

*God is still speaking,*  
**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



**For Immediate Release**

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## **United Church of Christ Applauds U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Decision to Cancel Washington NFL Team Trademark**

*Decision comes on heels of the Central Atlantic Conference of the UCC's unanimous vote calling for the Conference's 40,000 members to boycott the team's games and merchandise until its name and logo changes.*

The United Church of Christ applauds the decision of the United States Patent and Trademark Office to cancel the Washington Redskins trademark registration, deemed “disparaging to Native Americans.” The landmark case, which appeared before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board, was filed on behalf of five Native Americans. It was the second time such a case was filed.

The decision by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office comes on the heels of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ's unanimous vote calling for the Washington franchise to change its name and for the Conference's 40,000 members to boycott the team's games and merchandise until its name and logo changes. The vote took place at the Conference's annual meeting Saturday, June 14, and was supported by the Oneida Indian Nation and the National Congress of American Indians.

“As I heard the news on the local radio station, the first thing I said to my self was this effort to change the team's name has entered a whole new phase,” said the Rev. Dr. John Deckenback, conference minister of the Central Atlantic Conference of the UCC, based in Baltimore. “The momentum is building and I hope that the team is paying attention and will move quickly to change the name. The Patent and Trademark Office decision appears to confirm the wisdom of the actions taken by the Central Atlantic Conference's annual meeting last weekend. In light of this action, we will redouble our efforts in the coming weeks.”

“The cancellation of the Washington NFL team's trademark by the U.S. Patent Office is a significant step toward justice for our country's Native Americans,” said the Rev. Linda Jaramillo, a national officer of the UCC and executive minister for the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries. “This action sends a clear

message that the team name and logo are indeed demeaning, degrading and dehumanizing to an important segment of our society and will not be tolerated any longer. Guided by the bold and courageous leadership of the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministry, the UCC stands in strong support of this decision and will continue to fight alongside our Native American brothers and sisters until the team name and iconography are changed and the wounds they have caused finally begin to heal."

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**About the United Church of Christ:**

The United Church of Christ (UCC) is a mainline Protestant denomination with nearly 1 million members and more than 5,100 congregations nationwide. The UCC is a church of many firsts, including the first mainline denomination to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly-gay man and the first predominantly white denomination to ordain an African American. The UCC's motto ("That they may all be one," (John 17:21)) and tagline (God is still speaking,) supports the Church's long-standing commitment to social justice issues and its extravagant welcome to all, no matter who they are, or where they are on life's journey. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, the UCC has also been active in protests against the use of the Cleveland Major League Baseball team and its Chief Wahoo mascot.

The Central Atlantic Conference, one of 38 regional conferences of the United Church of Christ, comprises 185 UCC congregations in the Mid-Atlantic region, including New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and parts of Virginia and West Virginia. It includes more than 40,000 local church members and approximately 400 ordained ministers.