



# Change the Mascot!

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

## **Change the Mascot Applauds Cleveland Team and Major League Baseball for Eliminating Native American Mascot**

**Oneida Nation Homelands – December 14, 2020** – The national grassroots Change the Mascot campaign today praised the owners of the Cleveland team and Major League Baseball for ending the use of “Indians” as the name and mascot for Cleveland’s team.

Ray Halbritter, Oneida Nation Representative and leader of the Change the Mascot campaign, said it reflected growing understanding that Native people should not be relegated to serving as mascots for sports franchises.

“With their commendable decision to alter the team name, Cleveland’s team is taking an important step,” said Halbritter. “For decades, Native American leaders including the National Congress of American Indians have called on Cleveland to change the name and logo. By finally acting, Cleveland’s team is moving the team and professional sports forward down a new path of inclusivity and mutual respect.”

Eliminating the Indian mascot from Cleveland was a process that began in earnest with the team’s announcement in 2018 that it would stop using its offensive “Chief Wahoo” mascot. It comes on the heels of an announcement earlier this year that Washington’s NFL team would

drop its racist R-word name, a cause championed by Change the Mascot which led an effective and ultimately successful effort to eliminate the R-word from football.

“Change the Mascot is heartened to see the growing movement across professional sports to eliminate Native American mascots, and we hope this trend continues,” said Halbritter.

### **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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