



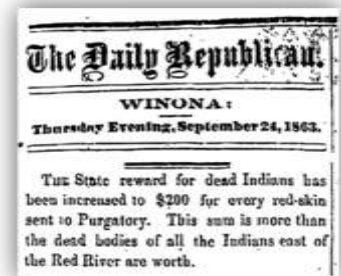
Change the Mascot!

The Change the Mascot campaign is a civil rights and human rights effort asking the NFL to stop using the dictionary-defined racial slur as the name of the Washington football team. Since the campaign launched in 2013, Native American groups, athletes, sports icons, school boards, city councils, state legislators, media organizations, civil rights groups, religious leaders, Members of Congress and the President of the United States have all said it is time for the Washington team to make a change.

Why Does The R-Word Matter?

Some say: "It honors you! Redsk*n isn't offensive, you are being too sensitive."
What is the real history of the name?

Redsk*n isn't a benign classification of a person's skin tone. Not only has it been flung at our people in hatred, it also refers to the literal "red skin" bounty hunters would collect in order to be paid for the number of Natives they slaughtered. These men would **murder Native people then rip the skin from their bodies in order to receive payment**. It isn't a term that honors the "strength, courage, pride, and respect" so many argue it does. It is a term born of the violence Native Americans have been experiencing for hundreds of years.



Today the word is a **dictionary defined offensive term** and is widely acknowledged as a slur – a racist, hateful word used to hurt or disparage someone. It is so offensive that the U.S. Trademark and Patent Office has refused to grant trademarks to products bearing the R-Word calling it “a **derogatory slang word.**”

Using the word can have severe legal consequences:

- if one child called another child a "redsk*n," it would be **bullying**;
- if one adult referred to another as a "redski*n" at work, it would be **harassment**;
- if "redsk*n" was used in the course of a crime or scrawled on someone's home, the perpetrator would be charged with a **hate crime**.

The use of the R-Word has real public health consequences in Native American communities.

Studies by organizations like the **American Psychological Association** and the **American Sociological Association** and prominent psychologists such as Dr. Michael Friedman, Ph.D. have shown that the use of a dictionary-defined racial slur has real harmful psychological effects on Native Americans and has dire public health and well-being consequences as well, regardless of intent.

Being the subject of a racial epithet causes damage to an individual's self-esteem and can affect a child's academic performance, contributing to the many issues facing Native Americans including suicide, unemployment and poverty.

Are there Native Americans who are offended and feel the team should change the name?

Yes. As with all conversations about language, there are a wide variety of opinions. It is true some Native people do not find the word offensive. However, thousands of Native people are offended and hurt by the continued use of the word. **More than 100 Native American organizations** across the United States have spoken out in opposition to the use of the R-Word mascot of the Washington D.C. NFL team including the **National Congress of the American Indian** and the **United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.** Several tribal governments and organizations have passed resolutions condemning the use of the R-Word by the NFL including the Hoh Indian Tribe, Penobscot Nation, Inter Tribal Council of Arizona and the Poarch Band of Creek Indian.

Slurs and offensive words used to describe other ethnic groups are not acceptable – why is this one?

Why is this a global issue?

The National Football League is a \$9 billion-a-year global marketing machine. Unfortunately, the first and sometimes only exposure many non-Native Americans have to images of Native American people and culture is through the NFL team in Washington D.C. The use of the racial slur by the NFL repeatedly exposes Native Americans to a harmful stereotype and condones the use of the term by non-Native Americans.

What other groups have stood in solidarity with Native Americans opposed to the mascot?

Major media outlets, journalists, religious leaders, civil rights organizations and elected officials throughout the United States have voiced strong opposition to the use of the racial epithet.

- Major media outlets including: Slate, the Philadelphia Daily News, DCist, Washington City Paper and journalist including Sports Illustrated's Peter King, USA Today sports writer Christine Brennan, Mike Wise, Bomani Jones, Bob Costas and many others.
- Athletes have always played a critical role in civil rights crusades, and the Change the Mascot campaign is no exception. From NFL Hall of Famer Art Monk to star cornerback Richard Sherman to all-pro linebacker Jason Taylor, professional football icons have said it is time for Washington to consider changing its name.
- More than 50 Civil Rights organizations including: The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Inc., Anti Defamation League, American Civil Liberties Union.

- Republican and Democratic Members of Congress have been calling on the Washington team to change its name for many years. In 2013, a group of U.S. House members wrote a letter calling on the league to change the name. Later that year, President Obama publicly declared that he believes it is time for the Washington team to consider changing the name. Then in May of 2014, 49 U.S. Senators signed a letter written by the Senate Majority Leader reiterating the same message.
- In May of 2014, The United Nations independent expert whose job is to defend the rights of indigenous people called on the NFL to stop using the R-word because, as the UN said, it is a "hurtful reminder of the long history of mistreatment of Native American people in the United States." The expert said: "(The term) is inextricably linked to a history of suffering and dispossession, and that it is understood to be a pejorative and disparaging term."
- In October of 2015 Gov. Brown of California signed the California Racial Mascots Act, a law that eliminates the dictionary-defined R-word slur as a mascot from all of the state's public schools.

Many non-Native American schools/colleges have stopped using ethnic mascots

In 2005 the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) established guidelines to direct colleges to end the use of offensive ethnic team mascots.

- More than 200 American colleges, schools and school districts have all stopped using racially offensive Native American mascot names including the R-Word. There are only a few dozen left that still use the name.
- Numerous schools from all across the country including districts in Texas, Indiana, Oklahoma, Oregon, Wisconsin and New York have also elected to end their use of derogatory mascots such as the R-word. Students at Cooperstown High School in New York helped jumpstart the Change the Mascot movement in 2013 when they voted to drop the R-word slur as their school's nickname.
- An Ontario football team from Canada's National Chapter Amateur Football Association has dropped the nickname in favor of a new one beginning 2014.