



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Northern Indiana School the Latest to Drop Offensive R-Word Mascot

Change the Mascot is praising Indiana's Goshen Community School Board for voting last night to remove the dictionary-defined R-word slur as the school's mascot. Goshen joins a growing number of schools across the nation which are taking action to eliminate this derogatory epithet.

Oneida Nation Homelands (July 28, 2015) The grassroots Change the Mascot campaign today is praising Northern Indiana's Goshen Community School Board for its vote yesterday evening to remove the derogatory R-word as the school's mascot after more than 90 years. The name will be retired January 1, 2016.

NCAI Executive Director Jackie Pata and Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter, leaders of the Change the Mascot campaign, released the following statement in response to today's news:

"On behalf of the Change the Mascot movement, we express our deepest appreciation and congratulations to the Goshen Community School Board for its courageous actions in helping to eliminate the R-word racial slur from our country's – and particularly our children's –

vernacular. More and more educators are coming to the conclusion that in today's society, there is no justification for supporting the continued use of a dictionary defined slur.”

The Goshen Community School Board joins numerous schools from all across the country who have decided to end their use of this derogatory, dictionary-defined slur. Earlier this summer, the Lancaster Central School District of New York, the Oregon Board of Education, Madison (WI) School Board and Capitol Hill High School in Oklahoma all acted to remove the R-word from their schools. The Houston Independent School District and Conrad Schools of Science in Delaware also took steps to change the 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.

Lawmakers at all levels of government are also speaking out against the use of this offensive epithet in our nation's schools. Last month, the California Senate Education committee approved historic legislation that would eliminate the dictionary-defined racial slur as a mascot for all public schools statewide. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan also expressed his opposition to Washington NFL team's offensive name, and praised the Lancaster Central School District for “for challenging the status quo & saying Native American stereotypes are inappropriate in sports.”

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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