



# Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Joel Barkin  
Oneida Nation V.P. for Communications  
(315) 361-8173  
[jbarkin@oneida-nation.org](mailto:jbarkin@oneida-nation.org)

## **Change the Mascot Praises Colorado State Commission for Calling to Remove All Damaging Native Mascots in Public Schools**

**Oneida Nation Homelands (April 20, 2016)** The Change the Mascot campaign today is praising a Colorado panel of state officials and tribal leaders for urging the state's public schools to eliminate derogatory Native American mascots, nicknames and logos. Change the Mascot is also once again applauding Governor John Hickenlooper for his executive action to create this commission to address the important issue of American Indian representations in the state's schools.

The Change the Mascot campaign, which leads the nationwide effort to change the offensive R-word name of the Washington NFL team, said the following in response to this news:

“We thank Governor Hickenlooper for his creation of this commission, and applaud the panel for their enlightened determination that there is no place for offensive, derogatory language and imagery directed at Native Americans in our public schools today,” said Change the Mascot leaders, National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata and Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter.

“The mascotization of Native people is a critical civil rights issue which is detrimental to the next generation and unfortunately still present and promoted in our schools and professional sports. The findings of the Colorado panel echo the sentiments of a growing push for change in this country supported by countless Native American tribes, civil rights and religious groups, sports icons, top journalists, political leaders from both parties, and many other schools across the nation.”

This latest call for change in Colorado follows California’s recent signing into law of a bill that eliminates the dictionary-defined R-word slur as a mascot from all of the state’s public schools. Assembly Bill 30 (AB 30) - The California Racial Mascots Act, will prohibit the state’s public schools from using the term R\*dskins as a school or athletic team name, mascot, or nickname beginning January 1, 2017.

Numerous other schools from all across the country including districts in Texas, Indiana, Oklahoma, Oregon, Wisconsin and New York have also elected to end their use of derogatory mascots such as the R-word. 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.

[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.

###

Follow us on Twitter:

[@ChangeDCMascot](#)

[@OneidaNatnNews](#)