



Change the Mascot!

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Oneida Indian Nation Praises U.S. Patent & Trademark Office's Rejection of Washington Redskins Product Due to the Derogatory Nature of the R-Word

ONEIDA NATION HOMELANDS (NY) (March 19, 2014) For the second time in just three months, the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office has rejected a trademark application because it contained the derogatory, dictionary-defined slur "Redskins." Monday's ruling denying trademark protection to "Washington Redskins Potatoes" is being lauded by the Oneida Indian Nation and its grassroots Change the Mascot campaign, which have called upon the Washington NFL team to end its use of the offensive R-word.

"Registration is refused because the applied-for mark includes matter which may disparage or bring into contempt or disrepute persons, institutions, beliefs, or national symbols," the agency stated in its decision. "Given that 'REDSKIN' in the mark is a derogatory slang term that refers to, and is considered offensive by, American Indians, registration of the applied-for mark must be refused."

In January, the agency rejected a similar trademark application for "Redskins Hog Rinds," listing five separate dictionary definitions showing the offensive meaning of the R-word and citing growing opposition to the name including the Change the Mascot campaign.

“Once again, the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office is making clear what should be obvious to everyone with a conscience – that “Redskins” is not a term which anyone with common decency would use to address a Native American. Despite the team’s claim that the mascot is a term of honor, the reality is that it is a dictionary-defined slur that insults and denigrates Native Americans. The R-word has no place in modern society,” said Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter. “It is heartening to see this latest step in the right direction, and we hope that the Washington NFL team will heed the clear calls for change and place itself on the right side of history by changing the team’s disparaging name.”

The Washington NFL team’s existing R-word trademark is also currently under review by the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office, which will determine whether the team will retain trademark status and legal rights to the term.

This week’s ruling from the USPTO follows a growing chorus of Change the Mascot support from top political leaders across the country, including city councils, mayors, governors, Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle and even the President of the United States. Leading civil rights organizations, faith leaders, sports icons, journalists, publications and Native American tribes have also taken a strong stance against the Washington team’s continued use of the offensive R-word.

Change the Mascot’s grassroots campaign has run ongoing nationwide radio ads pushing for a change and plans to continue its efforts into the offseason and 2014 NFL season.

Learn more at www.changethemascot.org

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