



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As Second Series of Ads Launch, NFL Commish Says D.C. Team "Needs to Be Listening" to Critics

With the Change the Mascot Campaign Expanding to Cities Throughout America, the Associated Press says Goodell's Statement Shows "Momentum for a Change Seems to be Growing"

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (September 12, 2013) As the Oneida Indian Nation of New York today brings its ad campaign urging the team to drop its offensive name to every city Washington's pro football team will visit this season, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell has declared that league and team officials "need to be listening" to the mounting calls for change.

The commissioner's declaration, made during an interview with D.C.'s 106.7 "The Fan," comes just days after the Oneida Indian Nation launched the first ad in its "Change the Mascot"

campaign (www.changethemascot.org) The Nation is today releasing its next ad - this one to air in Wisconsin in advance of the Washington team's game this weekend with Green Bay.

Reporting on Goodell's comments, the Associated Press noted that "momentum for a change seems to be growing."

Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter said, "We are encouraged to see that Mr. Goodell is joining us and so many others in calling for a serious discussion about ending the Washington team's use of a racial slur. Mr. Goodell is absolutely right - it is time for the Washington team's owners to start listening. If Dan Snyder continues to be dismissive of the concerns of Native Americans and disdainful of the fact his franchise bears a name that is defined in the dictionary as an epithet, it will be incumbent upon the other owners, the League and the Commissioner to step in and take action."

The Oneida Indian Nation's newest ad reinforces that particular point. Entitled "Dictionary," it reviews how the R-word is a hurtful epithet relegating indigenous peoples to second-class status.

The ad will air on WTMJ, the flagship station of the Green Bay Packers in Wisconsin, in advance of the Washington team's game at Green Bay on September 15th. You can find the ad at www.changethemascot.org. Other ads will soon be running each week in every city the Washington NFL team visits.

Last week, an NFL spokesman said the league "respects that reasonable people may have differing views" and insisted that "the name from its origin has always intended to be positive and has always been used by the team in a highly respectful manner." But as the Oneida Nation's new ad points out, the dictionary defines Redskin as an "offensive" label for Native Americans - one that was used against indigenous people when they were forcibly removed from their lands at gunpoint.

"These ads on sports radio stations ask our fellow NFL fans to stand with us and join this campaign because we all want the league to succeed," said Halbritter. "Succeeding means creating a brand that is built on inclusion and mutual respect, not on racial slurs and disrespect. This is a word that few would ever use in casual conversation when talking to a Native American. That's a sign that it shouldn't be used to market a professional football team."

Text of the "Dictionary" radio spot:

Narrator: "NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell defines the nickname Redskins as quote "a unifying force that stands for strength, courage, pride and respect."

"Really? The dictionary defines it as quote: "an offensive term for Native Americans."

Ray Halbritter: "I'm Ray Halbritter, the representative of the Oneida Indian Nation, a proud sponsor of the NFL. When Washington's team visits your city this week, there is something you should know. The word "redskins" is deeply hurtful to Native Americans. It is what our people were called as our lands were taken."

“It is the insult Native American parents heard as their children were taken. And, sadly, it is the racial slur the NFL continues to use to describe the team that represents our Nation’s capital. It is simply wrong to use the offensive term “redskins” to sell anything, much less an NFL team.”

“Go to changethemascot.org and help us tell the NFL to stop using the name “redskins” - we deserve to be treated as what we are: Americans.”

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