



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

Resolutions Committee Recommendation

Resolution #: DEN-18-044

Title: Opposing the Washington NFL Team's Return to the District of Columbia Until the Franchise Changes Its Offensive Name

Comments:

While NCAI has passed numerous resolutions on the topic (offensive and harmful Native “themed” sports mascots) that this resolution broadly addresses, this latest resolution specifically seeks to exert pressure on District of Columbia elected officials to block the National Football League and the NFL’s franchise in Washington from locating its new stadium within the boundaries of the District unless and until they team agrees to do away with the “R-word” racial slur as its name and mascot. This resolution has received edits (see the track changes document attached to this resolution draft) to sharpen and tighten its language and strengthen the clarity of the ask.

Recommendations:

This resolution should be forwarded to the Human, Religious, and Cultural Concerns Subcommittee for review and consideration.

Sponsor a member in good standing (yes/no)?: _____



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #DEN-18-044

TITLE: Opposing the Washington NFL Team's Return to the District of Columbia Until the Franchise Changes Its Offensive Name

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
Jefferson Keel
Chickasaw Nation

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Aaron Payment
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Michigan

RECORDING SECRETARY
Pauna Majel-Dixon
Pauma Band Mission Indians

TREASURER
W. Ron Allen
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

ALASKA
Rob Sanderson, Jr.
Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

EASTERN OKLAHOMA
Joe Byrd
Cherokee Nation

GREAT PLAINS
Larry Wright, Jr.
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska

MIDWEST
Roger Rader
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

NORTHEAST
Lance Gumbs
Shinnecock Indian Nation

NORTHWEST
Leonard Forsman
Suquamish Tribe

PACIFIC
Willie Carrillo
Tule River Tribe of California

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
Darrin Old Coyote
Crow Nation

SOUTHEAST
Nancy Carnley
Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indians

SOUTHERN PLAINS
Zach Pahmahmie
Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation

SOUTHWEST
Joe Garcia
Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo

WESTERN
Franklin Pablo, Sr.
Gila River Indian Community

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jacqueline Pata
Tlingit

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

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the use of racist imagery is an affront to basic human rights, undermines basic human dignity, and has a negative impact upon self-image, self-awareness, and self-esteem; and

WHEREAS, the Washington team's R-word name traces back to colonial times when bounties were paid for the bloody skins of Native men, women and children, which were traded like animal hides; and

WHEREAS, every major English language dictionary defines "redskin" as an offensive term to describe American Indians, and this term, when used in reference to Native American cultures and people, has a history of use as a pejorative and insulting term; and

WHEREAS, the continued use of racist language stereotypes by national sports franchises not only detracts from the proud history and traditions of Native peoples, but perpetuates inaccurate stereotypes, exploits and degrades our culture, and relegates our people to the past or as cartoonish caricatures; and

WHEREAS, the use of the R-word as the name and mascot of the Washington National Football League team is offensive and hurtful to Native Americans and causes direct harmful effects on the public health, well-being and academic achievement of the Native American population; and

WHEREAS, despite the team's arguments to the contrary, the R-word is not a term of honor or respect, but rather, a term that still connotes racism and genocide

for Native peoples and for all others who know of this history and recognize that it is wrong to characterize people by the color of their skin; and

WHEREAS, the term “redskin” would not properly be used by a person when addressing a Native American and should not be used to market a professional sports team; and

WHEREAS, the use of negative stereotypes is a testament to the continued practice of outright commodification of Native peoples and our unique cultural identities; and

WHEREAS, the abuse of Native American symbols for entertainment and profit is insensitive, insulting and unacceptable; and

WHEREAS, the limited and sparse representation of Native Americans in the media and popular culture comprises a significant portion of what children learn about Native people and their culture, and impacts children’s identity formation by reinforcing outdated stereotypes about Native cultures from the past and present; and

WHEREAS, every major Native American organization, along with hundreds of clergy members, churches, civil rights organizations, media outlets, journalists, authors and elected officials have voiced support for changing the team name; and

WHEREAS, the Washington NFL team has chosen to continue using its offensive race-based name and mascot despite great efforts to educate the NFL and the team about the substantial harm these actions cause; and

WHEREAS, national sports franchises, such as Washington’s NFL team, should not be vehicles of institutionalized racism or used to indoctrinate the American public with the idea that it is acceptable to typecast an entire race of people; and

WHEREAS, the team’s ongoing use of a racial slur is directly at odds with the values and actions of former U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy, in whose honor RFK stadium is named, and which is the location of a proposed future site for the stadium.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has reaffirmed its strong opposition to the use of the demeaning R-word by the Washington NFL team and does hereby call on the District of Columbia’s governing leaders, including the D.C. Council and Mayor Muriel Bowser, to oppose and refuse to approve a move back to the District by the franchise until it changes its offensive name.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2018 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Colorado Convention Center, October 21-26, 2018, with a quorum present.

Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:

Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary



The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #DEN-18-044

TITLE: Opposing the Washington NFL Team’s Return to the District of Columbia Until the Franchise Changes Its Offensive Name

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
Jefferson Keel
Chickasaw Nation

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Aaron Payment
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Michigan

RECORDING SECRETARY
Juana Majel-Dixon
Pauma Band Mission Indians

TREASURER
W. Ron Allen
Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

ALASKA
Rob Sanderson, Jr.
Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

EASTERN OKLAHOMA
Joe Byrd
Cherokee Nation

GREAT PLAINS
Larry Wright, Jr.
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska

MIDWEST
Roger Rader
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

NORTHEAST
Lance Gumbs
Shinnecock Indian Nation

NORTHWEST
Leonard Forsman
Suquamish Tribe

PACIFIC
Willie Carrillo
Tule River Tribe of California

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
Darrin Old Coyote
Crow Nation

SOUTHEAST
Nancy Canley
Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indians

SOUTHERN PLAINS
Zach Pahmahmie
Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation

SOUTHWEST
Joe Garcia
Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo

WESTERN
Franklin Pablo, Sr.
Gila River Indian Community

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jacqueline Pata
Tlingit

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

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the use of racist imagery is an affront to basic human rights, undermines basic human dignity, and has a negative impact upon self-image, self-awareness, and self-esteem; and

WHEREAS, the Washington team’s R-word name ~~traces back to~~ derives colonial times from policies of colonization in which when bounties were paid for the bloody skins of Native men, women and children, ~~which were traded like animal hides as proof of their killings~~; and

WHEREAS, every major English language dictionary defines “redskin” as an offensive term to describe ~~American Indians~~ Native people, and this term, when used in reference to Native peoples and American cultures ~~and people~~, has a long history of use as a pejorative and insulting term; and

WHEREAS, the continued use of racist language and image stereotypes by national sports franchises not only detracts from the proud history and traditions of Native peoples, but perpetuates inaccurate and harmful stereotypes about Native peoples, exploits and degrades ~~our culture~~ their cultures, and relegates ~~our people~~ them to the past or as vestiges of the past or cartoonish caricatures; and

WHEREAS, the use of the R-word as the name and mascot of the Washington National Football League team is offensive and hurtful to Native ~~Americans~~ people and causes direct, harmful effects on the ~~public health, well-being~~ physical and mental health and academic achievement of the Native ~~American~~ population, particularly Native youth; and

WHEREAS, despite the team's arguments to the contrary, the R-word is not a term of honor or respect, but rather, a term that still connotes racism and genocide for Native peoples and for all others who know of this history and recognize that it is wrong to characterize people by the color of their skin; and

WHEREAS, the term "redskin" would not properly be used by a person when addressing a Native ~~American-person~~ and should not be used to market a professional sports team; and

WHEREAS, the use of ~~such~~ negative stereotypes ~~is a testament to~~ exemplifies the continued practice of outright commodification of Native peoples and our unique cultural identities; and

WHEREAS, the abuse of Native ~~American~~-symbols for entertainment and profit is insensitive, insulting, and unacceptable; and

WHEREAS, the limited and sparse representation of Native ~~Americans-people~~ in the media and popular culture comprises a significant portion of what children and society at large learn about Native peoples and their cultures, and impacts children's identity formation by reinforcing outdated stereotypes about Native cultures from the past and present; and

WHEREAS, every major Native ~~American~~-organization, along with hundreds of clergy members, churches, civil rights organizations, media outlets, journalists, authors, and elected officials have voiced support for changing the team's name; and

WHEREAS, the Washington NFL team has chosen to continue using its offensive race-based name and mascot despite great efforts to educate the NFL and the team about the substantial harm ~~these actions that the name and mascot~~ cause; and

WHEREAS, national sports franchises, such as Washington's NFL team, should not be vehicles of institutionalized racism or used to indoctrinate the American public with the idea that it is acceptable to typecast and dehumanize an entire race of people; and

WHEREAS, the team's ongoing use of a racial slur is directly at odds with the values ~~and~~ actions, and racial justice legacy of former U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, in whose honor RFK stadium is named, and which is the location of a proposed ~~future~~-site for the team's future stadium.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) ~~has~~-reaffirmed its strong-categorical opposition to the use of the demeaning R-word by the Washington NFL team and does hereby call on the District of Columbia's governing leaders, including the D.C. Council and Mayor Muriel Bowser, to oppose and refuse to approve a move back to the District by the franchise until it changes its offensive name.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2018 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Colorado Convention Center, October 21-26, 2018, with a quorum present.

Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:

Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary