



Rabbi Jonah Pesner
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Mr. Dan Snyder
Redskins Park
21300 Redskins Park Drive
Ashburn, Virginia 20147

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Dear Mr. Snyder:

On behalf of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, I write today to urge you to change the name of the Washington Redskins.

On several occasions in recent years, we have made clear our deep concern about and opposition to the team's name and have urged you to change it. As the new director of the Religious Action Center, I reiterate that call today.

The Washington Redskins franchise is surely a staple in American professional sports. Over the course of the team's renowned history, it has built a strong base of fans and a wide following. Representing our nation's capital in the NFL gives it prominence around the country. This legacy, however, is tarnished by the team's derogatory name and logo. "Redskin" is a racial slur that references the deplorable treatment of American Indians that has been a significant part of this country's history. The logo, seemingly attempting to draw upon the archetype of an Indian warrior, blatantly mocks a culture that struggles to survive.

Jewish tradition compels us to speak out against actions that, regardless of their intentions, belittle a group of people because of who they are. We learn that "God formed Adam out of dust from all over the world: yellow clay, white sand, black loam and red soil. Therefore no one can declare to any race or color of people that they do not belong here since this soil is not their home" (Yalkut Shimoni 1:13). 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. It is time to close this chapter and begin a new era with a team name that can be celebrated by all.

I urge you to change the name of Washington, D.C.'s football team so that we can revel in its successes without mocking an integral and often embattled sector of American society. I would welcome the opportunity to meet in person and discuss the issue at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner



The Religious Action Center pursues social justice and religious liberty by mobilizing the Jewish community and serving as its advocate in Washington, D.C. The Center is led by the Commission on Social Action of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism (and its affiliates) and is supported by the congregations of the Union.

