



Change the Mascot!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Phone Campaign by Washington Football Team Fans Urges Fellow Supporters to Call NFL and Back a Name Change for D.C.'s NFL Team

Oneida Nation Homelands (Jan. 15, 2015) Lifelong supporters of the Washington NFL team are now literally calling upon fellow fans to join them in advocating for a new name and mascot that doesn't demean and disparage Native Americans with the R-word racial slur. With support from the Change the Mascot campaign led by the Oneida Indian Nation and the National Congress of American Indians, loyal Washington pro football fans Ian Washburn and Josh Silver are featured in recorded calls being placed to homes across the D.C. metro area. This initial wave of calls is the first of a series that is being planned for the NFL offseason. Washburn, Silver and a half dozen other team fans also are sending letters to NFL Vice President of Social Responsibility Anna Isaacson and Commissioner Roger Goodell encouraging the NFL to act and oppose the name.

"We represent America's capital; and it's time we demonstrate our commitment to the ideals of equality and civility," the call states. "Without the name, it's still D.C. football... You can stay a true fan, and also recognize the need for a mascot that doesn't alienate and offend."

The calls from Washburn and Silver ask listeners who "love the team, but hate the name" to join them in contacting the NFL's VP of Social Responsibility Anna Isaacson. "Let's tell her and

Commissioner Goodell that even D.C.'s fans want a new mascot. Let's do the right thing, turn the page, and ensure our future legacy is one of pride," the message concludes.

Change the Mascot leaders Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter and National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata stated: "These courageous fans provide a shining example of how you can be a sports fan while also being thoughtful and socially responsible. Their actions demonstrate that people can support the Washington football team, but also recognize that its hurtful name needs to change. The willingness of Ian, Josh, and the other fans who are coming forward are a testament to their character and I hope that others will step forward to stand up for what's right."

This latest development in the campaign to change the team's name comes on the heels of a growing outcry against the R-word by Americans from all walks of life. This season, several of the Washington team's road games were met with large protests against the R-word, including a 4,000 person rally in Minneapolis. New survey results, announced just weeks ago, also revealed that four in five Americans would be uncomfortable calling a Native American a "r*dskin."

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 last season, 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.

The letter to Isaacson from fans in support of a name change can be found at:

<http://www.changethemascot.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Fan-Letter-to-the-NFL.pdf>

Full script of the call:

Ian: Hi, I'm Ian Washburn

Josh: And I'm Josh Silver. We're lifelong fans of Washington pro football.

Ian: After missing the playoffs again, it's clear things need to change—including our team's name.

Josh: Native American tribes, national civil rights organizations, and elected officials from both parties agree. We represent America's capital; and it's time we demonstrate our commitment to the ideals of equality and civility.

Ian: Without the name, it's still D.C. football; still honoring legends like Doug Williams and Joe Gibbs. You can stay a true fan, and also recognize the need for a mascot that doesn't alienate and offend.

Josh: We're asking other fans who love the team but hate the name to join us in contacting the NFL's VP of Social Responsibility Anna Isaacson at 345 Park Ave, New York, NY 10154, or Anna.Isaacson@nfl.com.

Ian: Let's tell her and Commissioner Goodell that even D.C.'s fans want a new mascot. Remember, the name was devised by former owner George Preston Marshall, an avowed racist and segregationist. Let's do the right thing, turn the page, and ensure our future legacy is one of pride and respect.

Voiceover: Paid for by the Oneida Indian Nation, 315-829-8889.

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