



Bethesda Jewish Congregation

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

Mr. Daniel M. Snyder
Owner, Washington Football Team
21300 R-skins Park Drive
Ashburn, VA 20147

Dear Mr. Snyder:

The Bethesda Jewish Congregation asks you to change the name of your football team. We understand that you believe the name honors Native Americans. We respectfully disagree. Despite your strenuous efforts to re-orient the meaning of the name, it remains a dictionary-defined racial slur that perpetuates stereotypes and demeans Native Americans.

BJC is a liberal Jewish congregation whose members engage in a wide spectrum of Jewish practice. Our membership is predominantly from Montgomery County, yet because of our unique, welcoming, inclusive perspectives, includes members from the greater metropolitan area.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples concludes, "The use of stereotypes obscures understanding of the reality of Native Americans today and instead helps to keep alive racially discriminatory attitudes." In 2005, the American Psychological Association (APA) passed a resolution calling for the immediate retirement of Native American mascots in schools and athletics. The APA determined that such mascots were detrimental to the learning environment of both non-Native and Native youth. Likewise, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) passed a resolution in 2005 prohibiting any college team from "displaying hostile and abusive racial/ethnic/national origin mascots, nicknames or imagery at any of the 88 NCAA championships." Over 2,000 high schools have dropped Native American names and mascots and 28 have dropped the name R-skins.

In a 1992 resolution, the Central Conference of American Rabbis called upon the Washington football team to change its team name "... and to renounce all characterizations based on race or ethnic background." That resolution noted that the "'R-dskins' moniker' persists in encouraging stereotypical thinking about Native Americans." In a letter to Rebrand Washington Football, the Washington Regional Office of the Anti-Defamation League states, "The Washington National Football League team name and branding is deeply offensive to Native Americans, reinforces racial stereotypes, and promotes bigotry." The Religious Action Center (RAC) has likewise

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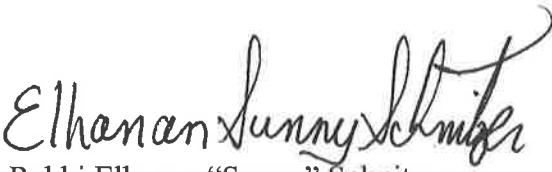
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called upon you to change the name, stating, "A name associated with a term that divides instead of unites, that causes pain instead of pride, is not a name that should be perpetuated."

In our region, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments passed a resolution in 2002 declaring that the term "'R-dskins' is viewed by many sensitive and progressive-minded individuals as a demeaning and dehumanizing racist insult that embodies a history of degradation and slaughter." This was followed up by a resolution passed in 2013 by the District of Columbia Council and one passed in 2015 by the Arlington County Board asking you to change the name of the team.

Persecution against Jews have been aided and abetted by the use of stereotypes and name calling. It is with this perspective that we call you to change the name of the team. We are all made in the image of God and each of us deserves dignity and respect. Please change the name, Mr. Snyder.

Sincerely,


Rabbi Elhanan "Sunny" Schnitzer


Shoshanah Drake, President, BJC Board of Trustees