



# Change the Mascot!

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## **U.S. Housing Secretary Julián Castro Speaks Out Against Offensive Washington NFL Team Name**

*The Change the Mascot Campaign today praised U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and potential Vice Presidential candidate Julián Castro for calling out the R-word mascot as “offensive” and expressing his support of a name change.*

**Oneida Nation Homelands (July 14, 2015)** Just days after a U.S. District judge upheld the ruling to cancel the trademark of Washington's NFL team on the grounds that R\*dskins is offensive, Change the Mascot praised U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro for speaking out in opposition of the derogatory R-word racial slur.

The national grassroots movement released the following statement:

“We sincerely thank Secretary Castro for all of his hard work and dedication to Indian Country, and for speaking out clearly against the derogatory name of the Washington NFL team. Secretary Castro represents a new generation of political leadership and he reflects the changing face of our society, making his perspective on this key issue particularly relevant. Major changes are afoot in America, and decades-old symbols that offend and insult are being retired and relegated to museums where they belong. The NFL and Washington team owner Dan Snyder should

recognize that they are standing on the wrong side of history, and stop clinging to outdated relics of the past, which Americans want to put behind them in the interest of building a most respectful and inclusive society.”

This weekend, Secretary Castro said, “I very much agree that the name is offensive,” during a question and answer session at the Native News Media Conference, which is sponsored by the Native American Journalists Association and Native Public Media. “There’s a feeling in our nation that there’s this moment, this window of opportunity, to address these deep-seated challenges, these wounds that we’ve had, certainly with the African American community, but also with the Native American community. My hope is that that may mold change.”

Castro’s comments come on the heels of comments from Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, who said the government would not allow the Washington NFL team to return to the federal land beneath Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium until the franchise changes its offensive name. Last month, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan also spoke out on Twitter in strong opposition to team’s name.

The National Council of La Raza and other leading advocacy organizations including the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the NAACP, the Fritz Pollard Alliance and many more respected groups have all joined together in opposition of the team’s name and voiced support for the Change the Mascot campaign.

A grassroots movement that works to educate the public about the damaging effects on Native Americans arising from the continued use of the R-word, Change the Mascot’s 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, the campaign 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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