

DATE

John Donahoe
President and Chief Executive Officer
NIKE, Inc.
One Bowerman Drive
Beaverton, OR 97005

Dear Mr. Donahoe,

We are writing to you today to urge Nike to terminate your business and public relationships with the National Football League's (NFL) Washington D.C. franchise, if it does not stop using the name "Redskins." Many of us have raised this issue with Nike for years to little avail. But in light of the Black Lives Matter movement that have focused the world's attention on centuries of systemic racism, we are witnessing a fresh outpouring of opposition to the team name. Therefore, it is time for Nike to meet the magnitude of this moment, to make their opposition to the racist team name clear, and to take tangible and meaningful steps to exert pressure on the team to cease using it.

It is heartening to see the outpouring of company statements and future looking programs addressing systemic racism that have emerged. The actions being taken are wide ranging from workplace diversity to public policy. One specific action has been the evaluation of racist symbols and stereotypes. For example we see the rebranding of consumer products that are offensive such as Pepsi's decision to sunset their Aunt Jemima brand and Land O'Lakes changing its logo by removing the "Native American" woman image from its packaging.

Thus it is timely and urgent for Nike to also review its own business relationships.

Since the murder of George Floyd on May 25th, every corner of the country has seen a wave of anger over racial discrimination and violence. Perhaps not since the civil rights era of the 1960s, which led to the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, have citizens spoken with a more clear and compelling demand to end racism and discrimination in all its forms.

Yet, today, the NFL's Washington D.C. team still uses a racist name as its mascot. "Redskins" remains a de-humanizing word characterizing people by skin color and a racial slur with hateful connotations. Virtually every major national American Indian organization has denounced use of Indian and Native related images, names and symbols disparaging or offending American Indian peoples, with over 2,000 academic institutions eliminating "Indian" sports references.

We need to remember that the franchise name is not just a word, it is a symbol that loudly and clearly signals that Native Americans are not worthy of respect. This bears out in all arenas of life, from the doctor's office where [more than one in five](#) Native Americans report experiencing discrimination in clinical encounters, to the classroom where Native American students reported being bullied because of their race [over three times](#) as often as white students.

In 2018, the National Congress of American Indians passed a resolution (#DEN-18-044) stating:

the continued use of racist language and images, stereotypes by national sports franchises detracts from the proud indigenous history and traditions of Native peoples and perpetuates inaccurate and harmful stereotypes about American Indian and Alaska Native peoples, exploits and degrades our culture, and relegates our people as vestiges of the past or cartoonish caricatures; and ...

the use of the R-word as the name and mascot of the Washington National Football League team is offensive and hurtful to American Indian and Alaska Native people and causes direct, harmful effects on the physical and mental health and academic achievement of the American Indian and Alaska Native populations, particularly youth; and ...

despite the team's arguments to the contrary, the R-word is not a term of honor or respect, but rather, a term that still connotes racism and genocide for Native peoples and for all others who know of this history and recognize that it is wrong to characterize people by the color of their skin;

Over 200 civil rights organizations have condemned the name. Just this past February, a University of Michigan/University of California, Berkeley study concluded that Native American participants significantly oppose the Redskins team name and the use of Native mascots in general. This rigorous study underscores the flaws in earlier surveys used to justify the continued use of the name.

Many companies have acknowledged the racism of the name and have distanced themselves from names and symbols disparaging native peoples, including Anheuser-Busch, Philip Morris, Coca-Cola, Denny's, and Miller Brewing. But still, Nike produces and sells thousands of pieces of apparel bearing the name and logo of the team.

We appreciate that Nike has spoken up in support of the protests stating "Systemic racism and the events that have unfolded across America over the past few weeks serve as an urgent reminder of the continued change needed in our society. ... The NIKE, Inc. family can always do more but will never stop striving to role model how a diverse company acts."

Further, we acknowledge that Nike has taken steps to be more transparent about its workforce diversity. And in 2018, Nike launched an ad-campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick which focused on the protests he began in 2016. At the time, Nike's ad-campaign helped keep alive the public conversation around systemic racism and police brutality. We also note that Nike has stepped back from using the Washington football team name on some products.

However, Nike continues to provide uniforms and equipment to the Washington D.C. NFL football team which bears the logo and name. Further, it produces and sells thousands of jerseys and other apparel with the team's racist name and logo. This association with and facilitation of the racism inherent in the name and logo runs contrary to the very sentiments expressed by the company.

Therefore, the undersigned ### investors representing ### trillions in assets, ask you to move beyond the words on paper and to live up to the principles Nike asserts by applying them to your apparel relationship with the Washington D.C. NFL football franchise – terminate your business and public relationships with the franchise, if it does not stop using the name "Redskins."