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CO-CHAIR

June 19, 2014

Mr. Zygi Wilf  
Minnesota Vikings Football Club  
9520 Viking Drive  
Eden Prairie MN, 55344

Dear Mr. Wilf:

Yesterday, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office ruled to cancel legal protections for the trademarked name of the National Football League's Washington franchise because it is "disparaging to Native Americans." The time for debate has ended – the name of the Washington franchise is clearly an offensive racial slur. I urge you, as an NFL team owner, to not remain silent on this matter any longer.

Thirty-one NFL franchises split the sales of their licensed merchandise equally. As you well know, when a shirt, cap, or jersey bearing the Washington team name is sold, the Minnesota Vikings share in the profit from that sale. After yesterday's decision, NFL owners must now ask themselves if they want to continue to profit from a name so hurtful to our Native American brothers and sisters that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office deemed it ineligible for federal protection. By taking a stand to change the mascot, you can send a very clear message to Native Americans and all Americans that your organization no longer wishes to benefit from the commercialization of that hateful slur.

In November, the Minnesota Vikings are scheduled to host the Washington franchise for a game on the University of Minnesota campus at TCF Bank Stadium. As the Vikings will be a co-host with the University on their campus, I would like to remind you of three facts. First, Minnesota has a strong Native American community and TCF Bank Stadium honors that community with a plaza recognizing each of our tribal nations. In addition, one of those tribal nations, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux, contributed to the funding of this stadium. Lastly, the presence of the Washington franchise with their racist name on the University of Minnesota campus would be in violation of the Board of Regents' *Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action Policy*.

Mr. Wilf, I believe you are a man of integrity. Therefore I am calling upon you to publically demonstrate leadership on behalf of your organization and the people of

Minnesota by adding your voice to the millions of Americans who are calling for this racist mascot to be changed and for Native Americans to be treated with respect and dignity by the NFL. A strong condemnation of the Washington franchise's name by the Minnesota Vikings Football Club will go a long way towards helping to change the mascot.

Sincerely,



Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

cc: Governor Mark Dayton  
Hon. Paul Thissen, Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives  
Hon. Sandy Pappas, President of the Minnesota Senate  
Chairman Charlie Vig, Shakopee-Mdewakanton Sioux Community  
Chairman Ron Johnson, Prairie Island Indian Community  
Chairman Floyd "Buck" Jourdain, Red Lake Nation  
Chairman Norman Deschampe, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa  
Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe  
Chairwoman Erma Vizenor, White Earth Band of Ojibwe  
Chairwoman Carri Jones, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe  
Chairwoman Karen Diver, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa  
Chairman Kevin Leecy, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa  
Chairman Kevin Jensvold, Upper Sioux Community  
Chairman Denny Prescott, Lower Sioux Indian Community  
President Eric Kaler, University of Minnesota  
Chairman Richard Beeson, University of Minnesota Board of Regents