



Change the Mascot!

October 6, 2014

Anna Isaacson
Vice President of Social Responsibility
National Football League
345 Park Ave
New York, NY 10154

Dear Ms. Isaacson,

Like so many other Americans concerned about the National Football League's behavior, we are grateful that Commissioner Goodell has empowered an official to finally address the growing integrity crisis now facing the league. As the vice president for social responsibility, you face the monumental task of reassuring the country that a league lavishly subsidized by taxpayers is using those public resources to respect, rather than trample, the most basic American ideals of equality and civility.

In light of that task, we write to request that you use your position to reinforce to Mr. Goodell and league officials that continuing to promote a racial slur is not socially responsible. Indeed, it is the opposite of that - the Washington franchise marketing, promoting and profiting off such a slur is both blatantly anti-social and wholly irresponsible.

As any official in a job promoting social responsibility almost certainly knows, the Washington team name is dictionary-defined and government-defined racial slur - one screamed at Native Americans as they were dragged at gunpoint off their lands. No doubt, this is why the term was originally used as the team name by Washington owner George Preston Marshall - a man who is one of the most renowned segregationists in modern American history, and whose ugly legacy is, tragically, still honored by Washington team owner Daniel Snyder at a section in FedEx Field.

Over the last year, civil rights organizations, public health groups, religious leaders, sports icons, current and former NFL players, Members of Congress of both parties, and the president of the United States have all spoken out against the Washington team's continued promotion of this racial slur. They have joined a huge grassroots Change the Mascot campaign asking the league to stand on the right side of history by changing the team's name.

"We all have to get back to respect," said Mr. Goodell himself earlier this year when assessing the league's conduct. While the NFL has spoken about the steps it has taken to help end bullying within the league, it still continues to promote an incredibly damaging form of bullying by employing and defending the use of the disparaging R-word, while simultaneously ignoring complaints from the very victims whom the slur is affecting.

As the official now charged with helping the league finally begin building a record of socially responsible behavior, you are in a position to make sure that basic respect for people of color is not self-servingly left out of that social-responsibility mission. For that reason, we are asking you to speak out on behalf of the Change the Mascot campaign, to let the league know that it cannot at once slur Native Americans and also promote itself as socially responsible.

To more fully articulate the goals of our campaign, we are hereby requesting a meeting with you at your earliest convenience. We believe you will benefit from meeting face to face with Native Americans harmed by the league's continued campaign to slur people of color, and you will subsequently see that ending such behavior is integral to any effort to promote social responsibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Halbritter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ray Halbritter
Oneida Indian Nation Representative

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Cladoosby". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Brian Cladoosby
President, National Congress of American Indians