



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change the Mascot Calls on CBS to Refrain from Using Racist R-word Name if Washington Team Makes Super Bowl

Oneida Nation Homelands (January 7, 2016) Just days ahead of the Washington NFL team's first playoff game in three years, the Change the Mascot campaign is urging the CBS television network to commit to refraining from using the team's disparaging R-word name should the D.C. franchise make it to the Super Bowl. The grassroots movement sent letters to a variety of CBS executives, noting their responsibility to promote tolerance rather than bigotry when broadcasting one of the biggest worldwide events to hundreds of millions of people on a global scale.

The letter from Change the Mascot leaders Jackie Pata, Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians, and Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter, states: "Today, America is working to promote itself as a tolerant, pluralistic society in the face of detractors who seek to portray our country as a haven of bigotry. During one of the biggest worldwide media events of the year, we as a nation should not be providing fodder for America's foes. Instead, we should be doing everything we can to make sure that -- at minimum -- we are not deliberately promoting across the globe hateful slurs against indigenous people."

“We are hopeful that CBS will honor its own venerable legacy by doing what it can to make sure the program is respectful and civil -- and is not used as a platform to promote bigotry.”

The letter to CBS encourages the network to follow the lead of dozens of fellow media organizations which have expressed opposition to the name or restricted use of the R-word term in their coverage, including The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, The Kansas City Star, The Denver Post, The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, The Sacramento Bee and many more.

It also notes that leading journalists including CBS Sports’ Phil Simms, Greg Gumbel and James Brown have also individually spoken out against the team’s name.

Following recent news that the Washington NFL team will play at London’s Wembley Stadium next season, the letter also highlights growing discontent and concern in Europe about using the racial slur at a sporting event held there.

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.

A list of Change the Mascot supporters can be found at:

<http://www.changethemascot.org/supporters-of-change/>.

The full text of today’s letter to broadcasters can be found at:

<http://www.changethemascot.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CTM-Letter-to-CBS-Jan-7-2016.pdf>

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