



October 9, 2021

Mr. Daniel M. and Ms. Tanya Snyder
Owners, Washington Football Team (WFT)
21300 Coach Gibbs Drive
Ashburn, VA 20147

Dear Mr. and Ms. Snyder:

Rebrand Washington Football (RWF), a grass roots advocacy organization, appreciates that the Washington Football Team (WFT) announced earlier this year that the new name will not involve any Native American logos, images, or names. We have been working with Native American allies for several years to urge your team to rid itself of these harmful stereotypes. We are also pleased that your new name will not be “Warriors” which is evocative of Native American stereotypes.

We are delivering today 1,091 additional petition signatures that we gathered this year before your recent announcement concerning the discontinuation of Native American mascots, names or imagery. Since our inception in 2015, we have presented you with 11,651 signatures asking for a name change.

We are also asking you to consider establishing a \$10 million fund to help high schools across the country delete the name R-skins from their facilities and athletic uniforms. According to the National Congress of American Indians, 93 high schools across the country still use the name R-skins.¹ Many of them were probably inspired to imitate your name. It is a special responsibility of your team to help fund the eradication of these racial slurs as names of high schools.

RWF derives the figure of \$10 million based on grant dollar amounts distributed by the Native American Heritage Fund² that is devoted to eradicating Native American mascots and working with schools to educate the community regarding Native American culture. The rebranding grants range in size from \$40,000 to over \$200,000. RWF chose \$100,000 to represent the median or average grant. Since 93 schools bear your former name, multiplying \$100,000 by 93 yields a total of over \$9 million. Rounding up leads us to suggest a fund of \$10 million. RWF believes that a fund and commitment by your team would greatly facilitate the elimination of most if not all of the R-skins names from these schools.

The words of your President, Jason Wright, express well the reasons why you should further reach out to the community and help cleanse it of the harms caused by your former name. Mr. Wright states:

¹ National Congress of American Indians, National School Mascot Tracking Database,
https://www.ncai.org/NCAI_School_Mascot_Tracking_Database_-_Overview_and_Numbers.pdf

² Native American Heritage Fund, <https://nahfund.com/>



In the spirit of that engagement, I want to address a name that has emerged amongst our fanbase, “Warriors.” One might look at this name as a natural, and even harmless transition considering that it does not necessarily or specifically carry a negative connotation. But as we learned through our research and engagement with various groups, “context matters” and that makes it a “slippery slope.” Feedback from across communities we engaged clearly revealed deep-seated discomfort around Warriors, with the clear acknowledgment that it too closely aligns with Native American themes. Such an embrace of potentially Native-adjacent iconography and imagery would not represent a clear departure that many communities have so forcefully advocated for us to embrace, and that frankly, we set out to do when we started this process a year ago.

We have 89 years of history in this league and failing to acknowledge our past use of Native imagery in the consideration of the new name wouldn’t be mindful of the individuals and communities that were hurt by the previous name. We’ve made significant changes in our organization and our culture, and our new name must reflect these changes. To that end, we will choose an identity that unequivocally departs from any use of or approximate linkage to Native American imagery.

I know this may be disappointing for some folks. But as I have said many times before, our new identity should unite us. It should bring us together the way this team comes together on the football field and the way we have seen our Fans come together and proudly support our Team and our DMV community.³

We could not agree more with your President that the previous name had caused hurt and had divided instead of united the community. Just as you vow never to use a Native American name or stereotype again, it would be in the spirit of healing a community wound to fund an effort to eradicate copycat R-skins names across the country.

Should you adopt our suggestion, we hope that a fund you create would work in conjunction with the Native American Heritage Fund and other Native American leaders that have fought the previous name including Suzan Harjo and Amanda Blackhorse.

We hope to hear from you soon regarding our suggestion. You can contact us on rebrandwf@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Josh Silver
Bethesda, MD

Ian Washburn

³ Scott Jennings, *Jason Wright: Washington's new name won't be the Warriors*, SB Nation, <https://www.hogshaven.com/2021/7/12/22573564/jason-wright-washingtons-new-name-wont-be-the-warriors>



Arlington County, VA

Bill Mosley
District of Columbia