

November 22, 2019

Dear Members of the County Council:

It has been brought to my attention that County Executive Marc Elrich will be introducing a resolution asking Mr. Snyder to change the name of the professional Washington football team. The name of the team is a racial slur that perpetuates stereotypes and demeans Native Americans.

I am the Senior Rabbi of Temple Shalom in Chevy Chase, MD. We are a diverse congregation located in District 5 representing approximately 400 families, most of who live in Montgomery County. A few years ago, we held a forum about the name of the team and I am saddened that there has been little progress in this name change over the past several years.

In 2005, the American Psychological Association (APA) passed a resolution calling for the immediate retirement of Native American mascots in schools and athletics in part because the APA determined that such mascots were detrimental to the learning environment of both non-Native and Native youth.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism have all asked Mr. Snyder to change the name of the team.

[In Idaho, a school district recently retired the name R-skins](#) from its high school name. The high school responded to the local Shoshone-Bannock tribe, which said that the continued use of the name would only honor genocide. [A tribal position paper](#) says, “We do not have a name for r-dskin in our language. The origin of the name r-dskin refers to the name colonists made up. These names clearly delineated Indian people as a separate race of people who had no civil rights under the U.S. Constitution.”

Over 2,000 high schools have dropped Native American names and mascots and 28 have dropped the name R-skins.

In [2013, the District of Columbia](#) Council passed a resolution asking Mr. Snyder to change the name of the team. The [Arlington County Board](#) followed in 2015.

If Montgomery County also adopts a resolution, local governments would be sending a strong signal to Mr. Snyder that it is time to change the name. A resolution would also serve as a valuable educational tool, increasing awareness in Montgomery County about the harms caused by the name and logo of the football team.

Names in Judaism are very important. In the Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jewish tradition, children are named for deceased loved ones in the hope that they will honor the deceased's memory by carrying on their values, legacy, and character traits.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if our sports teams' names also reflected the values, legacy, and character traits that we want the players and fans to emulate? In order to do so, we must make sure all of our teams' have names that show honor and respect, not hate and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes.

Please pass a resolution asking Mr. Snyder to change the name of his team.

L'Shalom (in Peace),

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