



National  
Congress of  
American  
Indians



# Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Change the Mascot Applauds Central Conference of American Rabbis and Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism for Urging Washington NFL Team to Change R-word Name

**Oneida Nation Homelands (Dec. 14, 2015)** The Change the Mascot campaign is applauding the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism for calling again on the Washington NFL team to change its offensive R-word name and mascot.

Letters from the two leading Reform Jewish organizations reiterating their opposition to the team's name were delivered to the franchise's headquarters today by Rebrand Washington Football (RWF), a group of fans of the team who also want its demeaning name to change. RWF also delivered petitions bearing more than 1,600 signatures calling for a new team name, along with a third letter from its founding members.

In response to today's developments, Change the Mascot leaders Jackie Pata, Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians, and Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter said the following:

“We want to thank the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism for their strong calls on the Washington NFL team to finally do the right thing and stop degrading Native Americans with its offensive team name and mascot. We commend Rebrand Washington Football for its dedicated efforts, which demonstrate that there is a growing movement to end the use of the R-word slur, even by the team’s own fans.

“What has become increasingly evident all across the country is that this racist epithet has no place being publicly marketed and celebrated in America by the NFL. Continued use of the offensive term ‘R-dskin’ is a serious civil rights issue and moral issue that can no longer be ignored.”

The Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism are among numerous religious organization and leaders from a number of different faith communities that have united in their opposition to the racial slur. In June, The United Church of Christ passed a resolution calling for the team to change its name, and encouraging the more than 1.1 million members of its 5,100+ churches to boycott all team games and merchandise until the moniker is dropped.

In late 2013, more than 70 D.C.-area clergy members sent a letter to the NFL and Washington team owner Dan Snyder calling for the Washington team to change its name, and two leading D.C.-area rabbis published a CNN op-ed taking a strong stand against the Washington team’s use of the R-word. The Council on American-Islamic Relations has also demanded a name change from the team.

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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