



# Change the Mascot!

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## California Senate Overwhelmingly Passes Historic Legislation to Eliminate “R-dskins” from Schools Statewide

*The grassroots Change the Mascot movement is praising passage of landmark legislation by the California State Senate which will remove the dictionary-defined R-word slur as a mascot from all of public schools statewide. Now headed back to the Assembly for a final vote before going on to the desk of Governor Jerry Brown to be signed into law, this historic legislation puts added pressure to change the Washington team’s name on the NFL, which has three teams in the state of California.*

**Oneida Nation Homelands (Sept. 9, 2015)** The California State Senate last night passed a landmark bill (25-10) that will remove the R-word mascot from all public schools, making California the first state in history to place a statewide ban on the dictionary-defined R-word slur. The 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 the Senate’s 25-10 passage of Assembly Bill 30 (AB 30) - The California Racial Mascots Act. Since the Senate amended the legislation, which was previously passed in the State Assembly, it now moves back to the chamber for a final vote before heading to the desk of Governor Jerry Brown to be signed into law.

National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata and Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter, leaders of the Change the Mascot movement, praised the momentous news, saying:

“We applaud the California Senate for its vote and congratulate and thank Assemblyman Luis Alejo for having the moral courage to author this bill and to shepherd it through the political process in California. We also applaud student activist Dakota Kicking Bear Brown, all those who testified before the California Senate alongside Change the Mascot, and the dozens of Native American, civil rights and religious organizations and thought leaders who spoke out in support of this historic legislation. This milestone is a major victory for everyone continuing the fight to bring an end to the use of this demeaning epithet in California and all across the country.

“Faced with this latest development, the National Football League must now try to reconcile how it can keep defending the use of a racial slur when that the most populous state in the country, which is also home to three of the league’s teams, deems too offensive for its own public school system.”

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.

As Senator Ed Hernandez (D-West Covina) stated, the measure follows a nationwide move by schools “away from the outdated and offensive name.”

In addition to California’s legislation, schools and educational systems all across the country have also come the decision to retire the outdated slur. Students at Cooperstown High School in New York voted to drop the R-word slur as their school’s nickname in 2013. They served as an inspiration to the Change the Mascot campaign and also led the way for many others who have taken steps to remove the R-word from their schools, including the Oklahoma City School Board, the Houston Independent School District, Lancaster Central School District Board in New York, the Oregon Board of Education, Madison (WI) School Board and Conrad Schools of Science in Delaware.

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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