



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oneida Indian Nation Praises New York Lawmakers for Resolution Calling on Pro Sports Leagues to Stop Using Racial Slurs

ONEIDA, NY (May 6, 2014) The Oneida Indian Nation today applauds New York State legislators for their announcement of a new resolution calling upon professional sports leagues to stop using racial slurs, specifically citing the Washington NFL team's R-word mascot as a dictionary-defined epithet. Announced at a press conference today by New York State Assemblyman and Chair of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus Karim Camara, New York State Senator George Maziarz, Senator Joe Griffo and Assembly Member Keith Wright.

The resolution, which will be sponsored by Camara, a Democrat, in the Assembly and Maziarz, a Republican, in the Senate, will be introduced this week.

Assemblyman Camara today said the use of the term "Redsk*ns" should no longer be tolerated. "Both Webster's dictionary and the United States government have deemed this term a racial slur. It's outrageous that in this day and age, a professional football team in our nation's capital intentionally demeans Native Americans," said Camara. "The League needs to hear from New York's government that the NFL's refusal to use its power to stop the use of this racial epithet dishonors the universal values of this great state."

Senator George Maziarz, Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on State-Native American Relations said: “The use of dictionary defined racial slurs by professional sports teams or frankly in society as a whole, has no place in 21st century America. Our committee has worked with all of the Native American nations and tribes in New York State to build mutual trust, and trust always starts with respect. Today the State Legislature is taking a step to build a more respectful society by moving forward with this resolution.”

Ray Halbritter, Oneida Indian Nation Representative, attended and spoke at today’s press conference, thanking the legislators for their leadership on this issue: "It’s incredibly heartening to see a bipartisan group of New York political leaders united in opposition to derogatory mascots in professional sports," he said. “We sincerely thank these leaders for their courageous stand pointing out that offensive slurs should be immediately relegated to the dustbin of history.”

“Professional sports organizations that receive massive amounts of public funding should not be profiting from the use of harmful racial slurs such as the R-word,” said Halbritter. “With the introduction of this resolution, New York has become a role model for the entire nation, and is clearly demonstrating that it wants to stand on the right side of history. The Oneida people have been here since time immemorial and we are proud to be located in a state that has become a model for promoting inclusivity and mutual respect.”

The new resolution follows the NBA’s recent historic decision to ban Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling for his offensive comments about African Americans. It also comes on the heels of growing calls for the Washington NFL team to drop its offensive mascot.

Over the past year, Change the Mascot has garnered increasing support from political leaders from both sides of the aisle, religious groups, Native American tribes, educational systems, civil rights organizations, and even the President of the United States. The campaign aired nationwide radio ads throughout the past NFL season calling for a name change, and plans to continue its efforts in the upcoming 2014-2015 season.

Learn more at www.changethemascot.org

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