



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

September 15, 2015

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
Congresswoman
U.S. House of Representatives
2136 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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RE: SUPPORT FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 3487, “RESPECT FOR NATIVE AMERICANS IN PROFESSIONAL SPORTS ACT OF 2015”

Dear Congresswoman Holmes Norton,

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), I would like to express my gratitude and support for your introduction of H.R. 3487, the “Respect for Native Americans in Professional Sports Act of 2015”. Established in 1944, NCAI is the largest and oldest representative organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments, and serves the broad interests of the nation’s 566 tribal governments consisting of the over 5.2 million Native peoples.

In 1968, NCAI launched a campaign to end negative and harmful stereotypes perpetuated by media and popular culture. These efforts have been rooted in an attempt to achieve social justice and racial equality for Native people. The continued use of racist and derogatory “Indian” sports mascots, logos, and symbols have perpetuated negative stereotypes of America’s first peoples. Rather than honoring Native peoples, these caricatures and stereotypes contribute to a disregard for the diverse cultural heritage of Native peoples.

Stereotypes significantly affect how our people view the world and their place in society, while also affecting how society views Native peoples in historical and contemporary contexts. NCAI’s position and 45 year campaign to rid degrading “Indian” stereotypes and mascots is directly linked to ongoing efforts in building a healthy and nurturing environment for our Native youth to flourish and become the next generation of leaders.

On behalf of NCAI and the Change the Mascot Campaign I want to extend to you my gratitude for introducing H.R. 3487. We look forward to working with you and your office on this critically important matter.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Pata
Executive Director
National Congress of American Indians