July 6, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Roger Goodell, Commissioner
National Football League
280 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10017
roger.goodell@nfl.com

Dear Mr. Goodell,

The undersigned are Native American leaders and organizations that have worked tirelessly and substantively for over half a century to change the racist name of the Washington team. We appreciate the statements made in recent days regarding the league and the team’s intention to revisit the name, but we are deeply concerned that the process or decision to rename is being made in absence of any discussion with the concerned leadership.

Specifically, we, the undersigned, request that the NFL immediately:

1. Require the Washington NFL team (Owner - Dan Snyder) to immediately change the name R*dsk*ns, a dictionary defined racial slur for Native Peoples.
2. Require the Washington team to immediately cease the use of racialized Native American branding by eliminating any and all imagery of or evocative of Native American culture, traditions, and spirituality from their team franchise including the logo. This includes the use of Native terms, feathers, arrows, or monikers that assume the presence of Native American culture, as well as any characterization of any physical attributes.
3. Cease the use of the 2016 Washington Post Poll and the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey which have been repeatedly used by the franchise and supporters to rationalize the use of the racist r-word name. These surveys were not academically vetted and were called unethical and inaccurate by the Native American Journalist Association as well as deemed damaging by other prominent organizations that represent Native Peoples. The NFL team must be held accountable to the various research studies conducted by scientists and scholars which find stereotypical images, names and the like are harmful to Native youth and the continued progress of the wellbeing of Native Peoples.
4. Cease the use of the offensive, racial slur name “R*dsk*ns” immediately, and encourage journalists, writers and reporters to use the term in print only by using asterisks “R*dsk*ns” and to refer to the term verbally as the “r-word”.
5. Ban all use of Native imagery, names, slur names, redface, appropriation of Native culture and spiritually as well as violence toward Native Peoples from the League.
6. Apply the NFL’s “zero tolerance” for on-field use of racial and homophobic slurs to all races and ethnic groups, especially Native Peoples.

7. Complete a full rebranding of the Washington team name, logo, mascot, and color scheme, to ensure that continuing harm is not perpetuated by anyone.

Finally, we note that the above items are non-negotiable and not subject to consultation or dialogue “processes”, however, we expect the NFL to engage in a robust, meaningful reconciliation process with Native American movement leaders, tribes, and organizations to repair the decades of emotional violence and other serious harms this racist team name has caused to Native Peoples.

Sincerely,

Suzan Shown Harjo, Lead Plaintiff, Harjo v. Pro Football, Inc; President, The Morning Star Institute; Former Executive Director, National Congress of American Indians

Amanda Blackhorse, Lead Plaintiff, Blackhorse v. Pro Football, Inc.

S. James Anaya, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2008-2015; Dean and University Distinguished Professor, University of Colorado Law School

Jodi Archambault, Special Assistant to the President, White House Domestic Policy Council, 2009-2015

Notah Begay, PGA TOUR winner, Founder, NB3 Foundation

Joann K. Chase, Former Executive Director, National Congress of American Indians

Philip J. Deloria, Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History, Harvard University, and Author, Playing Indian and Indians in Unexpected Places

Keith Doxtator, Trust Director, Oneida Nation

Crystal Echohawk, Executive Director, Illuminative

Carla F. Fredericks, Director, First Peoples Worldwide

Stephanie Fryberg, University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor of Psychology, University of Michigan, Co-Author, Unpacking the Mascot Debate: Native American Identification Predicts Opposition to Native Mascots

Shannon Keller O’Loughlin, Executive Director, Association on American Indian Affairs
NDN Collective

Mary Phillips, No Name Change No Stadium

Marcus Amerman, David Bradley, Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds, America Meredith, Mary Kathryn Nagle, Mateo Romero and Gabrielle Tayac for the Native Artists Coalition to End “Native” Mascots

W. Richard West, Jr., President and CEO, Autry Museum of the American West, and Director Emeritus and Founding Director, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution

Appendix: Organizational Signatories as of July 8, 2020:

Alaska Native Heritage Center
American Indian Association of Illinois
American Indian Center of Chicago
American Indian Center of Indiana, Inc.
American Indian Child Resource Center
American Indian College Fund
American Indian Community House
American Indian Council
American Indian Film Institute
American Indian Graduate Center
American Indian Heritage Day in Texas & Indian Citizens against Racial Exploitation
American Indian Movement Indiana and Kentucky chapter
American Indian OIC
American Indian Scholarship Fund Southern California
American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES)
American Indians in Texas Spanish Colonial Missions
Americans for Indian Opportunity
Apache Language Project 2020
Bottom Billion Fund
Buffalo Nickel Creative
California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center
California Native Vote Project
Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies at CU Boulder
Center for Native American Youth
Central Oklahoma Two Spirit Society
Chief Seattle Club
Coalition of Natives and Allies, Pennsylvania
Colorado Plateau Foundation
Cook Native American Ministries Foundation
Cultural Survival
Decolonizing Wealth Project
Denver Indian Center, Inc.
Echoes of the Four Directions
Eradicating Offensive Native Mascotry
First Nations Community Financial
First Nations Development Institute
First Peoples Fund
Friends of the Akwesasne Freedom School, Inc.
Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition
Gwich’in Steering Committee
HeSapa Voter Initiative
Indigenous Art Movement (IAM)
Indigenous Circle of Wellness
Indigenous Environmental Network, Indigenous Educational Network of Turtle Island
Indigenous Peoples Task Force
Indigenous Rights Center
Indigenous Roots LLC
Indigenous Strategies
Indigenously
Kiksuyapi Consulting
Las Vegas Indian Center
Little Earth Residents Association
Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission
MICA Group
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Washington
MMIW Texas
MRG Foundation
National Aboriginal Trust Officers Association
National Indian Child Welfare Association
National Indian Education Association
National Indian Justice Center
National Indigenous Resource Center (NIWRC)
National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center
National Native American AIDS Prevention Center
National Native American Bar Association
National Urban Indian Family Coalition
Native American Journalists Association
Native American Youth and Family Center
Native Education Raising Dedicated Students
Native Justice Coalition
Native Muse Productions
Native News Online
Native Organizers Alliance
Native American Pathways
National Indian Justice Center
Native Public Media
Native Sourcing
Native Star Foundation
Native Ways Federation
Native Youth Leadership Alliance
North American Indian Center of Boston
North American Indian Center of Boston
Northwest Oklahoma Indigenous Safety & Education (NOISE)
Northeast Oklahoma Indigenous Safety & Education (NOISE)
Northwest Area Foundation
Notah Begay III Foundation
One Bowl Productions
Rebrand Washington Football
Red Eagle Soaring
Red Earth descendants
Regalia Making Mothers
Restoring Justice for Indigenous Peoples
Roanhorse Consulting
Sacred Pipe Resource Center
Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples
Sacred Sites Protection & Rights on Indigenous Tribes (SSPIRIT)
Safe Haven Shelter & Resource Center
Sky-Eagle Collection
Social Impact Strategies Group
Society of American Indian Government Employees
Southeastern Indian Artists Association
Sovereign Nations Consulting
Survival of American Indians Association Incorporated
Tapahe Inventive Design
The California Indian Museum and Cultural Center
The Kansas Association for Native American Education
The Red Handed Warrior Society
The Red Road
The Woape Foundation
Tiwahe Foundation
Tocabe: An American Indian Eatery
Tomaquag Museum
Tribal Entities Connect
Tulsa Indian Coalition Against Racism (TICAR)
Two-Spirit Health Action Network
Tzacol Productions Inc
United Native Americans
United Natives Striving to Protect Indigenous Rights
United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF)
Warrior Women Project
Washington Indian Civil Rights Commission
Wolf Rivers Counseling
World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA)
Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program