



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National American Indian Leader in Phoenix for Super Bowl; Available for Interviews on Need for R*dskins Name Change

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) President Brian Cladoosby will be in Phoenix for this weekend's Super Bowl and is available to meet with media to discuss the urgent need for a name change from the Washington NFL team. NCAI and the Oneida Indian Nation are the leaders of the Change the Mascot campaign, which recently released a powerful new TV ad entitled "Take It Away" that clearly showcased how nothing is lost from the Washington fan experience by removing the derogatory R-word name and mascot.

WHO: Brian Cladoosby, President of the National Congress of American Indians and one of the key leaders of the national, grassroots Change the Mascot campaign

WHAT: Available for media interviews surrounding the Super Bowl to give perspective from a top Native American leader about the need to change the Washington NFL team's name, and to

discuss the Change the Mascot campaign and the movement's recently released "Take It Away" ad.

WHEN: Immediately through Monday, February 2

WHERE: Phoenix, AZ

Brian Cladoosby, President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), will travel to Phoenix, Arizona this weekend to attend the Super Bowl. While in town, the national American Indian leader will be meeting with members of the media to discuss the damage being caused by the racist name and mascot of the Washington NFL mascot and why the time for a change is now.

A highly-respected American Indian leader, Cladoosby is the 21st President of NCAI and the President of the Association of Washington Tribes. He has also served on the Swinomish Indian Senate, the governing body of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community since 1985, and as the Chairman of the Swinomish Indian Senate since 1997.

During the recent Annual State of Indian Nations Address, Cladoosby delivered powerful remarks about the need to end the use of the damaging R-word slur. Below is an excerpt from his speech:

"I want to address an issue the National Congress of American Indians has worked on for almost 50 years. I want to talk about the stereotypes and degradation that Native peoples continue to be subjected to in our society.

In particular, I want to talk about the name of the Washington DC football team.

Allow me to read from the pages of a Minnesota newspaper published one September day in 1863: 'The State reward for dead Indians has been increased to \$200 for every red-skin sent to Purgatory. This sum is more than the dead bodies of all the Indians east of the Red River are worth.'

History is clear on what that vile word meant: it was the scalped head of an American Indian man, woman, or child that trappers and hunters sold, like bear fur, for money.

Let me be very clear: the single-most offensive name that you can call an American Indian is "Redskin."

Today, a majority of people agree. In a recent national survey 83 percent of Americans said they wouldn't use the R-word to a Native American's face. And they're right.

We know the team owner stands on the wrong side of history. He has dug in his heels and refuses to change.

But why do you do it, Fed Ex? You point with pride to your policy of diversity and inclusiveness. Yet, your name is on the stadium. How do you defend perpetuating exactly the kind of racism that 40 percent of your workforce has faced in one form or another?

And why do you do it, Coca-Cola? For generations, you have been the company that taught the world to sing. Why do you defend a name that teaches the young generation to hate?

And why do you do it Verizon . . . or Best Buy . . . or HP . . . or United Airlines? Many of us associate your companies with great American success stories! But doesn't your defense of this name harken back to the worst of America's failures?

American Indians are appropriately honored as soldiers and teachers, students and first responders, CEOs and community leaders. There is no honor in the name of that team.

It's long past time that Washingtonians begin to see their fellow Native citizens through the eyes of respect and not as mascots for a football business that doesn't even have a fraction of the resilience, pride, or strength of character of any tribal nation.

To those who say there are other issues that Indian Country should focus on, my response is simple: this issue is no different than any issue we work on every day at the National Congress of American Indians.

As we have since 1944, we will stand for the rights of Native peoples in every corner of our society, whether it's under the bright lights of the NFL or in the voting booths of South Dakota.

This isn't a partisan issue. This isn't an issue of political correctness. We're not trying to make news or make noise. We're trying to make progress. We're standing up, with partners like the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights . . . the NAACP . . . the National Council of La Raza . . . and the Fritz Pollard Alliance. We're standing with tribes and Native organizations, religious leaders and journalists, school students and former NFL stars . . . and we're calling on all fair-minded Americans to stand with us."

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