



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change the Mascot Applauds New Anti-Racism Organization of Miami Dolphins Owner Stephen Ross and Urges it to Address NFL Team's Racist R-Word Name

Oneida Nation Homelands (October 16, 2015) The Change the Mascot campaign is praising Miami Dolphins owner Stephen M. Ross today for his launch of a new non-profit organization seeking to combat racism and discrimination using the power of sports – the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE). Change the Mascot is encouraging Ross to make one of its first initiatives advocating for the removal of the dictionary-defined R-word slur and mascot of the Washington NFL team.

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Executive Director Jackie Pata and Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter, leaders of the Change the Mascot campaign, today released the following statement:

“We thank Stephen Ross for creating this organization aimed at helping address the ongoing issues of racism and discrimination that unfortunately still exist in today’s society. We completely agree with Ross’ assessment that sports can be ‘the common denominator in the world that brings everyone together.’ As such, it seems a natural fit for the organization to

address the outlying NFL franchise in Washington which is not only dividing and isolating people with its offensive team name, but directly denigrating a segment of our nation's population based on their alleged skin color.

“We welcome the opportunity to meet with Ross and leaders of RISE to start an open dialogue about the importance of combating the serious harm caused by the ongoing use of the dictionary-defined R-word slur, and overarching racism and discrimination against Native Americans in sports today.

“Numerous leading advocacy organizations including the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the NAACP, the Fritz Pollard Alliance, the National Council of La Raza and many more respected groups have all joined together in opposition of the team's name and voiced support for the Change the Mascot movement. We hope that RISE will also join with Change the Mascot to take a stand against the R-word slur, whose ongoing use is an important civil rights and human rights issue.”

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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