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**Native American Senior Civil Rights Official at the Department of Energy  
Receives Significant Discrimination Settlement from Agency**

*Official spoke up about racist sports images and suffered retaliation*

**Washington, DC (March 10, 2020)** — Jody TallBear, a Native American attorney in the Department of Energy's Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, reached a \$200,000 settlement agreement with the United States Department of Energy in connection with Title VII claims she brought against Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

The settlement compensates Ms. TallBear for the retaliation she faced after raising concerns about the use of the Washington professional football team's name and mascot in the work place. As a Native American, Ms. TallBear was deeply and personally offended by a name that celebrates the genocide of her ancestors and a mascot image that strips Native American people of their humanity today. As a leader in DOE's diversity and civil rights office, Ms. TallBear took it upon herself to educate her coworkers and other federal employees about the history of the term and its effect on Native Americans who have to hear it.

Instead of encouraging such activities, the Department's senior most civil rights official and an Obama appointee, ordered Ms. TallBear to stop and subsequently stripped Ms. TallBear of her lead position on tribal affairs and energy policy. This appointee continued her efforts to isolate Ms. TallBear by denying detail offers of other DOE offices to utilize Ms. TallBear's expertise in Native American affairs. Ms. TallBear had quickly risen through the ranks as a valued member of the Department, only to have been halted in her career track because she spoke up about the Washington professional football team's mascot.

"When I came to Washington DC in 2009 to work on tribal energy policy, I never imagined that I would become embroiled in a civil rights lawsuit related to the Washington football team mascot," said Ms. TallBear. "But the blatant hypocrisy I witnessed in working side-by-side with diversity and civil rights experts that carved out exemptions for racism against Native Americans in the workplace became too much to bear. To be able to look myself in the mirror, I had to speak up."

In addition to the monetary relief, the Department has agreed to restore 100 hours of sick leave for Ms. TallBear and pay for her attendance at the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, VA.

“Ms. TallBear was brave enough to voice an unpopular opinion about how it feels to show up to work where there are constant reminders of America’s persistent racism towards Native Americans and paid the price” said Dennis Corkery, an attorney for Ms. TallBear. “This settlement should be a reminder to all employers in our region that the civil rights education that Ms. TallBear engaged in should be encouraged, not punished.”

Ms. TallBear was represented by the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs and pro bono by Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP.

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#### **ABOUT THE WASHINGTON LAWYERS’ COMMITTEE**

*Founded in 1968, The Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs works to create legal, economic and social equity through litigation, client and public education and public policy advocacy. While we fight discrimination against all people, we recognize the central role that current and historic race discrimination plays in sustaining inequity and recognize the critical importance of identifying, exposing, combatting and dismantling the systems that sustain racial oppression. For more information, please visit <http://www.washlaw.org> or call 202-319-1000. Follow us on Twitter at @WashLaw4CR.*