-recorded video before the 2021 Super Bowl. The following year, singer Mary Mary performed the song from outside SoFi stadium at Super Bowl LVI. Last year, Sheryl Lee Ralph performed the song on the field before the Kansas City Chiefs faced the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl LVII.

This is also not the first time the song has faced criticism from a Republican representative.

In response to the song being performed at the 2023 Super Bowl, Republican Representative [*Lauren Boebert*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/lauren-boebert?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) of Colorado shared a post on then Twitter, now X, writing, "America only has ONE NATIONAL ANTHEM. Why is the NFL trying to divide us by playing multiple!? Do football, not wokeness."

Other conservatives have previously criticized the NFL over the song. In 2021, [*Fox News*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox-news?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) host [*Sean Hannity decried a performance*](https://www.newsweek.com/sean-hannity-blasts-nfl-plan-black-national-anthem-before-2021-games-1610435?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) as an attempt to "inject ***politics*** into sports." Several[*conservative pundits also complained*](https://www.newsweek.com/vanessa-williams-black-national-anthem-controversy-explained-1606821?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) when Vanessa Williams performed the song during a [*PBS*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/pbs?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Fourth of July special that same year.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2347480/matt-gaetz.jpg)

**Graphic**

Matt Gaetz

Kent Nishimura/Getty Images

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL) speaks with reporters before going into the Speakers offices at the U.S. Capitol on January 10, 2024 in Washington, DC.Ahead of Super Bowl LVIII, Gaetz said on Sunday he will not watch the Super Bowl because of a scheduled performance of a “Black National Anthem.”

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