

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

Cc: Commissioner Roger Goodell

Dear Ms. Isaacson,

We write to you today as football fans and devoted supporters of the NFL team that represents Washington, D.C. As you are hopefully already aware, there is an issue of concern uniting a large cross-section of NFL fans: the outdated and offensive name and mascot of our beloved team. We care deeply about Washington football, and that is exactly why we believe that the time for a change is now.

The term "Redskins" is a patently offensive slur against Native Americans who have repeatedly expressed that this term offends and hurts them. Every major organization representing Native Americans, along with tribal nations spanning the country, have spoken out against it. In addition to its demeaning nature, the slur's use is also a public health issue. Research has clearly demonstrated that it causes negative impacts on the psychological well-being of Native people, particularly children.

Countless national groups who focus their work on civil rights and human rights, as well as prominent legislators in Congress, President Obama, religious leaders, lawmakers from across the country at the regional and state levels, sports legends and many others have also spoken out against the use of this term and the need to excise it from the modern-day lexicon.

Civic leaders connected with Washington D.C. sports teams have also spoken out against the name such as Robert Pollin, an economist and son of the late Abe Pollin. Abe Pollin was the former owner of the Wizards basketball team who changed the name from Bullets because he was concerned about the association with violence. Also, Jordan Wright, the granddaughter of George Preston Marshall who was the original owner of the football team, has said that the name coined by her grandfather is not right and needs to change.

As opposition continues to grow within our hometown and across the country, it has become clear to us as fans that this embarrassing name should be changed. The NFL should impress upon the team that it should no longer cling to this outdated slur. The NFL and the team should stop alienating and offending a sizeable portion of America's population.

The NFL also needs to protect itself and its teams from endless litigation and controversy surrounding the name. The United States Patent and Trademark Office ruled in early 2014 that the Washington Redskins name is not subject to trademark protection because "based on the evidence properly before us ... these [trademark] registrations must be canceled because they were disparaging to Native Americans at the respective times they were registered." The league must not allow teams to continue to profit from names that are offensive and damaging. It is not in society's interest or in your interest as a league to continue to permit the use of a dictionary-defined slur.

Just as we are connected by our love of burgundy and gold football, we are also united in our desire to add to the team's previously proud history by making this imperative change for the better. We want the Washington team's legacy to be one of honor and respect—one that we can be proud to pass along to future generations.

We are asking you, as the NFL's Vice President of Social Responsibility, to use your position to help us turn the page and do the right thing. The Washington team is the only professional sports franchise in the country with a racist epithet as a team name. With your experience and background, surely you understand that is neither socially responsible for the team or the NFL. We urge you and Commissioner Goodell to take a stand on this issue just as you have been willing to address other key issues including the league's lack of tolerance for domestic violence.

Our hope is that the NFL will address a name change for Washington with honesty and the seriousness it deserves. Doesn't the NFL want its own legacy to reflect that you were unafraid to take on this civil and human rights issue? The correct move is painfully obvious: change the name for the good of the league and the legacy of Washington's storied franchise.

This letter is co-signed by just a few of the many Washington fans who love the team, but hate the name. We want and deserve better. It is time for a change.

Sincerely,

Josh Silver  
Ian Washburn  
Alexandra Johns  
Sheila Miles  
Stanley Augustin  
Susanna Montezemolo  
Randy Capps