



# Change the Mascot!

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## Change the Mascot Statement on Report That Obama Administration is Blocking R\*dskins Return to RFK Stadium

*The national grassroots Change the Mascot campaign today released a statement in response to a Washington Post report that Interior Secretary Sally Jewell refuses to allow the federal land at Washington, D.C.'s Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium to be used by the sports franchise whose name is a hateful slur against people of color.*

**Oneida Nation Homelands (July 1, 2015)** The Change the Mascot campaign today is applauding the Obama Administration for its refusal to allow the Washington NFL team to return to the federal land beneath Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium until the franchise changes its offensive name.

The National Park Service owns the land upon which RFK Stadium is built, and according to an in-depth article in today's [Washington Post](#), Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, has decided not to extend the District of Columbia's lease of land and is unlikely to accommodate construction of a new stadium with the team's current name.

Change the Mascot leaders NCAI Executive Director Jackie Pata and Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter said in a joint statement about today's news:

“We are appreciative that Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and the Obama Administration have taken another principled stand against continued racism by the Washington NFL team. The Administration's refusal to allow federal land to be used for promoting the slurring and unequal treatment of minorities follows in the footsteps of President Kennedy and U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Robert Kennedy's threat of action against the team in 1962 was what forced the team and its racist owner George Preston Marshall to finally integrate their football team one decade after the other teams in the league.

“The absurdity of a team bearing the racist name ‘R\*dskins playing in a stadium named for RFK would be akin to having the team play at a stadium paying tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. or another civil rights icon. With its opposition to the land at RFK being used to benefit a team bearing a racist epithet for a name, the Obama Administration is correctly asserting that taxpayer-owned property should not be used for the persistent slurring of people of color. America is an increasingly diverse nation and the Washington team's insensitive, racist mascot is totally out of step with the times.”

Both Secretary Jewell and President Obama have in the past spoken out about the derogatory nature of the R-word.

“Personally, I think we would never consider naming a team the ‘Blackskins’ or the ‘Brownskins’ or the ‘Whiteskins.’ So, personally, I find it surprising that in this day and age, the name is not different,” Jewell told [ABC News](#). She has also called the R-word a “relic of the past,” and said that it should be changed.

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 elevate the debate surrounding the Washington team's name, bringing 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 and institutions.

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