



# Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Top Civil Rights Organizations Urge Media Not to Use Washington NFL Team's R-word Name on Thanksgiving**

**Oneida Nation Homelands – Nov. 21, 2017** – A coalition of the country's most prominent advocacy and civil rights organizations today called on media organizations to refrain from using the offensive R-word name of the Washington NFL team during their Thanksgiving Day coverage. The Washington franchise will take on the New York Giants in a high-profile, nationally broadcast game on Thursday.

Endorsees of the just-released letter include: NAACP, National Urban League, Advancement Project, Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum, Demos, PICO National Network, Race Forward, UnidosUS, National Congress of American Indians, Oneida Indian Nation and Change the Mascot.

“Thanksgiving is often the only major American holiday that brings Native people and their history into the national conversation. Using the holiday to promote the Washington team’s derogatory name will further marginalize Native Americans who have already experienced histories of oppression and violence,” the letter states. “Media organizations can do their jobs by reporting on the team, but also refrain from using the slur and denigrating Native people.”

The letter goes on to highlight the substantial and tangible destruction caused by the use of the R-word. It points to social science research proving that such mascots and slurs lower self-esteem and mood among Native American youth, and also increase negative attitudes towards Native Americans among other races.

“In light of all of the evidence of destruction caused by the R-word’s use, we are hopeful that you will pledge to honor this modest request,” the letter continues. “At a time when our political debate is so polarized, media organizations should be able to agree to not explicitly promote a racial slur.”

Today’s plea to media organizations is part of Change the Mascot’s grassroots movement 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, the campaign has continually 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. A full list of Change the Mascot supporters can be found at:  
<http://www.changethemascot.org/supporters-of-change/>.

The full text of today’s letter to media organizations can be found at:  
<http://www.changethemascot.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CHANGE-THE-MASCOT-Broadcaster-Letter-Nov-21-2017.pdf>