



April 26, 2021

Mr. Daniel Snyder
Inova Sports Performance Center
21300 Coach Gibbs Drive
Ashburn, VA 20147

Dear Mr. Snyder:

Rebrand Washington Football (RWF), a grass roots advocacy group of fans and concerned citizens, opposes changing the name of your team to “Warriors” or any other name that evokes Native American themes or imagery. We recently learned that the Washington Football Team (WFT) circulated possible names, including Warriors, to season-ticket holding fans.

The WFT must not make the same mistake again regarding a racial slur and inappropriate name that perpetuates negative stereotypes of Native Americans.

In the rebranding process, the team must engage Native American leaders and the general public, not just fans holding season tickets. Engaging only a small fan base will exacerbate the culture of insularity that has hamstrung this team and has made it insensitive to civil rights concerns.

More than 1,500 Native American organizations and leaders sent a letter to the NFL strongly stating that a new name must not contain any traces of references to Native American images, themes, or cultures. The [letter’s demands](#) include:

Require the Washington team to immediately cease the use of racialized Native American branding by eliminating any and all imagery of or evocative of Native American culture, traditions, and spirituality from their team franchise including the logo. This includes the use of Native terms, feathers, arrows, or monikers that assume the presence of Native American culture, as well as any characterization of any physical attributes.

Complete a full rebranding of the Washington team name, logo, mascot, and color scheme, to ensure that continuing harm is not perpetuated by anyone.

Even if the WFT were to adopt the name Warriors and not use any Native American logos, it would still fail the test of the 1,500 Native American leaders who stated that names must not be used by **anyone** to harm Native Americans. Uniformed fans would likely continue to associate the Warriors name with Native Americans and would be encouraged to use stereotypical props, previous team merchandise, costumes, and headdresses at games or other events.

[Amanda Blackhorse](#), the Native American leader who filed a legal case against your team, stated, “If he (the owner) called his team the Warriors, they will still attach Native American imagery onto that, and it will still be harmful to Native people. It won’t be a win at all. It’s just perpetuating the cultural appropriation and stereotypes of Native people.”



As Washington Post columnist Barry Svrluga [recently explained](#), Marquette University retired Warriors in 1994 because the school's previous logos and merchandise contained cartoonish depictions of Native Americans. The NBA team Golden State Warriors faces pressure from players, including [Carmelo Anthony](#), to change its name. The Warriors had logos for decades containing stereotypes of Native American warriors.

The continued contemplation of Warriors as a name reveals that the WFT has not learned enough concerning the harms of its previous racist name. It reveals a team that is out of touch and does not understand and appreciate Native American culture. The remedy to this is for the WFT to have an immediate meeting and dialogue with Native American leaders like Suzan Harjo and Amanda Blackhorse. In addition, it is more than disappointing that the team, almost a year after abandoning its previous name, has consulted only with a relatively small fan base, its dwindling number of season ticket holders, regarding the name of the team. If the team seeks to generate widespread enthusiasm for its rebranding effort, it should poll the larger public just as Abe Pollin did when he renamed his NBA team to the Wizards.

A rebrand to Warriors is no rebrand at all, but instead a grievous mistake that exacerbates the harms of the former name, a dictionary defined racial slur. The WFT team would reignite the controversy surrounding its name to the detriment to itself and the public. Native Americans would continue to experience the humiliation of demeaning stereotypes while the non-Native public would internalize these stereotypes and treat Native Americans accordingly.

It is time for you and the team to put these harms in the past and choose a name that does not demean and belittle. If you have any questions, please contact us on rebrandwf@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Josh Silver, Co-Founder
Bethesda, MD

Ian Washburn, Co-Founder
Arlington County, VA

Bill Mosley, Co-Founder
District of Columbia