

October 21, 2013

Minneapolis, MN

American Indian Movement : National Coalition on Racism in Sports and Media

November 7, 2013 is "R" Day for all Indigenous People.

November 7, 2013 is the beginning of the end of the racist and illegal name for the Washington DC Professional Football Team.

The American Indian Movement (AIM) and the National Coalition on Racism in Sports and Media (The Coalition) announced today that because non-indigenous people have stolen portions of the sacred culture, heritage, religion and images of the Native American Nations for use and abuse by sports corporations for their profit and amusement, and because all such cultural appropriations by non-indigenous people harm indigenous children through discrimination and desecration, they are calling on all people to stop this injustice once and for all beginning November 7, 2013.

To help the rabid supporters of discriminatory names and mascots explore a new perspective, this analogy is offered:

"Imagine a Protestant sports team that chose years ago to adopt a Catholic name that was a degrading slur against the Catholic people. Imagine the Protestant team had no Catholic players or owners or heritage. In fact, imagine the Protestants actually massacred Catholic people throughout history and enslaved them until recently. Then, imagine the Protestant team's mascot was a caricature of the beloved Pope, complete with head-dress and robes and staff. Imagine the fans incited at every game to chant their versions of sacred Catholic music and song, to use sacred Catholic artifacts in jest, to dress in ridiculous versions of sacred religious cloth, all in front of Catholic fans. Imagine the Protestant team put their own manufactured image of the Pope on their helmets and uniforms, to celebrate the vulgar and demeaning name of the team at every game. Imagine the Catholic people asking year after year for the Protestant Team to stop this outrage, but they would not stop. And finally, to complete this analogy, imagine all newspapers and sports broadcasters and internet sites and clothing manufacturers and advertisers and all commentators choosing to carry all of this desecration of Catholic people and culture to Catholic children and their parents, knowing full well that it was horrible for Catholics to experience, and absolutely damaging to the self concept of their children."

AIM and The Coalition are demanding that local, federal, state and international authorities assert the many potent existing laws against discrimination in public facilities, the workplace and across the airwaves.

Demand is made that the people who cover and broadcast sports stop using the names and images that harm Native children.

AIM and The Coalition are asking all people, including lawyers and civil servants, who believe in equality and justice, to take immediate action.

“The issue is not whether the appropriation of Indian names and images is offensive. It is.

The greater issue is the substantial damage indigenous sports names and mascots do to Indigenous children, to Indigenous people and to all people of color. The demeaning of any one protected group damages all other groups.”

AIM and The Coalition cite many academic studies that show that discriminatory stereotypes damage children and damage the perspective of all people.

The American Indian Movement and The Coalition are encouraging legal and civil action across America. They are urging boycotts of the offending teams, merchandise and advertisers.

They have issued a Manifesto (www.yworlds.com/changethemascot) asserting:

It is illegal to use the R word in a publicly funded stadium.

It is illegal to use the R word in a public event.

It is illegal to harm children through direct denigration and racism.

It is illegal to broadcast obscene and racist material that causes harm to the public interest.

It is illegal to say or display the racist R word in any workplace in America.

Contact:

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