



The Big Leagues Go to Washington: Congress and Sports Antitrust, 1951-1989

David George Surdam

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Between 1951 and 1989, Congress held a series of hearings to investigate the antitrust aspects of professional sports leagues. Among the concerns: ownership control of players, restrictions on new franchises, territorial protection, and other cartel-like behaviors.

In [The Big Leagues Go to Washington](#), David Surdam chronicles the key issues that arose during the hearings and the ways opposing sides used economic data and theory to define what was right, what was feasible, and what was advantageous to one party or another. As Surdam shows, the hearings affected matters as fundamental to the modern game as broadcasting rights, player drafts and unions, league mergers, and the dominance of the New York Yankees. He also charts how lawmakers from the West and South pressed for the relocation of ailing franchises to their states and the ways savvy owners dodged congressional interference when they could and adapted to it when necessary.

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