



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change the Mascot Praises Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for Taking a Strong Stand Against Racist Washington NFL Team Name and Mascot

Oneida Nation Homelands (May 7, 2018) The Change the Mascot campaign, a grassroots movement working to educate the public about the damaging effects on Native Americans arising from the continued use of the R-word, today praised the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for having the moral courage to right a serious wrong by declaring that it will no longer consider applications for awards from the Washington NFL team.

“As Robert Wood Johnson Foundation CEO Richard E. Besser explained articulately in an op-ed in *USA Today*, the mascot issue is not one of political correctness, but mental health,” said Change the Mascot leaders Jacqueline Pata, Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians and Ray Halbritter, Oneida Indian Nation Representative. “As we have said from the start of this campaign, the perpetuation of American Indian stereotypes through the callous use of Native American mascotry and especially the use of the R-word racial epithet, poses a serious mental health issue for an entire group of people.”

“The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation courageously recognized that it had gotten it wrong on this issue, but has also shown by example that it is never too late to make a change for the better, especially when the mental health of the next generation is at stake. Washington NFL team owner Dan Snyder would do well to follow the Foundation’s lead, and finally do what’s right and give up this racist and harmful mascot.”

Numerous studies by social scientists have shown that serious harm is caused to Native Americans, especially children, by the use of racist iconography and mascots.

About Change the Mascot

[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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