



# Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Change the Mascot Applauds New Jersey Lawmakers for Joining Growing Political Movement Against Washington NFL Team's R-word Name

**Oneida Nation Homelands (Oct. 15, 2014)** The Change the Mascot campaign today is praising New Jersey State Assemblymen Patrick Diegnan (D-Middlesex) and Ralph Caputo (D-Essex) for introducing a set of resolutions calling for a name change from the Washington NFL team, requesting that the New York Giants refrain from using the team's R-word name, and urging retailers to voluntarily halt sales of merchandise bearing the dictionary-defined slur.\* The New Jersey lawmakers join a growing list of legislators at the national, state, and local levels across the country who are demonstrating they will no longer tolerate the team's offensive name, and are seeking out ways to encourage the team to finally drop the offensive nickname and mascot.

Change the Mascot leaders Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter and National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata said today: "We thank

Assemblymen Diegnan and Caputo for doing all within their power to help oppose this injustice, and their decision to stand with the Change the Mascot campaign on the right side of history. As more and more political leaders across the nation recognize and speak out about this civil rights and human rights issue, it points ever more clearly to the obvious truth – the R-word is a dictionary-defined racial slur which has no place in the modern-day, mutually respectful society we aspire to embody in the United States in 2014.”

The New Jersey resolution comes after the California State Assembly, the D.C. Council and the New York State Assembly, all passed resolutions within the past year calling upon the team to end its use of the racist epithet. Last year, the city councils of both Minneapolis and St. Paul, as well as Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton and former Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, also voiced their support of a name change from the team.

During a Change the Mascot press conference on Capitol Hill last month, Senator Maria Cantwell announced that she was introducing legislation to eliminate the NFL’s tax-exempt status as long as the league continues to defend and profit off of the R-word slur. The event also featured a diverse coalition of supporters including Congresswomen Eleanor Holmes Norton and Betty McCollum, as well as prominent civil rights and Native American leaders.

In June, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) cancelled the Washington NFL team’s federal trademark registration of the term “R\*dskins.” Just weeks before, 50 U.S. Senators sent a letter to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell declaring that “it’s time for the NFL to endorse a name change for the Washington, D.C. football team.”

Even President Obama has said he would consider changing the name if he were the owner, and former secretary of state Hilary Clinton called it “insensitive” and said “there’s no reason for it to continue as the name of the team in our nation’s capital.”

The grassroots Change the Mascot campaign, led by the Oneida Indian Nation and the National Congress of American Indians, works to educate the public about the damaging use of R-word on Native Americans, and has reshaped the debate surrounding the Washington team’s name and brought the issue to the forefront of social consciousness over the past year. Since its launch, the civil and human rights movement has garnered support from not only political leaders, but a diverse coalition of prominent advocates including Native American tribes, sports icons, top journalists and news publications, civil rights organizations and religious leaders.

\*Giants, N.J. retailers should blacklist Washington Redskins' name, lawmakers say, 10.10.14, [http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/10/giants\\_nj\\_retailers\\_should\\_blacklist\\_washington\\_redskins\\_name\\_lawmakers\\_says.html](http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/10/giants_nj_retailers_should_blacklist_washington_redskins_name_lawmakers_says.html)

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