



# Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Change the Mascot Praises The Washington Post for Decision to End its Use of the Washington NFL Team's Offensive R-Word Name

Oneida Nation Homelands (Aug. 22, 2014) The Washington Post today declared that its editorial pages will no longer use the derogatory R-word when referring to the Washington NFL team. "While we wait for the National Football League to catch up with thoughtful opinion and common decency, we have decided that, except when it is essential for clarity or effect, we will no longer use the slur ourselves," The Washington Post said in its statement today.

In response to the decision by one of the country's top newspapers to boldly oppose the name of its hometown NFL team, National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata and Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter, who lead the Change the Mascot Campaign stated:

“The Washington Post Editorial Page has made the appropriate and honorable decision to no longer use the name. When news organizations use this word in any context, they are endorsing it and legitimizing it by inherently promoting it as an acceptable term. It is not acceptable - it is a dictionary-defined racial slur that countless Native Americans, civil rights groups, religious groups and elected officials from across the country have said should be changed. For news organizations, there is no “objective” way for a media outlet to regularly promote this term without simultaneously endorsing it. Media outlets must decide which side they are on. Are they going to continue promoting a racial slur or are they going to stand on the right side of history? We hope they choose the latter by following the lead of The Washington Post and other publications that are no longer willing to tolerate this term.”

The Washington Post's decision to have its editorial page stop referring to the team by the offensive R-word places it in the company of a wide variety of other news publications and leading journalists. Mother Jones, which also has opted to stop using the name, has a list on its website which includes the following publications: Oregonian, Washington City Paper, Kansas City Star, DCist, Gregg Easterbrook ([ESPN.com](http://ESPN.com)), Slate, The New Republic, Tim Graham (Buffalo News), John Smallwood (Philadelphia Daily News), Peter King (Sports Illustrated and [MMQB.com](http://MMQB.com)), Bill Simmons (ESPN and Grantland), Christine Brennan (USA Today), Matthew Berry ([ESPN.com](http://ESPN.com)), San Francisco Chronicle, Syracuse New Times, Seattle Times, Richmond Free Press, Orange County Register, William C. Rhodan (New York Times), Washington Business Journal.

In addition to prominent journalists and publications, the [Change the Mascot](#) campaign has continually garnered a wealth of support from top thought leaders across the country and internationally. Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle, civil rights and advocacy organizations, top sports icons, religious groups, and even President Obama have all spoken out against the team's continued use of the epithet.

A link and full text of The Washington Post statement is below:

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/washington-post-editorials-will-no-longer-use-redskins-for-the-local-nfl-team/2014/08/22/1413db62-2940-11e4-958c-268a320a60ce\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/washington-post-editorials-will-no-longer-use-redskins-for-the-local-nfl-team/2014/08/22/1413db62-2940-11e4-958c-268a320a60ce_story.html)

### **Washington Post editorials will no longer use ‘Redskins’ for the local NFL team**

By Editorial Board August 22 at 1:01 PM

THIS PAGE has for many years urged the local football team to [change its name](#). The term “Redskins,” [we wrote in 1992](#), “is really pretty offensive.” The team owner then, Jack Kent Cooke, disagreed, and the owner now, [Daniel M. Snyder](#), disagrees, too. But the matter seems

clearer to us now than ever, and while we wait for the National Football League to catch up with thoughtful opinion and common decency, we have decided that, except when it is essential for clarity or effect, we will no longer use the slur ourselves. That's the standard we apply to all offensive vocabulary, and the team name unquestionably offends not only many Native Americans but many other Americans, too.

We were impressed this week by the quiet integrity of Mike Carey, who recently retired after 19 seasons as one of the NFL's most respected referees. [As recounted by Post columnist Mike Wise](#), Mr. Carey asked the league not to assign him to officiate any Washington games and, since 2006, the league granted his request. He never made any announcement about it. "It just became clear to me that to be in the middle of the field, where something disrespectful is happening, was probably not the best thing for me," Mr. Carey said.

We don't believe that fans who are attached to the name have racist feeling or intent, any more than does Mr. Snyder. But the fact remains: The word is insulting. You would not dream of calling anyone a "redskin" to his or her face. You wouldn't let your son or daughter use it about a person, even within the privacy of your home. As Post columnist Charles Krauthammer [wrote on the opposite page last year](#), "I wouldn't want to use a word that defines a people — living or dead, offended or not — in a most demeaning way."

What we are discussing here is a change only for editorials. Unlike our colleagues who cover sports and other news, we on the editorial board have the luxury of writing about the world as we would like it to be. Nor do we intend to impose our policy on our readers. If you write a letter about football and want to use the team name, we aren't going to stop you.

But as Mr. Carey noted, every time the R-word is used, something disrespectful is happening. We hope Mr. Snyder and the NFL will acknowledge that truth sooner rather than later. In the meantime, we'll do our best not to contribute to the disrespect.

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