



Change the Mascot!

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Media Contact: Joel Barkin
Oneida Nation V.P. for Communications
(646) 715-7190
jbarkin@oneida-nation.org

Decision to Reject "Redskins" as Derogatory by U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Lauded by Oneida Indian Nation

Oneida campaign cited in Patent and Trademark Office Ruling

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (January 7, 2014) The Oneida Indian Nation and the Change the Mascot Campaign that it leads are lauding the decision by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) to reject a recent application to register a trademark that used the term "Redskins."

"The USPTO ruling sends a powerful message to Washington team owner Dan Snyder and the NFL that in the name of basic decency and respect they should immediately stop spending millions of dollars to promote the R-word," said Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter. "This is a huge potential precedent-setter rooted in the painfully self-evident truth that the Change the Mascot campaign has been reiterating: The R-word is a dictionary defined slur designed to demean and dehumanize an entire group of people. The federal government was right to declare that taxpayers cannot and should not subsidize the promotion of that slur through lucrative patent protections."

The same agency which rejected the trademark of "Redskins Hog Rinds" will determine whether the Washington NFL team is able to keep its trademark registration. Native American leader

Suzan Shown Harjo has been at the center of efforts to use legal pressure upon professional sports teams to stop using offensive and harmful mascots that demean Native peoples.

In its letter denying the trademark, the USPTO cited media stories highlighting the growing opposition to the name being produced through the efforts of the Oneida Indian Nation and the Change the Mascot campaign. It also referenced a report from the National Congress of American Indians showing the damaging impact of Native American mascots.

The USPTO cited five separate dictionary definitions showing the offensive name of the R-word in its rejection letter.

A growing national movement, the Change the Mascot campaign has summoned support from Native American tribes, sports icons, political leaders from both sides of the aisle, and even the President of the United States.

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