



Change the Mascot!

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Oneida Indian Nation and National Congress of American Indians Praise U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for Cancelling Washington NFL Team's R-Word Trademark

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (June 18, 2014) In a landmark ruling issued today, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) cancelled the Washington NFL team's federal trademark registration of the term "Redskins," a decision being praised by the Oneida Indian Nation's [Change the Mascot campaign](#) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). Deeming the term "disparaging to Native Americans," the ruling by the USPTO's Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB) cancels the trademark status of the name, no longer providing the team with legal rights to the term.*

“The U.S. Patent Office has now restated the obvious truth that Native Americans, civil rights leaders, athletes, religious groups, state legislative bodies, Members of Congress and the president have all echoed: taxpayer resources cannot be used to help private companies profit off the promotion of dictionary defined racial slurs,” said Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter and NCAI Executive Director Jackie Pata in a joint statement. “If the most basic sense of morality, decency and civility has not yet convinced the Washington team and the NFL to stop using this hateful slur, then hopefully today’s patent ruling will, if only because it imperils the ability of the team’s billionaire owner to keep profiting off the denigration and dehumanization of Native Americans.”

Earlier this year, the USPTO rejected an application to register the trademark of "Redskins Hog Rinds," citing growing opposition to the name and five separate dictionary definitions showing the offensive meaning of the R-word.**

Native American leader Suzan Shown Harjo was instrumental in today’s victory for the Change the Mascot movement. A leading advocate for decades, Harjo originally filed a trademark lawsuit against the Washington team name in 1992 and has been at the center of continued efforts to keep legal pressure on teams with mascots that are offensive and demeaning to Native peoples.

“On behalf of the Oneida Indian Nation, the Change the Mascot campaign and NCAI, we would like to sincerely thank Suzan Shown Harjo and Amanda Blackhorse for their tireless efforts that helped lead to today’s historic milestone,” Halbritter and Pata said.

This momentous ruling from the USPTO comes on the heels of 50 U.S. Senators sending a letter to NFL officials demanding a name change, the unanimous passage of a New York State resolution calling on pro sports leagues to end their use of racial slurs, and 77 Native American, religious and civil rights organizations sending a letter to all NFL players encouraging them to stand up against the R-word name.

It also follows a growing chorus of Change the Mascot support from top political leaders across the country, including city councils, mayors, governors, and even the President of the United States. Faith leaders, sports icons, journalists, publications and Native American tribes have also taken a strong stance against the Washington team’s continued use of the offensive R-word.

Despite the mounting calls for change, Washington team owner Dan Snyder and NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell continue to defend the team’s name.

Change the Mascot’s grassroots campaign plans to continue its efforts into the offseason and 2014 NFL season. Since its launch last year, the movement has run ongoing nationwide radio ads pushing for a change, and has garnered support from a growing list of thought leaders from across the country. Learn more at www.changethemascot.org.

**U.S. Patent office cancels Redskins trademark registration, says name is disparaging, 6.18.14,*
www.washingtonpost.com/local/us-patent-office-cancels-redskins-trademark-registration-says-name-is-disparaging/2014/06/18/e7737bb8-f6ee-11e3-8aa9-dad2ec039789_story.html

***Pork rinds can't be sold under trademark "Redskins Hog Rinds," agency rules, 1.6.14,*
www.washingtonpost.com/local/pork-rinds-cant-be-sold-under-trademark-redskins-hog-rinds-agency-rules/2014/01/06/954feca4-7726-11e3-b1c5-739e63e9c9a7_story.html

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