



# Change the Mascot!

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## Historic Bill Banning R-word Mascots in Public Schools Overwhelmingly Passes California Assembly and Moves on to Governor's Desk

*The Change the Mascot campaign is praising the California Assembly's passage of landmark legislation to remove all R-word mascots from public schools statewide. The legislation is now headed to the desk of Governor Jerry Brown where he is expected to sign it into law making California the first state in history to place a statewide ban on the dictionary-defined slur.*

**Oneida Nation Homelands** (Sept. 10, 2015) The California Assembly today overwhelming passed (59-9) landmark legislation which would eliminate the dictionary-defined R-word slur as a mascot from all of the state's public schools. Now moving to the desk of Governor Jerry Brown to be signed into law, Assembly Bill 30 (AB 30) - The California Racial Mascots Act would make California the first state in the country with statewide legislation restricting the use of the epithet in its schools.

The grassroots Change the Mascot campaign, whose representatives including Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter testified at the Senate Education Committee Hearing on June 17, is applauding today's milestone. Halbritter and fellow Change the Mascot leader National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata said in a joint statement:

“Today's victory brings us just one step away from making history. We applaud the bill's author Assemblyman Luis A. Alejo and California's lawmakers for taking a bold stand by demanding an end to the use of the hurtful R-word epithet. Our country's future lies in the hands of the next generation, so by removing this demeaning term from the vernacular at our schools, we are helping set the foundation for a more accepting and respectful society and a more compassionate and brighter tomorrow.”

The California Racial Mascots Act would prohibit public schools from using the term R-dskins as a school or athletic team name, mascot, or nickname beginning January 1, 2017. The legislation originally passed the Assembly in May, but returned to the chamber for a final vote after being amended when the Senate approved a similar measure earlier this week.

Schools from all across the United States have also elected to end their use of this derogatory, dictionary-defined slur. This summer, Northern Indiana's Goshen Community School Board, the Lancaster Central School District of New York, the Oregon Board of Education, Madison (WI) School Board and Capitol Hill High School in Oklahoma all acted to remove the R-word from their schools. The Houston Independent School District and Conrad Schools of Science in Delaware also took steps to change the schools' R-word mascots. Students at Cooperstown High School in New York helped jumpstart the Change the Mascot movement in 2013 when they voted to drop the R-word slur as their school's nickname.

Change the Mascot is a grassroots campaign that works to educate the public about the damaging effects on Native Americans arising from the continued use of the R-word. This civil and human rights movement has helped reshape the debate surrounding the Washington team's name and brought the issue to the forefront of social consciousness. Since its launch, Change the Mascot has garnered support from a diverse coalition of prominent advocates including elected officials from both parties, Native American tribes, sports icons, leading journalists and news publications, civil and human rights organizations and religious leaders.

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