



# Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Schools in Oregon, Wisconsin and Oklahoma the Latest to Take Action Against Racist R-Word Mascots**

*Momentum continues to build in schools across the county against racist native mascots.*

**Oneida Nation Homelands (May 27, 2015)** In a momentous week, several major educational institutions across the nation took strong actions to eliminate the R-word racial slur from their schools.

The Oregon Board of Education voted unanimously against an amendment to allow Native American mascots, requiring schools to choose new names by 2017. In Wisconsin, the Madison School Board unanimously approved an amendment banning Native American logos from the student dress code. And Oklahoma City's Capitol Hill High School announced its selection of the Red Wolves as the school's new mascot after ending its use of the offensive R-word.

National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata and Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter, leaders of the Change the Mascot campaign, said in response to the news:

“On behalf of the Change the Mascot campaign, we express our admiration and appreciation to these educational boards, administrators, students and other advocates for helping eliminate the use of the dictionary-defined R-word racial slur from our schools. In stark contrast to the Washington NFL team and its owner Dan Snyder, who insist upon continuing to denigrate Native people for their own financial gain, these schools recognize the need for a change and are a shining example of the American ideals of mutual respect and equality.”

This latest wave of progress comes on the heels of the California Assembly this month passing legislation that would ban the R-word in the state’s public schools.

All throughout the United States, schools are deciding to give up the offensive dictionary-defined slur. Just weeks ago, the Lancaster Central School District Board in New York unanimously decided to eliminate the use of the slur at Lancaster High School, and Conrad Schools of Science in Delaware took steps to end its use of the R-word mascot. In 2014, the Oklahoma City School Board and the Houston Independent School District both announced plans to remove their schools’ R-word mascots.

Students at Cooperstown High School in New York helped jumpstart the Change the Mascot movement in 2013 when they voted to drop the R-word slur as their school’s nickname. They served as an inspiration to the Change the Mascot campaign, and participated in a campaign symposium on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

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, 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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