



Change the Mascot!

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Civil Rights Icon and Olympian John Carlos and Former Washington, D.C. NFL Player Tre' Johnson Speak Out Against the Washington Mascot

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (June 4, 2014) The National Congress of American Indians and the Oneida Indian Nation today praised legendary Olympian and activist John Carlos and celebrated former Washington NFL player Tre' Johnson, for calling upon the Washington, D.C. NFL team to change its derogatory team name. Carlos became an internationally recognized icon after receiving a medal at the 1968 Olympics and raised his gloved fist in protest against racial discrimination, and Johnson is a former Washington R*dskins offensive lineman (1999-2000, and 2002) and was selected to play in the 1999 Pro Bowl. Carlos and Johnson have now added their names to a growing list of current and former NFL players who have taken a stand against the continued use of the dictionary-defined R*dskins slur.

The comments by Carlos and Johnson appeared in a column by Mike Wise published in The Washington Post yesterday evening.*

“I definitely think the name should be changed; it’s 2014,” Johnson said. “We’re progressive and intellectual enough to realize something like that is offensive. And it’s offensive because a group of people that that moniker represents has said so.”

Carlos also has strong words about the growing opposition to the team’s name: “For tribes or reservations to say they’re uncomfortable with you using that name, and then have players say they are just as uncomfortable, and the owner stands there, saying he’ll never change the name?”

How do you get away with that? To this day, there has been no real negotiation or real listening and understanding that I know of.”

In a joint statement, Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter and NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Pata stated: “Tre’ Johnson, a legendary member of the Washington, D.C. NFL team, and John Carlos, a civil rights sports icon, have added their powerful voices to the growing Change the Mascot campaign against the demeaning mascotization of Native peoples. NFL officials and the Washington, D.C. team owner have a choice: they can continue following in the footsteps of the infamous segregationist George Preston Marshall who originally decided to use this dictionary defined racial slur as the D.C. team’s name. Or they can stand on the right side of history and retire this racist moniker.”

The national Change the Mascot campaign has garnered support from bipartisan political leaders, civil rights groups, faith leaders, sports icons, leading journalists, Native American organizations, and even President Obama.

*John Carlos, who raised a gloved fist on Olympic podium in 1968, wants to know what today’s athletes stand for, 6/3/14, http://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/john-carlos-who-raised-a-gloved-fist-on-olympic-podium-in-1968-wants-to-know-what-todays-athletes-stand-for/2014/06/03/f6f9e134-eb55-11e3-93d2-ed4be1f5d9e_story.html

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