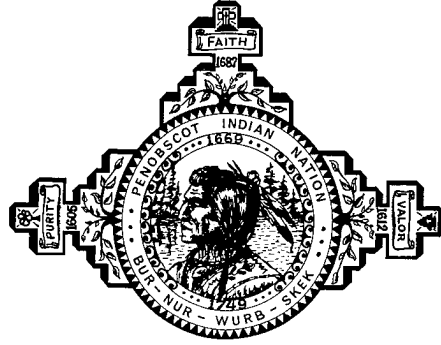


Office of the Chief and Council

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September 10, 2013

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20005

RE: Indian Mascots

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell:

On behalf of the Penobscot Indian Nation, I write to express our strong opposition to the name "Redskins" for the National Football League's (NFL) Washington D.C. franchise. This term is racist and derogatory and perpetuates harmful stereotypes, even if it is unintentional, because it perpetuates negative stereotypes of us and uses a name that was at the heart of extreme ethnic cleansing policies. The NFL should change the name so that we and other American Indians are not disparaged.

In 1755 the Penobscot started living under the Spencer Phipps proclamation, this proclamation was in effect for almost thirty years and called for all "settlers" to hunt Penobscot men, women and children under this proclamation and be paid a handsome bounty when the scalps were brought in for payment. These scalps were referred to as "redskins" when tallying up the bounty. For the Penobscot the use of this word continues to remind our people of this gruesome genocidal act under formal policy. Hundreds of Penobscot were killed during this period of time. This term is all but eradicated in the State of Maine in recognition of this appalling history.

The caricature of Indians personified by "Chief Zee" at Redskins games – with his faux headdress and tomahawk – is especially insensitive. Washington Redskins football games are perhaps the last place in the U.S. where such a spectacle is not only tolerated, but also embraced.

The *New York Times* chronicled how the Washington Redskins was the last NFL team to integrate its players in 1962. Then-Secretary of the Interior Stuart Udall played a key role by insisting that the team integrate prior to using the federally funded D.C. stadium (since renamed RFK Stadium), which led to the change. With schools, colleges, and even the NCAA updating their mascots and policies during the past decade, the Washington Redskins organization and its owner, Daniel Snyder, should do the same.

For these reasons, we request that the Committee examine the Indian mascot issue and the Washington Redskins organization in particular through an oversight hearing or the facilitation of dialogue. The Nation appreciates your consideration of this letter and we look forward to providing further input on this matter.

In Brotherhood,

Kirk E Francis, Chief
Penobscot Indian Nation