Toolkit: Eradicating Native Mascots in Sports after the Washington Football Team Name Retirement

Suggested Social Media • **Images & Resources** • **News Items**

As a direct result of over five decades of Native-led advocacy and some 15 years of shareholder engagement by Native and social investors, the Washington Football Team retired its racist name and logo on July 13, 2020.



Critical action remains following this important achievement for fair and equitable representation of Native people in the U.S.:

- Ensure Washington's new name and logo are free of all Native associations.
- Engage other problematic sports franchises, including teams in **Kansas City**, **Atlanta**, **Chicago**, and **Exeter**, as well as college teams and **more than 1,900 K-12 schools in the U.S.**
- Where names and logos have been retired, facilitate reparative and reconciliatory action by the teams and their fans, inclusive of Native peoples and communities.
- Advocate for change wherever there is questionable or harmful representation of Native peoples and culture in business, industry and society.

Action continues on all fronts to eliminate mascots and logos throughout sports that are racist and appropriative of Native American people and culture, including Native-led and investor-led initiatives:

✓ **National Congress of American Indians** and **IllumiNative** continue to engage with teams and fans, uplifting the lifework of such individuals as **Suzan Shown Harjo** and **Amanda Blackhorse**. In 2020, Harjo and Blackhorse were leaders of a statement to the NFL signed by 1400 Native American advocates and organizations, asking to **cease the use of racialized Native American branding by eliminating all imagery evocative of Native American culture, traditions, and spirituality from team franchises**, and to end the use of Native terms, feathers, arrows, or monikers that assume the presence of Native American culture.

✓ The Investors & Indigenous Peoples Working Group, which led a campaign by investors holding $230 billion in June 2020 to demand the Washington Football Team name retirement, also engaged around the Kansas City Team's 2021 Super Bowl playoff with letters to Nike, PepsiCo, and retailers (notably, Amazon, Walmart, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Target were among the first retailers to remove merchandise brandishing the Washington Team's racist name and logo.)

✓ Decisive action from teams, retailers and sponsors, and growing support from sports fans continues to make waves across North America, such as Cleveland and Edmonton team name changes; legislation to ban Native-themed mascots in Colorado, Nevada and Washington, as well a budgetary restrictions in Connecticut; and over 100 K-12 schools in the U.S. dropping or considering to drop racist names and mascots since the WFT name retirement.

The following tools and resources support advocacy to end the use of all racist and appropriative Native mascots, logos and language in sports, business and the media.

Suggested Talking Points & Social Media Content

#ChangeTheName 🏈 #StopTheChop ⚾ #NotInOurHonor 🏒 #NotYourMascot 🏉 #EndRacismInSports

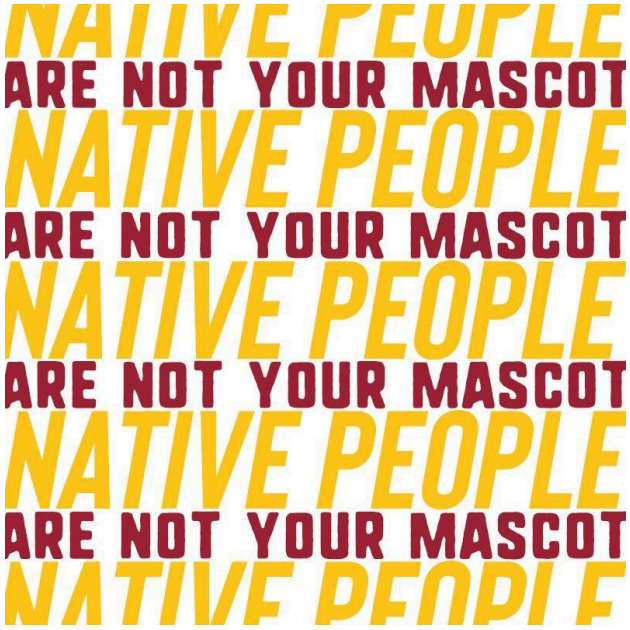
- More than one year after the Washington Football Team retired its racist name, Native American leaders, concerned investors and sports fans continue to fight to eliminate ALL racist and appropriative team names, logos and mascots. #ChangeTheName #NotInOurHonor

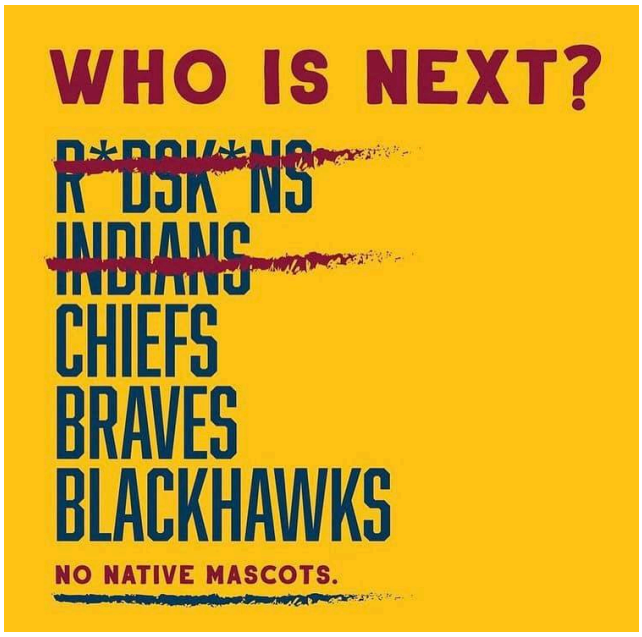
- Next steps to eradicate all Native mascots, logos and names in sports:
  - ✅ Advocate for change to all questionable or harmful representation of Native peoples and culture throughout industry and society
  - ✅ Demand sports franchises @Chiefs @Braves @NHLBlackhawks @ExeterChiefs #ChangeTheName and drop the mascot
  - ✅ Work to change the racist names and mascots of some 1,900 U.S. schools
  - ✅ Ensure new team names/logos are free of all Native associations
  - ✅ Facilitate reparative and reconciliatory action by the teams and fans inclusive of Native peoples and communities
  - ✅ Uplift Native voices and concerns, and elevate frontline Native communities and organizations

Images & Resources

IllumiNative

- Change the Name campaign, including social media-ready graphics:





NoMoreNativeMascots.org

- Take Action - A growing list of petitions from students, alumni and community members, throughout the U.S. working toward changing "Native" imagery and Native themed names in their local schools.

ChangeTheMascot.org

- The psycho-social effects of Native American mascots: a comprehensive review of empirical research findings, Race Ethnicity and Education by Laurel R. Davis-Delano, Joseph P. Gone & Stephanie A. Fryberg (2020)

National Congress of American Indians

- Ending the Era of Harmful 'Indian' Mascots (Video)
- National School Mascot Tracking Database: The Current Numbers (as of August 20, 2020)

Investors and Indigenous Peoples Working Group

Engagement Toolkit: Investors Demand Washington Team #ChangeTheName

Eradicating Racist Branding and Language in Business & Sports

See also:

Owning 'Red': A Theory of Indian (Cultural) Appropriation by Angela R. Riley and Kristen A. Carpenter

News Coverage & Further Background

Warriors ask Chiefs fans not to wear Native American headdresses | Reuters 12/13/21

'I don't feel honored': Native mascots at schools are not only offensive; they evoke historical trauma | King-5 NBC Seattle 12/9/21

Exeter Chiefs to ditch Native American branding after consulting fans | The Guardian 11/25/21

World Series 2021: It's past time for the Atlanta Braves to move on from the chop | ESPN 10/29/21

NCAI Calls Out MLB Commissioner for Giving the Atlanta Baseball Team a Pass on Tomahawk Chop | Native News Online/Yahoo! Sports 10/27/21

IllumiNative Issues Statement Ahead of Start of World Series on the "Tomahawk Chop" | Native News Online, 10/26/21

Native American sports images back in spotlight, as teams adapt to calls for change | NBC Kansas City 10/4/21

Continuing to Protest the KC football Name | Not in Our Honor 9/10/21

Will U.S. schools follow the big leagues and leave behind Native American mascots? | National Geographic 9/9/21

High school teams use nicknames too racist for the NFL. What can be done? | The Guardian 8/19/21

Washington Football Team bans Native American-inspired headdresses, face paint at FedEx Field | The Washington Post 8/4/21

Washington Football Team Bans Native American Headdresses and Face Paint | The New York Times 8/4/21

Kansas City Chiefs Retire Mascot 'Warpaint,' Keep Team Name | Native News Online7/30/21

The long road to a reckoning on racist team names | Vox 7/28/21

Indian sports mascots don't just mock Native culture. They erase it. | The Washington Post 7/27/21

Cleveland's baseball team goes from Indians to Guardians | Indian Country Today 7/23/21

The Cleveland Guardians have come to their senses. Now it's time for the last holdouts to drop their Indigenous names and logos | Toronto Star 7/23/21

'It's time to take a step forward': Portland Winterhawks replace Native American logo and mascot | KGW8 | 7/14/21

Washington NFL Team says no Native-themed mascot
Kolby Kickingwoman, Indian Country Today - July 13, 2021

Washington Football Team's new name, logo will have no 'linkage to Native American imagery,' president Jason Wright says
ESPN - July 12, 2021

Bans on Native American mascots pick up after Washington Football Team name change
Reid Wilson, The Hill - July 9, 2021

Colorado lawmakers vote to ban American Indian mascots in public schools
Saja Hindi, Denver Post - June 4, 2021

'They Need To Understand The Harm': How Indian Mascots Affect Native American Students
Esteban Bustillos, Boston Public Radio - June 3, 2021

Cleveland Indians Selling 'Indians' Gear While Looking for Non-Racist Mascot
Scott McDonald, Newsweek - June 3, 2021

Opinion: New Nielsen poll offers hope that we'll 'see the end of Native mascots'
Mike Freeman, USA Today - May 16, 2021

More than Mascots: It's Time to End Cultural Appropriation of Native American in Sports (Report)
The Nielsen Company - May 16, 2021

Gov. Jay Inslee signs ban on Native American school mascots
Nicholas K. Geranios, Associated Press - April 26, 2021

Cleveland bans Native American headdresses and face paint for home games at Progressive Field
Gabriel Fernandez, CBS Sports - March 31, 2021

Nevada bill would bar offensive school mascots, place names
Michelle L. Price and Sam Metz, Associated Press - March 9, 2021

Civil Rights and the Impact of Native American Names, Symbols, and Imagery in School Mascots
Nebraska Advisory Committee Briefing Report to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights - March 2021

'End racism,' the NFL implored. So what about the Chiefs' name?
Liz Clarke, The Washington Post - February 5, 2021

Global sport's problem with the appropriation of Indigenous culture
Calum Trenaman, CNN - January 18, 2021

For Native Americans, the fight against mascots is much bigger than sports
Deena Zaru, ABC News - December 31, 2020

Maine remains only state to fully ban Native American mascots. Why haven't others followed?
Lorenzo Reyes, USA TODAY - December 29, 2020

It's 2020. Indigenous Team Names in Sports Have to Go.
Kurt Streeter, The New York Times - December 21, 2020

For Opponents of Native American Nicknames, 2020 Has Brought Hope
David Waldstein, The New York Times - December 18, 2020

Cleveland's baseball team will remain Indians in 2021, rebrand with new name in 2022
Dave Sheinin, The Washington Post - December 14, 2020

Teams say Indian names show respect, history says otherwise
Jim Litke, Associated Press (via Indian Country Today) - December 16, 2020

Native American sports mascots turned real people into flimsy props. Good riddance to them all.
Sally Jenkins, The Washington Post - December 14, 2020

These teams faced pressure to change their Native American names. Here's what's happened since.
Eric Levenson, CNN - December 14, 2020

What's in a name? For some brands, a racist history primed to be toppled.
Allegra Frank, Vox - December 14, 2020

Cleveland Indians and 14 Other Sports Teams That Dumped Racist Names and Mascots (Photos)
Wrap Staff and Brian Welk, The Wrap - December 13, 2020

When Your Hometown Team Gets a New Identity
Hannah Giorgis, The Atlantic - November 26, 2020

Not in our honor: It is disappointing that the Kansas City NFL franchise has hijacked our heritage month
Suzan Shown Harjo, Indian Country Today - November 4, 2020

Sports teams were silent on Indigenous People's Day
Natalie Welch, Christopher Buccafusco Indian Country Today October 16, 2020

Hundreds Of Schools Are Still Using Native Americans As Team Mascots
Hope Allchin, FiveThirtyEight - October 12, 2020

Behind the scenes of the investor push to change Washington's football team name
Tisha Thompson, ESPN - September 2, 2020 [clip]

[It's Past Time to Eliminate Racist Native Mascots]
WziHanska Cook, Teach for America - September 3, 2020

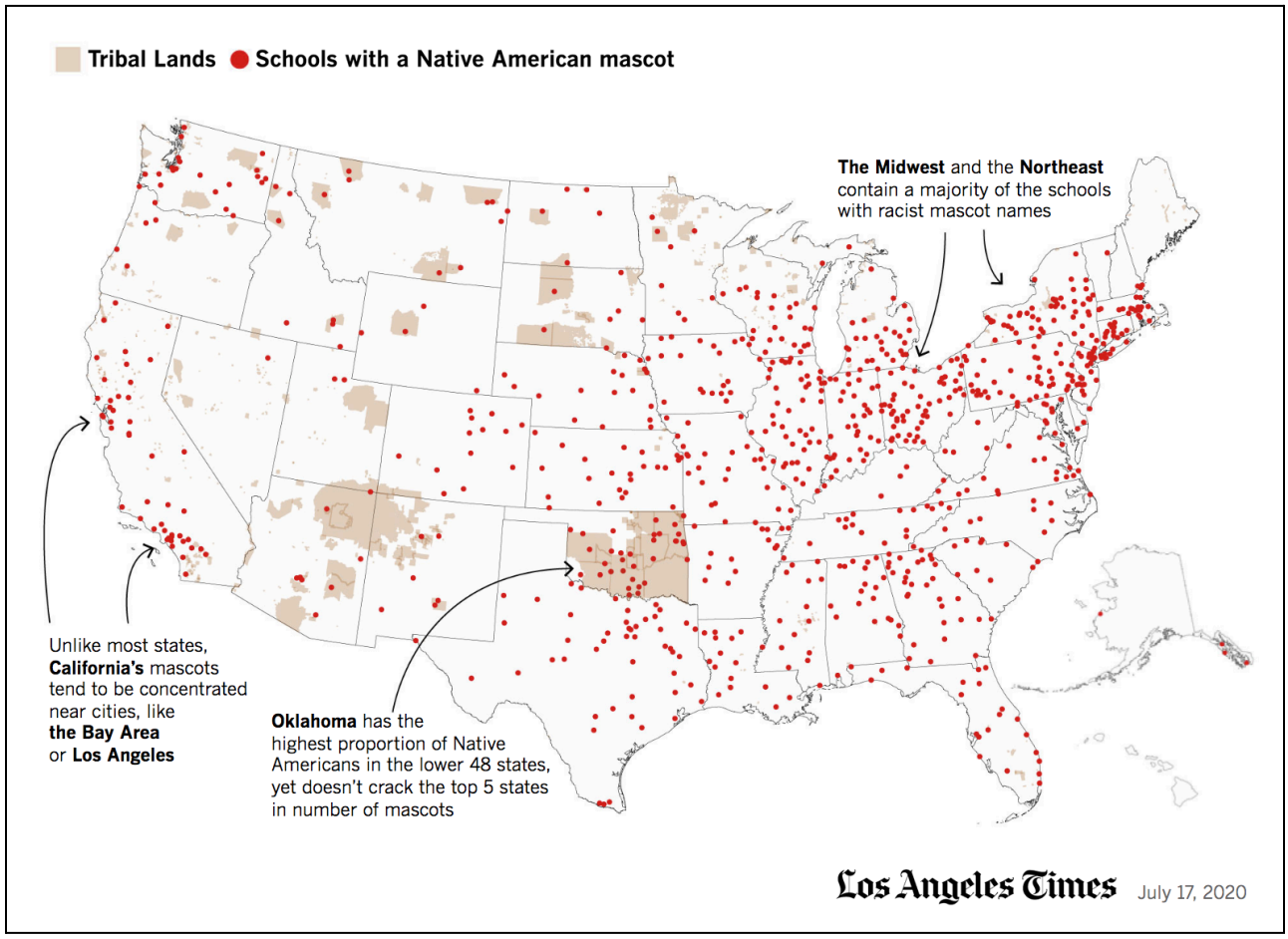
[The Chiefs offload their racism problem on their fans, who they'll be letting in their stadium amid coronavirus]
Dennis Young, *New York Daily News* - August 21, 2020

[A look at the history of racism in mascots at Stanford and schools across the country]
Elizabeth Wilson, *The Stanford Daily* - August 13, 2020

[Teams must do more than ban Native American headdress, offensive gestures]
Dr. Natalie Welch and Christopher Buccafusco, *The Undefeated* - August 27, 2020

[Native mascots still a sticking point in high school sports]
Sophia Eppolito and Felicia Fonseca, *Associated Press* - August 9, 2020

[Pro sports teams are starting to get rid of racist names. Hundreds of U.S. high schools still have them]
Rahul Mukherjee, *Los Angeles Times* - July 17, 2020



[The Cleveland Indians Need to Do More Than Change the Team's Name]
Nick Francona, *GQ* - July 17, 2020

[Time to reconsider Native American names, say activists and academics]
Amy Tennery, Reuters - July 16, 2020

For Native American Activists, Washington Name Change Was 'a Long Time Coming'
Kevin Draper and Gillian R. Brassil, The New York Times - July 13, 2020

In Campaign Against Racism, Team Names Get New Scrutiny
Brassil, McDonnell Nieto del Rio,Witz and Waldstein, *The New York Times* - July 10, 2020

To Native American groups, Redskins name is 'worst offender.' Now they hope for more changes.
Adam Kilgore and Roman Stubbs, *The Washington Post* - July 9, 2020

Washington NFL team's Standing Rock moment
Mark Trahant, Indian Country Today - July 5, 2020

Dan Snyder won't deserve an ounce of credit if he changes his team's name
Jane McManus, New York Daily News - July 4, 2020

FedEx calls on Redskins to change name following investors' demands on sponsors
Liz Clarke, The Washington Post - July 2, 2020

Investors Ask Nike, FedEx and PepsiCo to End Relationships With the Washington Redskins
Mary Emily O'Hara, Adweek - July 1, 2020

Sorry, the Chicago Blackhawks Need to Change Their Name and Logo
Paul Street, *The Counter Punch* - July 14, 2020

How the Kansas City Chiefs got their name and the Boy Scout Tribe of Mic-O-Say
Vincent Schilling, Indian Country Today - September 19, 2019

How Is the Blackhawks' Name Any Less Offensive Than the Redskins'?
Steve Inskeep, *The Atlantic* - June 19, 2015