



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oneida Indian Nation Rep Ray Halbritter Recognizes U.S. Reps. Tom Cole and Betty McCollum for Supporting Change the Mascot Campaign at Annual USET Conference in Washington, D.C.

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (February 3, 2014) Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter Monday recognized U.S. Representatives Tom Cole (R-Oklahoma) and Betty McCollum (D-Minnesota) at the opening session of the 2014 United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) Impact Week conference in Washington, D.C.

Halbritter presented both members of Congress with traditional Oneida Pendleton blankets and thanked them for their leadership in the ongoing Change the Mascot campaign to end the use of the racially insensitive R-word slur as the name and mascot of Washington's NFL team. Rep. Cole, a member of the Chickasaw Nation, and Rep. McCollum are co-chairs of the Native American Caucus for their respective parties, and both are tireless advocates in Congress for Indian Country.

“As the only Native American serving in Congress, Congressman Cole has used his position to champion the voice of Indian Country in Washington,” said Halbritter. “As just one recent high-profile example, this year he has played a pivotal role in the "Change the Mascot" campaign that has been pushing the NFL to finally change the name of the football team that represents the nation's capital. He has spoken out in support of this campaign on national television, and shown that this is not a Republican or Democratic issue - this is a unifying American cause, in the truest sense of that term.”

Halbritter continued, “This year, I have had the great honor to get to know Congresswoman McCollum through the "Change the Mascot" campaign. It was her, Congressman Cole and eight other congressional representatives who sent a letter to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell asking him to take action against the offensive name used by the Washington team. And it was Congresswoman McCollum who spoke out in support of the “Change the Mascot” campaign when the campaign began attracting national headlines during the NFL season. It is that kind of courage that should be an inspiration to all of us as we strengthen not just our push to end the use of the R-word, but also our larger advocacy on behalf of our communities.”

During USET Impact Week, tribal leaders will receive visits from White House staff, various Cabinet departments, and members of Congress, to discuss efforts to build stronger Tribal communities, and how to transcend challenges faced in Indian Country.

USET collectively represents 26 federally recognized Tribes at the regional and national level to promote Indian leadership, improve the quality of life for American Indians, and protect Indian rights and resources on Tribal lands.

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