



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oneida Nation Praises Leading Native American Organizations for Withdrawing Support for Event Sponsored by Washington NFL Team

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (April 14, 2014) The Oneida Indian Nation and the national [Change the Mascot](#) campaign it leads today praised leading Native American groups for withdrawing themselves from an event that included the Washington NFL team's Original Americans Foundation (OAF). When it was revealed that OAF had become the title sponsor for a charity golf tournament in Arizona on Saturday, major Native American organizations immediately canceled their support to avoid being associated with the group.

The Notah Begay III Foundation is a respected charitable organization started by the Native American, four-time PGA Tour winner, who is a longstanding critic of the D.C. team's name. Begay has termed Washington's continued use of the slur "a very clear example of institutionalized degradation." The Notah Begay III Foundation immediately backed out of this past weekend's golf event when the Washington team's involvement was revealed.

"I find it underhanded and despicable that the Washington football team would co-opt this event," said Executive Director Crystal Echo Hawk. "As soon as we found out about their involvement we withdrew our support."

"The NB3 Foundation does not support the Redskins or its organization OAF," the group said in a statement. "We are adamantly opposed to the team's continued use of this derogatory name."

Another group that pulled its sponsorship after learning that the Redskins foundation was involved in the same event was the National Indian Gaming Association, a nonprofit group that includes 184 Indian nations as members. Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association Ernest Stevens said his organization finds the R-word name offensive and questions the motives of the foundation recently started by Washington team owner Dan Snyder.

"It's a blatant attempt to try to buy out the issue," Stevens told USA Today. With regard to the Washington team's name, which is a dictionary defined racial slur, Stevens added: "It hurts my heart to have to say that word."

Ray Halbritter, Oneida Indian Nation Representative and leader of the national Change the Mascot campaign, praised the organizations for disassociating themselves from the Washington team's foundation. "As more and more Native and non-Native groups are making clear, the single greatest contribution that Dan Snyder and his team can make to Indian Country would be to stop continuing to profit from the use of a dictionary-defined racial slur and pretending that this epithet somehow honors us."

Since the Washington team announced the creation of OAF it has been dogged with controversy and widely criticized by Native American leaders, top policymakers and respected media voices. Just days after the organization was launched, The Washington Post, USA Today and other outlets cited a [report by the Office of Inspector General](#) determining that the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Office of Justice Services (OJS) awarded, and then terminated, a \$1 million contract to the organization whose CEO is the leader of the Washington NFL team's new foundation.

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