



# Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Following Mississippi's Move to Alter Its State Flag, Change the Mascot Urges the NFL to Finally Change the Washington Team's Racist Name and Mascot**

**Oneida Nation Homelands – June 29, 2020** – Mississippi lawmakers have announced plans to change the state's official flag following widespread criticism and calls for change. Lawmakers cite Confederate-era imagery and concerns about wider messages of segregation and division as the reason for its update.

The state's move comes amid a nationwide movement joined by businesses, organizations, and political offices seeking to address long-held concerns of racism in all of its forms.

Recent changes include the removal of George Preston Marshall's memorial statue at RFK Stadium in Washington D.C. as well as the changing of a dedicated section at FedEx Field. Marshall was a notorious and dedicated racist, as well as the founder of the Washington NFL team that currently uses a disparaging racial slur for its name and mascot.

With others demonstrating meaningful actions of change to address concerns of racism, Change the Mascot is urging the NFL and Washington team's owner to finally heed calls for the end of celebrating racism in the use of its R-word slur against Native peoples.

“This weekend’s historic legislation in Mississippi is another important and laudable declaration that public displays of racist symbols should have no place in our country,” stated Ray Halbritter, head of the Change the Mascot campaign.

“From legislatures to corporations, we have lately seen a wider recognition that these symbols do great harm to people of color — and it is time for the National Football League to finally take heed.

“The league’s franchise in our nation’s capital remains one of the most prominent promoters of racist iconography. The team recently agreed to change a section of its stadium named after its segregationist founder, but that is not enough; it must listen to civil rights groups, religious leaders, public health organizations, governors and the U.S. Congress and change its name.

“The NFL has said it opposes racism in all its forms and if it is serious about that rhetoric then it must stop promoting and profiting off a name that is a dictionary-defined racial slur.”

**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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