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REBRAND WASHINGTON FOOTBALL

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REBRAND WASHINGTON FOOTBALL ASKS MAYOR BOWSER USE DC GOVERNMENT'S POWER TO PRESSURE FOOTBALL TEAM TO CHANGE ITS NAME

Rebrand Washington Football today asked DC Mayor Muriel Bowser to put “teeth” into recent comments that the name of the Washington professional football team was offensive, and called on her to offer a more detailed statement saying that the District will not allow a relocation and subsidize a relocation until the team changes its name.

In a letter to Mayor Bowser, Rebrand said she must go further than merely stating that the name of the team was offensive, as she did on The Team 980 program Doc & Galdi.

“Rebrand was heartened to see your embrace of the recent demonstrations in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and an end to racially biased policing,” wrote Bill Mosley in the letter he sent on behalf of RWF. “Now we ask that you use the power of the District government to strike a concrete blow against racism – in this case, the callous and casual racism embodied in the team’s name.

In the letter, RWF noted that a majority of candidates in primary races for DC Council who responded to a questionnaire from the organization both opposed the team’s name and would be in favor of 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.

Local football fans founded RWF in 2015 to advocate that the team adopt a new name because the current one disparages Native Americans. Over the past five-and-one half years more than 10,000 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.

The text of the letter follows:



Members of Rebrand Washington Football (RWF) were pleased when, during your appearance on The Team 980 program *Doc & Galdi*, you said that the racist name of the Washington professional football team was offensive and an obstacle to its locating in the District.

Now we ask you to put teeth into your words. We ask that you offer a more detailed statement saying that the District will not allow a relocation and subsidize a relocation until the team changes its name.

Local football fans founded RWF in 2015 to advocate that the team adopt a new name because the current one is a dictionary-defined racial slur that disparages Native Americans. Over the past five and one-half years more than 10,000 members of the public have signed its petitions, which Rebrand delivers each December to the team's headquarters. This year alone, prior to having to suspend face-to-face petitioning due to the pandemic, 710 DC residents signed our petition demanding a name change. In addition to circulating its petition, RWF has worked with Native American allies who are advocating a change in the name.

This past May, RWF sent a [survey](#) to all candidates for DC Council running in the June primary election for ward and at-large seats. About half the candidates responded. The majority of respondents said not only that they opposed the name of the team, but also 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. Of the eight candidates who unequivocally said they would condition assistance for the team's relocation on its changing its name, four won their primaries on June 2.

Mayor Bowser, a symbolic condemnation of the name is only the first step. The District must take the next step and 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. As the results of our survey show, there will be support on the incoming DC Council for a such a resolution.

Rebrand was heartened to see your embrace of the recent demonstrations in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and an end to racially biased policing. Now we ask that you use the power of the District government to strike a concrete blow against racism – in this case, the callous and casual racism embodied in the team's name.

This could be the second time the team would be pressured to enter into modern times when it comes to human rights. The Kennedy Administration refused to lease the land beneath what became RFK Stadium until the first owner, George Preston Marshall, agreed to integrate the team, which was white-only until 1962. Likewise, you could use the lever of economic pressure to urge team owner Dan Snyder to shed a racial slur as the name of his team.



The Council last week banned chokeholds and other abusive police tactics. Eliminating a name that refers to the scalps of Native Americans would likewise strike a blow for freedom and civil rights. We urge you act now and turn aspiration into action.

Sincerely,

Bill Mosley

For Rebrand Washington Football

Washington, DC 20009