



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change the Mascot Praises U.S. Department of Labor's Center for Civil Rights for Promoting an Inclusive Work Environment Free of the Washington NFL Team's Offensive R-word Name

Oneida Nation Homelands (Nov. 23, 2015) The Change the Mascot campaign is applauding the U.S. Department of Labor's Center for Civil Rights for its efforts to create a welcoming and inclusive work environment. The group requested that no Washington NFL team jerseys, paraphernalia and memorabilia be worn to a football-themed staff party held on Friday.

Recognizing that the Washington team's offensive name is a serious civil and human rights issue, the email invitation to the party stated: "It has been respectfully requested that employees voluntarily refrain from wearing clothing or other sports memorabilia that promote Washington, D.C.'s professional football team, the [R-dskins], or other teams that use names, characters, etc. that may portray American Indians or other cultures in a derogatory manner." An email from an office manager forwarding the party invitation added about the ban on Washington NFL jerseys: "Please join me in promoting an inclusive environment for all employees and be conscientious about how we represent our values as a civil rights office."

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 decision by the Labor Department's Center for Civil Rights:

“We applaud the U.S. Department of Labor for seeking to foster a more inclusive and respectful environment for its employees by recognizing the serious harm caused by use of the demeaning and degrading R-word racial slur. Given that the use of the R-word is a civil rights issue, it is particularly heartening to see the Labor Department's Center for Civil Rights take a stand against the epithet. Government bodies, schools, places of employment, sports and civic leaders, civil rights and religious organizations have all made it clear that the mascot is offensive and its use creates hostility and harms people of color. Ending the use of the R-word as the Washington NFL team's mascot is not an issue of political correctness, it is a civil rights issue.”

The news from the Department of Labor follows a recently enacted law in California eliminating the slur as a mascot from all of the state's public schools. It also comes on the heels of news from adidas that it will provide assistance to any high school in the country wanting to change its mascot or logo from ‘potentially harmful Native American imagery or symbolism.’”

[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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