



National
Congress of
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Indians

Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder the Latest to Join Change the Mascot Campaign in Calling for an End to Washington NFL Team's Use of R-word Racial Slur

A U.S. District Judge in Maryland has also refused to allow the team's R-word name to be spoken in his court, describing it as an offensive slur against Native Americans.

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (July 14, 2014) The Change the Mascot campaign today is praising U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder for being the latest public figure to speak out against the Washington NFL team's continued use of the dictionary-defined R-word racial slur. Appearing on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, Holder stated: "The name ought to be changed. It's an offensive name...It's a team with a storied history that has huge amounts of support in Washington, D.C., and in the 21st century they could increase their fan base, increase their level of support, if they did something that from my perspective that is so obviously right."

Change the Mascot leaders Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter and National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata said in response to Holder's comments: "We thank Attorney General Eric Holder for standing with the Change the Mascot

campaign in boldly calling for a name change from the Washington NFL team. Mr. Holder's statements are particularly important given the unique history that exists between the Attorney General's office and the Washington NFL team. In 1962, the threat of action by U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy was what finally prompted the Washington team and its racist owner George Preston Marshall to integrate their team, which was the last in the country to do so by a decade. The avowed segregationist Marshall, for whom a section of the Washington team's stadium is still named today, gave the team the racial slur it still carries as its name. Unless current owner Dan Snyder wishes for his legacy to mirror that of George Preston Marshall, then he should heed the calls from millions of Americans to stop using a dictionary-defined racial slur which denigrates and offends Native Americans."

Holder joins a growing chorus of support from prominent public servants at all levels of government, religious and community leaders, civil rights organizations, Native American tribes, top athletes and sports icons, among many others. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office cancelled the team's trademark last month, calling the name "disparaging to Native Americans." In an historic move, 50 U.S. Senators recently sent a letter to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell urging a name change from the team. Even President Obama said last October that he would consider changing the name if he were the owner.

Meanwhile in Maryland, U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte, presiding over a case involving allegations that the Washington NFL team employed a bounty program that rewarded players for injuring opponents, reportedly forbid people from using the R-word in his courtroom, noting that it is an offensive slur against Native Americans. In the case's ruling, Messitte intentionally refrained from using the team's name and added a footnote stating "Pro Football's team is popularly known as the Washington 'Redskins,' but the Court will refrain from using the team name unless reference is made to a direct quote where the name appears."

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To view the news release online, go to: <http://www.oneidaindiannation.com/pressroom/US-Attorney-General-Eric-Holder-the-Latest-to-Join-Change-the-Mascot-Campaign-in-Calling-for-an-End-to-Washington-NFL-Teams-Use-of-R-word-Racial-Slur-267074761.html>

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