



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change the Mascot Slams Washington Team for Pressuring D.C. Mayor to Slur Native Americans

Today's statement from the national grassroots campaign comes on the heels of reports that Washington's mayor is being encouraged to use the R-word slur even after the District Council passed a unanimous resolution calling upon the team to drop the racist epithet.

Oneida Nation Homelands (May 12, 2015) The Change the Mascot campaign today spoke out against reported efforts by the Washington NFL team to coerce public officials into using a dictionary-defined racial slur against Native Americans. According to multiple sources, Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser has been advised to start using the R-word slur as a way to demonstrate "good faith" toward team owner Dan Snyder.

As a D.C. Councilmember in 2013, Bowser voted in favor of a unanimous resolution calling for the team to change its name and condemning the team's R-word name as a "racist and derogatory" term.

Within Washington, a broad and growing coalition of people of color, political and religious leaders, human and civil rights group, and academic and scholarly organizations have all decried the team's continued use of the racist epithet. Last year, The Washington Post declared that its

editorial pages would no longer use the derogatory R-word when referring to the Washington NFL team. Civil rights icon and Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton, who represents the District in the United States Congress, has also been an outspoken leader in demanding that the team and the NFL drop the racist moniker and mascot.

“The NFL has a long history of trying to pit states and cities against each other when teams consider relocations, but this is the first time the league seems intent on pitting public officials against people of color,” said the leaders of the Change the Mascot campaign, Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter and National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata. “There is no ‘good faith’ in the idea that a public official must slur Native Americans in order to entice a football franchise to consider actually moving to the very city that the team claims to represent. If Roger Goodell and Dan Snyder feel they have to use the threat of location decisions to force public officials to slur Native Americans, then it is a sign of desperation. The NFL should not be leveraging its enormous power to force public officials to denigrate Native Americans. On the contrary, it should be using its power to promote civility, tolerance and basic respect for all people, including people of color.”

In addition to its diverse and growing backing in Washington D.C., Change the Mascot has garnered support from a diverse coalition of Native American tribes, sports icons, leading journalists and news publications, and political leaders from both sides of the aisle from across the country.

The grassroots campaign 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.

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