

EXHIBIT A

**DECLARATION OF GEOFFREY C. BLACKWELL
IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS'
MOTION TO DISMISS**

[Updates \(/news/updates\)](#)[Press Releases \(/news/press-releases\)](#)[News & Updates Archive \(/news/archive\)](#)[Press Resources \(/news/press-resources\)](#)[Multimedia Center \(/news/multimedia-center\)](#)[Tribal Communicators Resources \(/news/tribal-communications-resources\)](#)[Home](#) • [News](#) • [NCAI Encouraged by Washington Commanders' Decision to Leave the Past Behind](#) [Subscribe to our News RSS \(/news/articles.rss\)](#)

NCAI Encouraged by Washington Commanders' Decision to Leave the Past Behind

Published on AUG 30, 2023

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Congress of American Indians is encouraged by today’s announcement from the National Football League’s Commanders President Jason Wright that a return to the former name “is not being considered. Period.” This resolute stance and promise of continued dialogue represents a meaningful first step toward the Commanders owning the history of its former name and taking accountability for the unspeakable harm caused to tribal citizens after decades of racism and erasure.

In light of recent interviews where the Commanders new ownership group referenced the former team name, NCAI sent a letter extending congratulations on their acquisition and reiterating Indian Country’s long-standing opposition to harmful, unsanctioned Native “themed” mascots and imagery.

NCAI invited meaningful dialogue on how to truly honor and respect Native peoples, urging ownership to promptly discontinue this practice and publicly commit to refraining from any further use of the pejorative slur by stating, “It is time to leave the former name in the past.” As the oldest, largest, and most representative organization in the United States serving the broad interests of Tribal Nations and Native people, NCAI has been at the forefront of Indian Country’s campaign to retire harmful branding, including the derogatory racial slur that previously characterized the “Commanders” franchise.

“The use of unsanctioned Native ‘themed’ sports mascots perpetuates harm and dehumanizes our citizens, impacting both Native and non-Native individuals, and particularly our children,” said NCAI Executive Director Larry Wright, Jr. “NCAI remains committed to fostering a proactive partnership with Washington ‘Commanders’ leadership, ensuring that harmful pasts are not repeated with future generations.”

Out of respect for tribal sovereignty, NCAI encourages the Washington Commanders organization to persist in dialogue with duly elected tribal leaders and engage with the communities directly affected by the previous mascot. This call to action extends to other professional franchises, including the Atlanta Braves, Chicago Blackhawks, and Kansas City Chiefs. NCAI urges these organizations to follow the lead of the Washington Commanders and Cleveland Guardians, promoting a dialogue

that upholds tribal sovereignty, amplifies contemporary Native voices, and paves the way for the retirement of harmful mascots, imagery, and

branding.

Since 1968, NCAI has remained committed to addressing the issue of inappropriate and stereotypical Native representation, advocating for positions that reflect the consensus of member Tribal Nations and citizens.

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About the National Congress of American Indians:

The oldest, largest, and most representative national organization serving Tribal Nations and their citizens, NCAI has been leading Indian Country's movement to retire harmful Native "themed" mascots from sports and popular culture since 1968. NCAI's membership has passed several consensus-based resolutions on the issue, and its relentless advocacy has helped to fuel the rapidly growing national movement among sports teams to retire offensive and harmful Native "themed" mascots out of respect toward Tribal Nations and Native peoples. For more information, visit www.ncai.org.

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- [Policy Issues \(/policy-issues\)](#)
- [Resources \(/resources\)](#)
- [Conferences & Events \(/conferences-events\)](#)
- [Initiatives \(/initiatives\)](#)
- [Contact Us \(/feedback-form/form\)](#)
- [Terms of Use \(/terms-of-use\)](#)
- [About Tribes \(/about-tribes\)](#)
- [Native Youth \(/native-youth\)](#)
- [About NCAI \(/about-ncai\)](#)
- [Membership \(/membership\)](#)
- [Privacy Policy \(/privacy-policy\)](#)



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