Use of slang word is offensive to Acadians

In your Dec. 31 TV news section, the "Knotty Lou Awards," the following: "I am not really a coonsaw, but I play one on 'TV, Frank Dance." The most insulting and derogatory term is reserved for Acadians is "coonsaw." This insulting term was never a pejorative or complimentary term and we resent its use.

During World War I, the French soldiers, fighting to save their homeland from the "black hounds," referred to the French-speaking American soldiers as "coonsaw." The French term "coonsaw" is defined as "a stupid woman or man, used specifically for a mongrel of unknown or illegitimate parentage, 1810-1931," to a person without a health card (1923).

The non-French-speaking American soldier, either out of pity or crassness, began to refer to the Louisiana soldiers by calling them "coonsaw" as a takeoff of "coonsaw.

Acadians are entitled to "national origin" protection under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 104. In view of this history setting aside protection to Acadians against insensitive, class-based discrimination, the equal protection clause was adopted to bar the evils of intentional discrimination against people on the basis of certain "suspect" classifications such as race and national origin.

And finally, under the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, Acadians were afforded every opportunity to fully develop their culture heritage and are entitled to protection from arbitrary and capricious classifications. (See "Native Born Acadians and the Louisiana Idea," La. Law Review, Vol. 40, No. 6, 1980.)

During the post-World War II era, many Acadians experienced occupational and geographic mobility. This afforded Acadians the opportunity to fully integrate into the American socio-economic pattern.

In 1964, the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODFLA) was created under the leadership of Lynn Demopolous, Curnette, and the Acadian culture is being protected by the Acadian people. One must be, this "horn again" peddled by observing and conversing with Acadians in the many south Louisiana cities and villages.

In 1980, by Senate Concurrent Resolution, the Louisiana Legislature condemned the use of "coonsaw" and the sale of any items containing the word. The pride and morals of all ethnic groups is seriously eroded when reference is made in a derogatory fashion to denote their group. Therefore, we respectfully request that you refrain from using this slang word. To continue to do so would be a violation of applicable internal and other laws against such conduct to many native-born Acadians.

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