



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

January 29, 2015

Ethel Branch
Co-Chair
Seattle Human Rights Commission
810 Third Avenue, Suite 750
Seattle, WA 98004-1627

Sarah Bishop
Co-Chair
Seattle Human Rights Commission
810 Third Avenue, Suite 750
Seattle, WA 98004-1627

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
Brian Cladoosby
Swinomish Tribe

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Michael Finley
Coleville Tribes

RECORDING SECRETARY
Robert Shephard
Sisseton Wahpeton

TREASURER
Dennis Welsh, Jr.
Colorado River Indian Tribes

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

ALASKA
Jerry Isaac
Native Village of Tanacross

EASTERN OKLAHOMA
S. Joe Crittenden
Cherokee Nation

GREAT PLAINS
Leander McDonald
Spirit Lake Nation

MIDWEST
Aaron Payment
*Sault Ste. Marie Band of Chippewa
Indians of Michigan*

NORTHEAST
Randy Noka
Narragansett Tribe

NORTHWEST
Fawn Sharp
Quinault Indian Nation

PACIFIC
Rosemary Morillo
Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
Ivan Posey
Shoshone Tribe

SOUTHEAST
Ron Richardson
Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe

SOUTHERN PLAINS
Steven Smith
Kiowa Tribe

SOUTHWEST
Manuel Heart
Ute Mountain Tribe

WESTERN
Arlan Melendez
Reno Sparks Indian Colony

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jacqueline Johnson Pata
Tlingit

NCAI HEADQUARTERS
1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
202.466.7767
202.466.7797 fax
www.ncai.org

RE: NCAI IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 15-01, URGING A NAME CHANGE FOR THE WASHINGTON, DC NFL TEAM, ADOPTED BY THE SEATTLE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Dear Co-Chair Branch and Co-Chair Bishop,

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), I respectfully submit this letter in support of Resolution 15-01, and the Seattle Human Rights Commission's support to change the name of the Washington, DC NFL team. Established in 1944, NCAI is the largest and oldest representative organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments. NCAI has represented the interests of tribal nations and their citizens to promote the advancement of tribal sovereignty and self-determination, while educating the general public of our diverse cultures.

In 1968, NCAI launched a campaign to end negative and harmful stereotypes perpetuated by media and popular culture. These efforts have been rooted in an attempt to achieve social justice and racial equality for Native people. The continued use of racist and derogatory "Indian" sports mascots, logos, and symbols have perpetuated negative stereotypes of America's first peoples. Rather than honoring Native peoples, these caricatures and stereotypes contribute to a disregard for the diverse cultural heritages of Native people.

Stereotypes significantly affect how our people view the world and their place in society, while also affecting how society views Native peoples in historical and contemporary contexts. NCAI's position and 47 year campaign to rid degrading "Indian" stereotypes and mascots is directly linked to ongoing efforts in building a healthy and nurturing environment for our Native youth to flourish and become the next generation of leaders.

Usage of this term carries negative historic connotations reminiscent to the eras of termination of Indian tribes and the assimilation of Native people. The history behind the use of this word in no way honors Native peoples and has no place in our modern American society. More and more people are realizing how toxic the name of the Washington, DC football team is.

In addition to current and former Washington team players speaking out against the name, we also have an increasing number of Washington team fans that are calling for a name change. A new group called, "Love the Team, Hate the Name" is symbolic of the increasing support of the DC area and overall team fan base. In

addition to the President, Members of Congress, tribal governments, and athletes, there have also been a resounding number of civil rights organizations that have called for a change. Groups like the American Psychological Association, NAACP, and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights have acknowledged the time for retiring the name and mascot of the Washington, DC NFL team is far overdue. Also just recently the Fitz Pollard Alliance, a major civil rights group with close ties to the NFL, announced its opposition to the Washington, DC NFL team name.

Thank you for joining the chorus of Change the Mascot supporters and calling for an end to the continued use of the Washington, DC NFL team name. Passage of this Resolution shows a firm and resounding commitment by your Commission in protecting and preserving our human rights. It is through efforts like yours that we will continue to raise awareness about the historical and disparaging nature of the continued use of the "R" word. We hope the City of Seattle will also make its voice heard on this issue and divert City funds from key team sponsors as requested in your resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Cladoosby". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

Brian Cladoosby
President
National Congress of American Indians