



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Joel Barkin

Oneida Nation VP of Communications

315.361.8173

jbarkin@oneida-nation.org

Change the Mascot Decries Use of the R-Word Racial Slur as Thanksgiving Approaches

The grassroots campaign working to educate the public about the R-word's harmful effects is urging the NFL and its Washington franchise to change the name

Oneida Nation Homelands – November 23, 2016 – As Americans prepare for tomorrow's Thanksgiving holiday, the Change the Mascot campaign is confronting the NFL and its Washington franchise for their continued promotion of a dictionary-defined racial slur that degrades Native Americans; this time on the very holiday that celebrates their role in our country's history.

On Thanksgiving Day, the Washington team will play the Dallas Cowboys in a nationally televised game on FOX, subjecting millions across the country to the offensive R-word epithet as their families gather for the holiday.

Change the Mascot leaders Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter and National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata issued the following statement:

"Thanksgiving is often the only time that people even think about Native Americans, our heritage, and our important role in this country, yet on this holiday we will once again be tainted by the degrading R-word racial slur and damaging imagery that reduces us to less-than-human, cartoonish mascots. At the very time our society is increasingly consumed by racial division, it is unfortunate that the NFL continues to be a leader in promoting this kind of blatant bigotry.

“Defenders of the R-word slur have claimed time and again that there are bigger issues than the Washington team name facing Indian Country, with Washington team owner Dan Snyder even pledging to address those challenges. Yet, as Native Americans protest to defend their most basic rights in North Dakota, self-stated advocates from the NFL have been noticeably absent and silent, while continuing to profit off a slur that demeans those on the front lines.

“The dehumanization of Native Americans across all fronts must end. The absurdity of using a racial slur proven to harm Native children on the Thanksgiving holiday should serve as a wake-up call to the NFL and the Washington team. There is no place for the R-word slur in America in 2016, on Thanksgiving or any other day of the year.”

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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