



# Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:  
Joel Barkin  
Oneida Nation V.P. for Communications  
(315) 361-8173  
[jbarkin@oneida-nation.org](mailto:jbarkin@oneida-nation.org)

## Change the Mascot Commends MLB Commissioner for Call to “Transition Away” from Cleveland’s Native American Logo

*Amid reports that MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred has been urging the Cleveland Indians to transition away from the team’s Chief Wahoo logo, the Change the Mascot campaign is praising his actions and calling on NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell to follow suit with the Washington NFL team’s use of the R-word slur.*

**Oneida Nation Homelands (April 13, 2017)** The Change the Mascot campaign today commends Major League Commissioner Rob Manfred for urging Cleveland’s baseball team to formulate a plan of action to move the team away from its offensive, cartoonish mascot, which would be an important step toward eliminating Native American-themed mascots in professional sports. The New York Times has reported that Manfred is putting pressure on the Cleveland Indians to transition away from their offensive Chief Wahoo logo.

Change the Mascot, which leads the nationwide effort to change the offensive R-word name and mascot of the Washington NFL team, today praised Manfred.

“It is very encouraging to hear that Commissioner Manfred is willing to stand up and take real action to help eliminate the damaging mascotization of Native Americans in professional sports,” said Change the Mascot leaders, National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata and Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter.

“Portraying an entire race of people as cartoonish mascots is not a victimless crime. Social science research has proven that use of these images and derogatory slurs, such as the R-word, have detrimental physiological impacts on the self-image and mental health of Native Americans, especially our youth who often look up to professional athletes as role models.”

“Commissioner Manfred’s actions to better Major League Baseball should serve as a wakeup call to National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell, who can and should press for ending the use of the dictionary-defined R-word slur by the Washington NFL team. This derogatory epithet – used to demean Native Americans for centuries – should not be publicly used and marketed in 2017 without consequence.”

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.

###

Follow us on Twitter:  
[@ChangeDCMascot](https://twitter.com/ChangeDCMascot)  
[@OneidaNatnNews](https://twitter.com/OneidaNatnNews)