



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oneida Indian Nation Responds to Attempts by Washington's NFL Team to Discredit its Leadership Over Opposition to the R-Word

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (March 17, 2014) The Oneida Indian Nation responded today to a report suggesting that Washington's NFL team and its supporters have attempted to discredit opponents of their offensive mascot only to be told by other Native American leaders that the name should change. Ray Halbritter, Oneida Indian Nation Representative and the leader of the Change the Mascot movement, has come under personal attack for publicly urging the team to drop a name which is a dictionary-defined racial slur.

"In his desire to defend a name given to his team by an avowed segregationist, Dan Snyder can continue to try to attack me personally, but his strategy will not work because this is far bigger and more important than any one person or group," Halbritter said. "This is an issue that underscores what it means to treat people with respect and to stop causing them pain rather than continuing to insult them with a racist epithet. This is a serious moral, human rights and civil rights issue – and the team's behavior continues to have serious negative consequences for Native Americans," Halbritter added.

Sid Hill, the spiritual leader of the Six Nations, recently received a call from a representative of the Washington team which "felt like they were looking for something, that they wanted me to

discredit Ray, and I wasn't going to go there." Hill said: "The backlash Ray's received is kind of scary...it's like they're trying to discredit the witness."

In an interview with a journalist from The Syracuse Post-Standard, Hill underscored his view that the R—word does not honor Native Americans, as the team has claimed. The term, he said, is a taunt and an insult that if directed toward a Native American on their territory would be seen by the target of the slur as an attempt to inflict hurt.

"It is hardly surprising that the team marketing a racial slur against Native Americans is evidently working to further denigrate Native Americans with personal attacks," said Oneida Indian Nation Vice President for Communications Joel Barkin. "For all its rhetoric about respect, the team officials' ugly tactics prove that they lack real respect for Native Americans."

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