



**Change the Mascot!**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Oneida Indian Nation Praises Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, the St. Paul City Council and Former NFL Player Joey Browner for Demanding Name Change from Washington NFL Team**

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (November 7, 2013) The Oneida Indian Nation today praised Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, the St. Paul City Council and former NFL player Joey Browner for taking a stand against the racist mascot of Washington's NFL team. The Minnesota elected officials and former Minnesota Vikings safety expressed their disapproval and disappointment in the continued use of the racial epithet, and said a name change from the team is overdue.

During a press conference today Governor Dayton said: "I believe the name should be changed." Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak released a statement saying: "It has never been right to disrespect the indigenous people of our country, and it is especially wrong to do it in 2013 with the name of a team that represents our nation's capital."

The St. Paul City Council signed an open letter to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and Washington team owner Dan Snyder "expressing their disapproval of the Washington Redskins name and mascot."

Former Vikings safety Joey Browner said of the name: “It should be changed,” adding “I want to show that I’m indigenous and I want to show a conscious awareness to the world. We need to change the imagery presented to our children.”

These officials and former NFL player have joined the growing national Change the Mascot campaign just days after the Minneapolis City Council issued an open letter to Washington team owner Dan Snyder and NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell asking them to change the offensive name. Earlier this week, the D.C. Council unanimously passed a resolution calling their home team’s name "racist and derogatory" and urging Snyder to change the mascot.

“We want to thank Governor Dayton, Mayor Rybak, the city council members from St. Paul and Minneapolis and Joey Browner for taking a strong stand against this racial slur that dehumanizes native peoples,” said Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter. “We look forward to other NFL players, mayors, city council members and elected officials at the local, regional, state and federal levels stepping forward and following their example.”

“The question now facing the NFL and team owner Dan Snyder is which side of history they want to be on.” Halbritter said. “It’s a question many Americans are asking themselves, as evidenced by the surge in support for ending use of this harmful racial epithet.”

In recent months, a growing movement of people including senior members of Congress from both parties, civil rights leaders, public health organizations, Native American tribes, and even President Obama have spoken out against the derogatory name.

Ahead of tonight’s game between the Vikings and Washington, Change the Mascot is running radio ads in Minnesota condemning the use of hate speech in Washington’s NFL team’s name.

Minnesota Congresswoman Betty McCollum has been a leading force in the campaign against the organization’s continued use of the R-word epithet.

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