



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change the Mascot Applauds Lancaster School Board Vote to Remove R-Word Nickname

Oneida Nation Homelands (March 16, 2015) – The grassroots Change the Mascot Campaign, led by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the Oneida Indian Nation, this evening praised a decision by the Lancaster Central School District Board to remove the R-word as the high school team’s mascot.

NCAI Executive Director Jackie Pata and Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter released the following statement:

“We offer our sincere congratulations to the Lancaster Central School District Board for their admirable choice. Tonight the people entrusted to teach our children stood up for what is right. They listened to all sides of the debate and arrived at a fair decision that demonstrates tolerance and respect, and embodies the values that we as Americans hold dear. “

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.

In December 2014, the Oklahoma City school board voted 8-0 to end the use of the dictionary-defined R-word slur by Capitol Hill High School after hearing impassioned pleas from students and community members. The Houston Independent School District also announced plans to replace all "inflammatory" mascots including "R*dskins."***

Led by the National Congress of American Indians and the Oneida Indian Nation, Change the Mascot is a grassroots campaign that works to educate the public about the damaging effects on Native Americans arising from the continued use of the R-word. This civil and human rights movement has helped reshape the debate surrounding the Washington team's name and brought the issue to the forefront of social consciousness.

Since its launch last season, Change the Mascot has garnered support from a diverse coalition of prominent advocates including elected officials from both parties, Native American tribes, sports icons, leading journalists and news publications, civil and human rights organizations and religious leaders.

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