

**Statement of Fritz Pollard Alliance Executive Director Harry Carson  
and Chairman John Wooten**

Over the last two years, we have studied the question of the Washington Football Club's use of the name "Redskins." Over the last year, we have had multiple conversations with leaders of the Washington Football Club, including owner Dan Snyder and Club President Bruce Allen, as well as leaders in the Native American community. Based on our study and conversations, we believe the Washington Club should cease using the name. In our meetings with Native American leaders – including John Echohawk of the Native American Rights Fund; Jacqueline Pata of the National Congress of American Indians, which is the largest and most representative Native American organization in our country; Brian Patterson of the United South and Eastern Tribes; and Ray Halbritter of the Oneida Nation – we learned of the damage that Native Americans, and particularly children in the Native American community, are suffering from the use of the name.

Promoting dignity and respect for all is central to the FPA's mission, and as such we cannot be silent on this issue. We have made our best efforts to convene an in-person meeting with Dan Snyder and the nationally recognized Native American leaders because we believe that people of goodwill can solve problems. Our vision is that the Washington Club could look to the Seattle Seahawks as a model, in that it has a neutral name and contemporary Native American imagery that the Native American community supports.

We recognize that the Washington Club has crafted traditions around the name "Redskins," and we understand the natural inclination to hold tight to tradition, but traditions can and often must change. Indeed, dozens of institutions, such as Stanford University and St. John's University, have moved away from Native American team names and moved forward with proud new traditions. We believe the Washington Club can do the same.

Our stand against the name "Redskins" does not diminish the respect we have for the Washington Club and its leadership. On this matter, however, we disagree with them, and we feel a moral obligation to voice our disagreement. We hope all people of goodwill can see that the time has come to create new traditions that honor the Club and its history while honoring Native Americans. We support the Club, but we do not support its name.

**Statement of Law Professor and FPA Counsel  
N. Jeremi Duru**

The Fritz Pollard Alliance has been concerned about the Washington Club's use of the name "Redskins" for some time and has intensely studied the matter. We have read the legal proceedings in the *Harjo* case as well as the *Blackhorse* case, both of which

involve challenges to the Club's trademark on the name "Redskins" and the latter of which has the current effect of cancelling the Club's trademark because of the name's disparaging nature. We have studied the manner in which various dictionaries define the term. We have spoken with leaders of the Club and leaders in the Native American community and have heard competing perspectives on the word's history.

Having done all this, the FPA has drawn the conclusion that "Redskins" is a term to which offense can be, and is, reasonably taken. The word does not offend everybody in the Native American Community, but a word need not offend everybody for it to be offensive. Indeed, the FPA views the N-Word as offensive and staunchly opposes its use notwithstanding the support the word receives from many African-Americans.

Calls for the Washington Club to reconsider its team name have come from all quarters in recent months and years. Our nation's President, Barack Obama, has stated that if he owned the Washington Club, he would think about changing the name. Last year, fifty United States Senators signed a letter describing the term "Redskins" as "a racial slur" and calling for a name change. The NAACP, the National Council of La Raza, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and numerous other civil and human rights organizations have called for a name change. Many individual journalists – such as Sports Illustrated's Peter King, CBS's James Brown, and the New York Times' William Rhoden – as well as entire media outlets – such as The New York Daily News, The Seattle Times, The Detroit News, and The San Francisco Chronicle – now refuse to use the name.

The FPA joins the ranks of these individuals and organizations and calls on the Club to change its name.