



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change the Mascot Campaign Praises Oklahoma City School Board Decision to Remove Racist R-Word Mascot from Capitol Hill High

Oneida Nation Homelands (Dec. 9, 2014) The Change the Mascot Campaign today congratulated the Oklahoma City school board for its stand against the use of the R-word as a sports mascot. The board voted 8-0 yesterday to end the use of the dictionary-defined slur by Capitol Hill High School after hearing impassioned pleas from students and community members.

After the vote, District administrators said they will immediately begin eliminating the R-word mascot and will create a committee of students, alumni and community members to identify a new mascot for Capitol Hill High School before the end of the spring semester.

Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter and National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata, leaders of the Change the Mascot campaign, have issued a joint statement today along with Brian Patterson, President of United South and Eastern Tribes (USET). Halbritter, Pata and Patterson stated:

“On behalf of the Change the Mascot movement we would like to express our admiration for the Oklahoma City school board and the broader community for their courageous actions this week.

Capitol Hill High School had used this offensive term for their mascot for nearly 90 years. Washington's NFL team and its owner Dan Snyder, who insist upon continuing to slur people of color with the R-word, could certainly learn a lot from the conscientious community in Oklahoma City. Their actions demonstrate to Snyder that clinging to outdated and offensive epithets out of tradition and a desire to profit from the continued marketing of a slur are not nearly as important as doing the right thing and choosing to stand on the right side of history."

The Change the Mascot campaign has rallied supporters all across America and internationally to urge Washington's NFL team to end its use of the R-word as a team name and mascot. The grassroots movement has garnered support from Native American tribes, sports icons, political leaders from both sides of the aisle, and the President of the United States.

In a seminal moment in 2013, students at Cooperstown High School in New York voted to drop the R-word slur as their school's mascot. Several of the leading student advocates later joined a Change the Mascot educational symposium in Washington, D.C. last fall to talk about their efforts.

Meanwhile, Neshaminy High School in Langhorne, Pennsylvania has made headlines in recent months when the editors and the advisor to the student newspaper banned the R-word, even in the face of punishment. Earlier this year, the Houston Independent School District also announced plans to replace all "inflammatory" mascots including "R*dskins."

As communities throughout the nation make the choice to end the use of this epithet, national headlines continue to question the use of the insensitive and racist slur in the NFL.

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