



www.rebrandwf.org/ rebrandwf@gmail.com

REBRAND WASHINGTON FOOTBALL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Contact: Bill Mosley, 202-360-5414

MOST DC COUNCIL CANDIDATES RESPONDING TO QUESTIONNAIRE OPPOSE NAME OF WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM

Most respondents also support tying stadium aid to name change

The majority of DC Council candidates responding to a survey from Rebrand Washington Football (RWF) said they oppose the name of the Washington professional football team, supporting a 2013 DC Council resolution that condemned the name of the team as racist and derogatory.

In addition, most of the respondents said they would support a resolution to deny any support from the District for relocating the team to the RFK Stadium site or any other DC location unless it changed its name.

Most of the responding candidates also supported an independent cost-benefit analysis of a stadium before the District committed any public funds for a stadium relocation.

“This results of this questionnaire clearly show that most candidates for Council oppose the team’s racist name and have a strong desire to see it change,” said Bill Mosley, who conducted the questionnaire for Rebrand. “In addition, many candidates are willing to put teeth into their convictions by denying assistance to the team for relocating into the District unless it changes its name. We will continue to urge that the Council use all means at its disposal to pressure the team to change its name or else forget about moving back to DC.”

The questionnaire was sent to all 28 candidates running in the DC primary election in the four wards voting this year as well as for councilmember at-large. Thirteen candidates responded.

The questions were:

- 1: The DC Council in 2013 passed a resolution condemning the name of the Washington professional football team as racist and derogatory. Do you support this resolution?
- 2: Would you support a resolution to deny the team any support for relocating to the District – including but not limited to tax-free municipal bonds, cash payments, long-term tax exemptions, infrastructure improvements, operating cost subsidies and use of city-owned land – unless the team changes its name to one that is not racially offensive?
- 3: Would you insist on a cost-benefit analysis conducted by an independent party commissioned by the District before the District commits any public subsidies or financing for a stadium relocation?



A summary of the candidates' responses is below. Their responses in full are in the appendix to the release that follows.

Ward or At-Large	Name	Q1	Q2	Q3
2	Jack Evans (D)	yes	no	yes
2	Jordan Grossman (D)	yes	yes	yes
2	Patrick Kennedy (D)	yes	yes	yes
2	Brooke Pinto (D)	yes	yes	*
2	Kishan Putta (D)	yes	yes	yes
2	Katherine Venice (R)	yes	yes	*
2	Yilin Zhang (D)	*	*	yes
4	Perry Redd (SG)	yes	yes	no*
7	Vincent C. Gray (D)	yes	no*	yes
7	Anthony Lorenzo Green (D)	yes	yes	yes
8	Nate "Ward8" Derenge (R)	no	no	yes
At-Large	Marya Pickering (R)	no	no	yes
At-Large	Ann C. Wilcox (SG)	yes	yes	yes

D= Democrat R=Republican SG=Statehood Green *see appendix

RWF released the results today for the purpose of public information. It does not make endorsements in political campaigns.

RWF was founded in 2015 by local football fans to advocate that the team adopt a new name because the current one disparages Native Americans. Over the past five years more than 9,000 members of the public have signed its petitions, which Rebrand delivers each December to the team's headquarters. In addition to circulating its petition, RWF has worked with Native American allies who are advocating a change in the name. RWF also seeks to publicize a [recent scientific survey](#) that demonstrates that Native Americans are indeed offended by the name of the Washington football team.

-end-



APPENDIX

Text of Candidate Responses

JACK EVANS

Ward 2 – Democratic Party

1. Yes

2. No. The Washington football team's name should not be a deal-breaker. Dan Snyder himself, the name of the team, should not be issues that are relevant to the relocation of the team to the city, and the construction of a new stadium.

Over 20 years ago, we went through a similar situation with Jack Kent Cooke. He had a difficult personality and the personalities became involved in where the stadium was going to be. We ended up losing a deal to move the stadium back to the District. Cooke is long gone, and we don't have the team.

My observations on this complicated situation is that the issues with personalities and the name will eventually be resolved. Where we should focus our efforts, is on the long-term, generational aspect of having the Washington football team located in the District of Columbia. Whatever the team is called, whoever owns it is not relevant, because that will change over time.

The RFK site is the ideal location. The infrastructure and resources to build a new stadium and the accommodations to move people in and out of the site is already there. We have the access roads, there is a Metro station on site, we have 10,000 parking spaces. The District knows how to handle large crowds and there is no better site in the metropolitan region for a football stadium.

On the economic front, we already have great examples of how these stadiums can become economic generators for a neighborhood. The Capital One Arena and Nationals Park proved that economic and neighborhood growth can come from smart planning. While the RFK site is located in Ward 7, it is closer to the neighborhoods of eastern Capitol Hill. Planning a new stadium should keep the well-being of the surrounding neighborhoods in mind. Additionally, the pride of having the Washington football team back in the city is enormous.



People *love* the football team. People *want* the football team back in the city - there's still a very soft place in people's hearts for the football team.

3. Yes, of course. The way I would approach the financing of the football stadium is, we the city - like we did with the soccer stadium - would clear the land. We would tear down RFK Stadium and clear out whatever else is there that would impact on the construction of a brand-new stadium. The Washington football team organization and the National Football League would be responsible for paying for the new stadium, and I think that would be an excellent deal on both sides. They pay for the stadium, we pay for the land, and we get the deal done.

JORDAN GROSSMAN

Ward 2 – Democratic Party

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.

PATRICK KENNEDY

Ward 2 – Democratic Party

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.

BROOKE PINTO

Ward 2 – Democratic Party

1. I certainly do. The name of the Washington football team is unquestionably racist and derogatory and has no place in professional sports. It is especially shameful that this sports franchise represents the nation's capital. President Obama was a strong opponent of the team name and previously stated that, "Names and mascots of sports teams like the Washington Redskins perpetuate negative stereotypes of Native Americans." Racism has no place in Washington, D.C.

Polls have gone back and forth showing whether people are offended by the name and want the name to be changed. Frankly, the polls are irrelevant. Many Native American tribes and organizations have come forward requesting that the name be changed. We should not have to poll to believe them. Sports are meant to bring people together, entertain, and inspire - not offend.



2. Yes, the Council should withhold support for the team to relocate to the District if they do not change their name. The support mentioned has serious financial implications for the District. While a professional sports team can offer a significant amount of economic value such as employment and tax revenues, the District should not welcome a business that is so outwardly offensive and ignorant.

There is no strong argument for the team to keep its name. The historic nature of the team name is no justification for its racism, and in fact just strengthens the case that it is offensive. Name changes in sports also happen often, it is not an unreasonable request, and there is precedent right here in D.C. In 1997, Washington's professional basketball team, then named the Bullets, made the right decision and rebranded to the Wizards. The team even let the fans vote on the new name, with \$1 per vote going to anti-violence efforts. This is the kind of awareness and community support we need to see from team owner Dan Snyder if the team is to expect any relocation support.

3. Only if the team changes its name. I am not at all interested in the team relocating to the District otherwise, for all of the reasons cited above. In theory, I have no problem with a potential stadium relocation, but only if Washington's football team has a mascot that we can be proud of, not offended and embarrassed by.

KISHAN PUTTA

Ward 2 – Democratic Party

1. In 2013, I actually authored the first resolution ever passed by a political body asking for the name change.

<https://shortarticlesaboutlongmeetings.blogspot.com/2013/10/anc2b-urges-redskins-name-change.html>

ANC2B Urges Redskins Name Change

Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2B/Dupont Circle passed a resolution supporting a DC City Council call to change the name of the Washington Redskins. The ANC resolution was passed 8-0, with one abstention, at a regular monthly meeting on October 9.

The resolution is the first by a DC government body to condemn the Redskins' team name, according to ANC2B Commissioner Kishan Putta (district 04). Since the vote, Putta said in an interview later, ANC2B has received support from members of other ANCs. Putta also said other ANC may soon join ANC2B in passing resolutions condemning the team name.

In a statement before the vote, Putta noted that, of all names of sports team, "Redskins" is the only word which is listed in the dictionary as "offensive". Putta also cited Martin Luther King Jr.'s remark concerning judging people not by the color of their skins, but the content of their character.

The DC City Council resolution is proposed by Councilmember David Grosso (I - At Large). The council will vote on Grosso's sense-of-the-Council resolution on November 5, according to information on Twitter. Eight other Councilmembers have already indicated they will support the resolution.

2. I'm on record that I think the RFK site would be better used for housing, fresh groceries, and public green space purposes, not for a football stadium and parking lot.



3. See #2. I opposed a football stadium and parking lot at RFK. But I would hope that any relocation package would include a robust cost-benefit analysis and I would make sure it was an independent unbiased study. If it is unbiased, I predict the analysis would show the costs (especially the lost opportunity costs of that valuable land) outweigh the benefits.

KATHERINE VENICE

Ward 2 – Republican Party

1. The nation's capital should not have any institution named after a grisly, gory symbol of systemic scalping and genocide.

“A 'Redskin' is the scalped head of a Native American, sold, like a pelt, for cash”, wrote Baxter Holmes, NBA writer at ESPN, previously at The Boston Globe, whose family background is Native American.

Holmes explains that the term refers to “a gory, bloodied crown from the head of a butchered Native American”, “slaughtered for money”, as Native American tribes were “systemically exterminated”.

The grand-daughter (Jordan Wright) of the original owner has made clear the appropriate action: “Do the right thing with the name and change it. Just go forward with a clean conscience and recognize that tens of thousands of people and their offspring are offended and what's still lingering is this awful loss of a people's dignity.” “The team is not going away. All of their stats and all of their games are still there.”

So yes of course I support the resolution.

No decent human-being could possibly support such an odious, offensively loaded name.

But the question is what has the Council done since its resolution? It has supported one of its members, Jack Evans, in pushing for the return of the team to the District, while entirely ignoring the clear imperative to change its name.

A resolution is not much more than a pretty piece of wallpaper if the Council then acts in direct opposition to that resolution, as they have, by supporting Jack Evans' actions.

The Council needs Councilmembers to push hard for action to change this name. I commit to doing that if elected.

2. Yes. Racism and gratuitous displays of symbols of genocide should not be taxpayer-funded - to state what should be obvious. It is staggering that Jack Evans so happily committed DC's residents' tax dollars to supporting such atrociousness.

(I also wish to point out here that one of numerous reasons why I have always been a fervent anti-Trumper, is because of his abhorrent racism. But he is not alone: indeed, the Republican Party itself at the federal level has become the party of racism, in a betrayal of its anti-racist, abolitionist origins. Age-old Republican values do not include racism: today's Republican Party leaders are neither smart nor well-informed enough to realize that.)



I would also expect the DC AG's newly founded Civil Rights unit to take legal action against the owner if the team did relocate to DC without changing its name.

Furthermore, public money should not be used to prop up vulture capitalists who are not smart enough as business people to stand on their own two feet. Social welfare should not go to wealthy businessmen. Jack Evans (who has spear-headed the push to bring the team back under its current name) is just very confused about what capitalism actually is: talented, smart capitalists do not need to rely upon government funding. If they do, then they are not qualified to run that business. That is the ABC of capitalism, and Jack Evans would do well to start learning it.

Incidentally, the columnist Colbert King points out that the owner's "record is a tale of how to run down a successful franchise".

He also points out that Dan Snyder has used his cheerleaders as escorts to wealthy donors.

Mr Snyder has a truly deplorable, pathetic and pitiful track record. It is Mr Snyder's free choice to degrade and embarrass himself by such conduct, but it should not be sustained by a single DC tax-dollar.

Now that we are in deep recessionary times, with many wonderful local, small businesses and talented home-grown entrepreneurs here in DC - who are not trading under offensive symbols of racial genocide - needing support because of the enforced pandemic shutdown, any public money should go to helping those businesses survive instead.

3. That would depend upon which individual commissions - on behalf of the District - this analysis and oversees it. The biases and individual interests of that official need to be carefully examined first. The DC Auditor has a proven track record of ethical, unbiased, rigorous service: I would support such an analysis undertaken by that office.

If such an analysis were done in a truly independent manner, it would certainly not pass any basic test of economic nor fiscal responsibility.

Indeed, DC has already demonstrated a clear track record of staggering fiscal recklessness and wastage of DC tax- dollars in its financial support of Events DC – another failed business that cannot stand on its own two feet and instead has to rely upon social welfare to survive.

Several advocacy groups, ethical experts and the DC Auditor have pointed to a long list of deeply-concerning, material examples of a lack of basic oversight, accountability and transparency with Events DC. These examples include: financial irregularity; blatant ethical lapses and conflicts of interest; the mis-use of DC residents' hard- earned tax-dollars to fund Councilmember perks, lobbyists' eye-watering pay-checks and projects that lack demonstrable value-creation for tax-payers - instead simply enabling private businesses and individuals to enrich themselves at DC taxpayers' vast expense. That is government-sponsored wealth expropriation.

This is a clear case of government over-reach, crony capitalism and systemic fiscal recklessness.



DC would get a far higher return on investment by creating and supporting equal economic opportunity by funding start-ups and homegrown entrepreneurs across DC instead – especially in these recessionary times.

YILIN (ELLEN) ZHANG

Ward 2 – Democratic Party

1. In the past, different organizations have conducted public polls on the Washington professional football team's name. I believe it's important to continuously gather public input on legislation. I would gather the public's opinion on the resolution. I would support a resolution to appropriately change the name of the team.
2. I would first gather input from the public. I would support a resolution to appropriately change the name of the team.
3. I believe it's important to make evidence-based decisions. I would support a cost-benefit analysis.

PERRY REDD

Ward 4 – Statehood Green Party

1. I unequivocally support this resolution because the team's name conveys a racist image that Native Americans at-large find offensive. It is important that society respects the self-determination of any and all peoples by referring to and characterizing them on terms by which they define themselves. When the USA isolates Native Americans on reservations, coupled with a narrative of a savage culture, the Washington football team's name was coined and accepted in the dominant culture without question...it is questioned--and challenged--now. With all of the knowledge and scholarship we've gained over the past generation, there's not a good enough reason--especially economic--to continue the use of any form of the current nickname or mascot for that franchise. I find it cowardly to remain silent when vulnerable people are attacked by the majority; I have not, nor shall I.
2. Absolutely, I don't agree or support creature-comfort tax subsidies--especially of the under-taxed, wealth-endowed 2%--of any kind. The city must re-prioritize to funding initiatives that erase the wealth gap, education and economic inequities in this city. Eradicating child poverty and achieving education equity must be paramount.
3. I wouldn't trust the 'independent' findings of a commission convened by the District because of the City's longstanding record of ethics violations and repetitious cronyism. Instead, I would insist on re-



prioritizing monies that support poor, working-class low- and middle-class residents. DC needs not another sports complex.

VINCENT C. GRAY

Ward 7 – Democratic Party

1. Yes, I support the DC Council's 2013 resolution.
2. I do not support bringing Washington's NFL team back to DC until the team has a new name. Period. Were the team to change its name, I do not support using taxpayers' money to fund the building of a stadium. When I was Mayor, the current team owner told me he would pay for construction of a new stadium but in the time since many neighborhood-friendly amenities have been erected at the current RFK site. So, given the objectionable name and these new features, I no longer support a stadium at the RFK site. The RFK area, much of which is in Ward 7, should be re-developed with many uses in mind i.e. affordable housing, job-creating commercial and retail spaces and parklands.
3. Yes

ANTHONY LORENZO GREEN

Ward 7 – Democratic Party

1. Yes. I believe the name should never be used. No financial support using tax dollars **should ever go to a team using a derogatory name. The team's values do not represent the District and thus it should be disassociated until the name is properly changed and** reparations are made to indigenous people.
2. Under my leadership, the team would confidently get opposing votes to provide any financial assistance or relocation back to Washington, DC. The team needs to go beyond just changing the name, an official statement should be issued, an education component around why the name change is needed, and reparations to indigenous people for the years of profit that were made.
3. Yes. Even more, no appointees to this commission should be picked by the Mayor. She has made her intentions very clear and any large investments; especially about bringing in a football stadium, should go through independent review.

NATE "WARD 8" DERENGE

Ward 8 – Republican Party



1. No, as a person who grew up in *Sioux Falls, SD*, i believe that every well-known reference to Natives is good reminder of the people who resided in this country before Europeans arrived.
2. No, I don't believe that private-held teams should receive public assistance.
3. Yes, if private-held teams receive public assistance, they should be highly scrutinized.

MARYA PICKERING

At-Large – Republican Party

1. No, I do not support this resolution: Let's use some common sense: people choose names for sports teams that are inspirational and intended to rally fans of our top athletes. The name "Redskins" honors the proud Native American heritage and the qualities of tenacity, courage and strength represented by our indigenous tribes.

Some time ago, I had the opportunity to get to know former Redskins owner, Mr. Jack Kent Cooke -- a high school dropout who became one of the country's richest men. He respected the ability and work ethic of all his players and coaching staff, as well as the exemplary Native American heritage represented by the team name.

As with any privately owned enterprise, the team owner and management can change the name any time they choose. The Redskins continue to be a source of sports pride for many in DC, and fans continue to attend their games. Off the field, many players engage with our community and volunteer hundreds of hours to interact with our city's youth and serve as worthwhile role models.

2. No. Please see my answer above. Why would we discourage a team that, in good seasons and bad, is a source of pride for our citizens and makes significant contributions to our community, including the creation of many jobs associated with a major sports franchise?

Those who truly care about the Native American population can support Tribal businesses and donate to related charities. The alleged indignation over our team's logo and name is another distraction in the culture wars dividing our country.

If we're looking for something to be offended by: how about a 68% high school graduation rate in DC public schools, crime in our streets, corruption and mismanagement in our Government agencies, and the size of our homeless population?

3. As your Councilmember, I would advocate for adequate oversight and prudent stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Certainly, a cost-benefit analysis conducted by an impartial independent party sounds like a good idea. Citizens throughout the city are tired of the "business as usual" mindset, including "pay for play" sweetheart deals with developers, and blatantly corrupt contracting practices. My background and experience as a government contract specialist qualify me to provide competent oversight and implement best practices in city agencies.

ANN C. WILCOX

At-Large – Statehood Green Party



1. YES, I support the City Council resolution condemning the name of the Washington professional football team. I would further note that other college and professional teams have either completely altered their name (Dartmouth Green), or shown greater sensitivity with logo and messaging (Cleveland Indians), in order to respond to concerns from the Native American community. Dan Snyder and the Washington football team should do the same.
2. YES. I would certainly support denying any tax exemptions or other subsidies to the Washington football team, unless the name issue is seriously addressed. I would further disfavor ANY tax breaks, designed to attract the team back to DC; I don't feel that taxpayers should "foot the bill" for promoting or providing infrastructure for professional sports teams.
3. YES, definitely.