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### Taking a Knee

Recently, NFL players have been kneeling during the national anthem as a way to peacefully protest police brutality and racism. This began with Colin Kaepernick kneeling during the national anthem to protest police brutality and racism. This has left many people split between two sides; those who believe NFL players have the right to peacefully protest during games, and those who disagree and believe they do not. The NFL players taking a knee during the national anthem to protest police brutality and racism is justified and categorically morally correct.

The right to peacefully protest falls under freedom of speech, and is therefore protected by the First Amendment and the Constitution. That being said, it does have restrictions. The government may not deny a person's constitutional rights, but they may regulate their right to protest based upon time and place. These regulations must be content neutral, meaning the content of the speech or expression may not factor into the decision, and serve a significant governmental interest, such as public safety. Now that you know the basic rules of the right to protest, I can address the NFL players. As Prof. Sandel had stated in his lecture, categorical moral reasoning is finds morality in certain rights and duties. In the case of the NFL players protesting, they had made it their duty to bring attention to police brutality and racism, using their influence and public position to make a statement against the issue, essentially calling it

out. They received backlash when people started saying they don't have the right to protest during the game, that it's unpatriotic, and it is disrespectful to our troops. Though they continued to protest for two main reasons. The first reason being, it is the right thing to do, and it raises awareness for the cause. The second reason, is that it does not go against the Constitution in any way, and does not violate any laws.

Knowing that the NFL players protested for a valid cause, held it peacefully, and broke no laws of any kind, was it morally correct for them to protest during the national anthem? Yes it was, they have the right to protest, and used that to target a huge problem in today's society. What they did is supported by categorical moral reasoning, and is protected by the very concept of a democracy. They chose to kneel during the national anthem in particular, because they knew it was of great importance, and to show that their issue was just as, if not more, important, it took precedence over the national anthem.