



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change the Mascot Praises Adidas for Momentous Offer to Help End Offensive Native American Mascots

Oneida Nation Homelands (Nov. 5, 2015) The Change the Mascot campaign is applauding adidas for its announcement today that it will assist U.S. high schools with changing their mascots or logos from “potentially harmful Native American imagery or symbolism.” The new initiative will provide financial assistance and free design resources to schools nationwide to help ensure that the change is not cost prohibitive.

Change the Mascot leaders Jackie Pata, Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians, and Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter said in response to this momentous news:

“This is a tremendous display of corporate leadership by adidas. We hope that a number of companies including FedEx, whose name adorns the Washington NFL team's stadium, will step forward and follow adidas's lead. Adidas clearly understands that in 2015, businesses cannot sit on the sideline on this issue and that they must choose which side they are on. It is inspiring to see that adidas has chosen to be on the side of inclusivity and mutual respect and has set an example for others to follow.

“This remarkable stand against racism by adidas illustrates that the issue of ending the use of the R-word is not going away, but is instead gaining momentum as people understand the damaging impacts of this racial slur.”

Mark King, President of adidas Group North America said today in a statement: “High school social identities are central to the lives of young athletes, so it’s important to create a climate that feels open to everyone who wants to compete. But the issue is much bigger. These social identities affect the whole student body and, really, entire communities. In many cities across our nation, the high school and its sports teams take center stage in the community and the mascot and team names become an everyday rallying cry.”

The growing movement to end the use of Native American mascots, particularly the dictionary-defined R-word slur, is surging forward all across the nation. This latest development comes on the heels of California signing into law an historic bill, which will remove all R-word mascots from every public school statewide.

All across the country, school boards, administrators and students themselves are also making the decision to give up this offensive term. 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 Northern Indiana’s Goshen Community School Board, the Lancaster Central School District of New York, the Oregon Board of Education, Madison (WI) School Board, Capitol Hill High School in Oklahoma, The Houston Independent School District 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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