



Samish Indian Nation

OF WASHINGTON

October 23, 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 Samish Indian Nation, we 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 harmful and perpetuates harmful stereotypes, even if it is unintentional, because it perpetuates negative stereotypes. We believe the NFL should change the name.

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. With schools, colleges, and even the NCAA updating their mascots and policies during the past decade, we believe the Washington Redskins organization 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. We appreciate your consideration of this letter and we look forward to working with you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Wooten
Chairman