



RESOLUTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED BY
THE NATIONAL BOARD OF
THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS, INC.

Resolution on the Washington, D.C. Football Team Name

WHEREAS, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights has, since its founding in 1950, stood for not only the eradication of legal and socioeconomic barriers to equality, but also for the promotion of tolerance and respect of all cultures and the affirmation of the dignity of all individuals; and

WHEREAS, Native American civil rights organizations and Native American people and their non-Native supporters have for decades called for the elimination of the use of so-called “Native” names, images, mascots, and behaviors that promote negative stereotypes and connotations or that trivialize Native American cultures, including those used by athletic teams and activities, and have succeeded in persuading the majority of educational athletic programs to abandon such practices as an affront to the dignity of Native American tribes and peoples; and

WHEREAS, a number of professional sports teams have either abandoned or limited their use of team names, images, mascots, and behaviors that have been viewed as offensive or demeaning to Native American cultures and peoples, without detrimentally affecting the athletic or commercial success of the teams; and

WHEREAS, similarly, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has instituted and enforced a policy that has penalized collegiate athletic programs that use pejorative or disparaging team names, images, mascots, and behaviors, a policy that has promoted respect for Native American tribes and peoples without detrimentally affecting the success of any athletic teams or programs that have changed their names or other forms of branding; and

WHEREAS, the term “redskin,” when used in reference to Native American cultures and people, has a history of use as a pejorative and insulting name; one that is and has been defined by numerous dictionaries as an offensive racial, ethnic slur; one that is widely considered to be just as offensive and demeaning as historically-used slurs that are no longer deemed acceptable when used in reference to groups and individuals in African-American, LGBT, physical or developmental disability, Jewish, Italian-American, or other communities; and one that cannot in any reasonable way be viewed as honoring the culture or historical legacy of any particular Native American tribe or individual;



WHEREAS, the fact that the private or commercial use of athletic team names, images, mascots, and behaviors is protected by the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, and similar state and local protections of the right of free expression, does not make the use of offensive or demeaning names, images, mascots, and behaviors any less harmful and inappropriate, and does not require local, state, or federal government entities to be complicit in or supportive of their use;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights calls upon the National Football League's Washington Redskins franchise to change its team name, and to refrain from the use of any other images, mascots, or behaviors that are or could be deemed harmful or demeaning to Native American cultures or peoples; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights calls upon the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and other local, state, and federal government entities to take any and all appropriate measures, while taking special care to avoid infringing any of the freedoms of speech or association guaranteed by the First Amendment and the U.S. Constitution and similar local and state protections, to disassociate themselves from the Washington Redskins franchise and to end any preferential tax, zoning, or other policy treatment that could be viewed as supporting the franchise as long as it retains its current team name; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights commends the current and former government officials, media outlets, and other entities that have encouraged the Washington Redskins franchise to change its team name or that have refused to be complicit in promoting the current team name; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights calls upon other sports teams to eradicate the use of team names, images, mascots, and behaviors that are or could be deemed harmful or demeaning to Native American cultures or peoples.