



Blacks In Government®
2013 National Delegates Assembly
Dallas, Texas



RESOLUTION

**BIG STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH NATIVE AMERICANS,
CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS, COALITION PARTNERS AND MANY
OTHERS BY ASKING PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA AND THE OFFICE OF
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT TO ISSUE A DIRECTIVE DENOUNCING THE
DISPLAY OF WASHINGTON “REDSKINS” PARAPHERNALIA AND
REFERENCES IN ALL FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS
AND FACILITIES**

WHEREAS, The National Organization of Blacks In Government (BIG), was incorporated in 1976 as a non-profit organization with (6) six primary constitutional goals to advocate and educate; and today, BIG is known as a world class organization which represents 3.4 million public and private civil servants by continuing to address these goals while seeking to eradicate discrimination in the workplace and its effect on public service; and

WHEREAS, the United States Government, utilizing both public and private industry employs over 2.5 million people according to Office of Personnel Management (OPM) statistics; and has assumed responsibility for ensuring a work environment for these 2.5 million people that is free from discrimination and bias; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States issued *Executive Order 13583, Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce* in 2011 which states that “A commitment to equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion is critical for the Federal government as an employer” and also that “As the Nation’s largest employer, the Federal Government has a special obligation to lead by example”; and

WHEREAS, the OPM issued the *Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* in 2011 which states that “while organizations may have diversity in their midst, employees may not perceive that their social identities are appreciated and included in the workplace. For this reason, building inclusive workplaces ensures that all employees feel included, connected, and engaged”; and

WHEREAS, in federal workplaces located in and around Washington DC, there are pervasive stereotypical depictions of Native Americans and written racial slurs through the display of Washington “Redskins” football team paraphernalia as well as the spoken racial slur “Redskins”; and

WHEREAS, achieving an inclusive work environment where the social identities of Native Americans are appreciated and accurately included cannot be achieved while the stereotypical images and racial slurs referencing Native Americans through “Redskins” paraphernalia and verbal references remain prevalent in the federal workplaces in and around Washington DC; and

WHEREAS, Indian mascots are widely accepted as tools that promote bias and prejudice against Native Americans and numerous official bodies have issued statements condemning the use of Native American mascots citing the harm inflicted on Native Americans by their use including the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the American Psychological Association, and the National Congress of American Indians; and

WHEREAS, on May 28, 2013 a bi-partisan coalition of the following 10 Congressional members; Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, Tom Cole, Betty McCollum, Raul M. Grijalva, Gwen Moore, Michael M. Honda, Donna M. Christensen, Zoe Lofgren, Barbara Lee, and Eleanor Holmes Norton signed a letter to Washington “Redskins” owner Daniel Snyder, team sponsor FedEx, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and all 31 NFL franchises urging the Washington franchise to change its “Redskins” name, stating it was derogatory and racially offensive to Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, BIG has officially partnered with other world class non-profit and non-government organizations (NGO’s) with mutual advocacy concerns for equality and training known as the National Coalition for Equity In Public Service (NCEPS) incorporating the Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE), Federally Employed Women (FEW), Federal Asian & Pacific American Council (FAPAC), National Image, Inc. (IMAGE), Federal Employees with Disabilities (FedsFirst) who collectively meet during each perspective annual training program; and

WHEREAS, during the June 2013 SAIGE Tenth Annual National Training Program in Spokane, Washington where SAIGE and non-SAIGE members affiliated with American Indian Tribes nationwide made it abundantly clear the name “Redskins” historically and today is an unequivocal racial epithet and a derogatory slur akin to the “N-word” among African Americans, the ‘W-word’ among Hispanics Americans and the “C-word” among Asian Americans and thereby its use depicts total disrespect and humiliation each time it is utilized in the Federal workplace by individuals in the presence of Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, "Redskin" is unequivocally a racial descriptor for [Native Americans](#) that dates back to a genocidal era in American history when Native Americans were hunted for government-paid bounties, killed, and forcibly removed from their lands. The term is defined by dictionaries of American English as "usually offensive", "disparaging", "insulting", "taboo" and is avoided in public usage with the exception of its continued use as a name for sports teams and many claim the term is a particularly egregious racial epithet; and

WHEREAS, The Patent and Trademark Office previously revoked the “Redskins” trademark because it was disparaging to a group of people. The decision was overturned on a procedural technicality - not on substantive merits. A second lawsuit is pending final decision; and

WHEREAS, Washington “Redskins” owner Daniel Snyder was recently quoted as stating he will “NEVER” change the team's name, thereby further insulting concerned congressional members, BIG members, NCEPS partners and Native Americans, including federal government employees whose ancestors endured unspeakable atrocities are now forced to relive such abomination much like the N-word forces African Americans to relive Slavery and its vestiges; and

WHEREAS, the Federal government has created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to oversee and protect employees against activity seen as racial harassment, racially derogatory language and racially charged hostile work environments that may be created by the use of any racially insensitive expression that insults or humiliates any employee in reference to their ethnicity, religious affiliation, disability, gender or race identification as specifically reported by Native American employees when hearing or seeing the term “Redskins” in the workplace; and

WHEREAS, the use of Native American mascots by colleges and universities, the presence of Indian mascot depictions, and verbal references on campuses has been found to create a hostile environment for Native Americans in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, BIG National Delegates represent the entire membership and meets annually to discuss the business of the organization including the adoption of Resolutions voted on by the Delegates that further direct BIG leadership to take specific actions,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

- (1) The National President of Blacks In Government will write a letter to the President of the United States Barack Obama and to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, asking that a directive be issued to all Federal Agencies and contractor affiliates that the use of the term “Redskins” and the stereotypical depiction of Native American mascots such as that which constitutes the “Redskins” logo is considered offensive and thereby prohibited from use in and on government property.
- (2) The National President of Blacks In Government will write a letter to its NCEPS partners asking each, as a show of solidarity, to write a letter to the President of the United States Barack Obama and to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, asking that a directive be issued to all Federal Agencies and contractor affiliates that the use of the term “Redskins” and the stereotypical depiction of Native American mascots such as that which constitutes the “Redskins” logo is considered offensive and thereby prohibited from use in and on government property.
- (3) BIG will issue a Press Release informing the public of its official position taken in support of the Native Americans that incorporates the language of this Resolution.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

The National President of Blacks In Government will request OPM to conduct national training seminars to further inform Federal workers why the term “Redskins” is racially insensitive to the American Indian workers.

Submitted by:

Matthew F. Fogg

Matthew F. Fogg
BIG National 1st Vice President
BIG Region XI - Heritage Chapter President
Retired - Chief Deputy United States Marshal

June 15, 2013

There are no costs to implement this resolution.