



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change the Mascot Responds to Washington NFL Team's Attempt to Protect Use of R-Word Racial Slur with Supreme Court Special Petition

Following news that the Washington NFL team has filed an unusual, special petition to add their case to another pending matter, in an attempt to defend the trademark of their offensive name, Change the Mascot has released the following statement.

Oneida Nation Homelands (April 26, 2016) The Change the Mascot campaign today responded to news that the Washington NFL team is attempting to bypass a federal appeals court and has filed a special petition with the U.S. Supreme Court seeking to protect their team name, which is a dictionary-defined slur. The franchise made an unusual move by asking to have its case heard alongside that of another group also seeking to trademark their name. The Supreme Court has not at this point agreed to hear the case.

“Desperate times call for desperate measures, and the Washington team is trying to jump through legal loopholes while a growing number of Americans, and even our federal courts, are demanding an end to the demeaning R-word slur,” said Change the Mascot leader and Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter. “Given this reality, the team has been left with few viable options given their unwillingness to simply accept that slur needs to go.”

“Instead of making a positive change in the spirit of mutual respect and progress, the NFL franchise is reportedly asking the Supreme Court to declare that it somehow has a special constitutional right to government-supported bigotry. The First Amendment does not guarantee anyone such a right -- not even billionaire owner Dan Snyder. The Constitution, however, does guarantee basic respect for civil rights and equality, which is all that people of color have asked by urging the NFL to stop promoting a racial slur as the Washington team's name. We hope the highest court in the land stands on the right side of history and honors the spirit and letter of the Constitution by ignoring this absurdly frivolous appeal.”

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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