



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Brett Stagnitti
Oneida Nation Public Affairs Manager
(315) 829-8310
bstagnitti@oneida-nation.org

Oneida Indian Nation Praises Houston School Board Vote Calling for an End to Racist R-Word Mascots

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (December 13, 2013) The Oneida Indian Nation today congratulated the Houston Independent School District's board for its stand against the use of the R-word as a mascot. The Houston school board yesterday gave its preliminary approval on a policy that would eliminate the use of the dictionary-defined slur and other racially-insensitive mascots that demean Native Americans.

In Thursday's meeting to consider the new policy, numerous activists spoke in support of the change which would affect four Houston-area schools. Brian Patterson, Representative to the Oneida Indian Nation's Men's Council and Clan Mothers and President of the United South & Eastern Tribes, Inc., provided testimony explaining the serious and destructive effects that the offensive moniker has on Native American communities.

"On behalf of the Oneida Indian Nation and the Change the Mascot movement I would like to thank the Houston school board for its courageous actions this week," said Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter. "A growing nationwide chorus is putting itself on the right side of history by calling for the long overdue end of the degrading R-word slur."

In recent months the Change the Mascot campaign has rallied supporters to urge Washington's NFL team to end its use of the R-word as a team name and mascot. The grassroots movement has garnered support from Native American tribes, sports icons, political leaders from both sides of the aisle, and even the President of the United States.

Earlier this week the membership of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the nation's premier civil and human rights coalition representing more than 200 diverse national organizations, voted unanimously for a resolution urging the owner of the Washington NFL team to change the team's offensive name.

Young people across the country have led by example on the issue. Earlier this year students at Cooperstown High School in New York voted to drop their R-word mascot, prompting a wave of national headlines about the continued use of the epithet in the NFL.

Learn more at www.changethemascot.org

###