

Iowa Commission on Native American Affairs est. May 12, 2008



Iowa Department of Human Rights

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Des Moines, Iowa 50319
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May 3, 2011

Name

Address

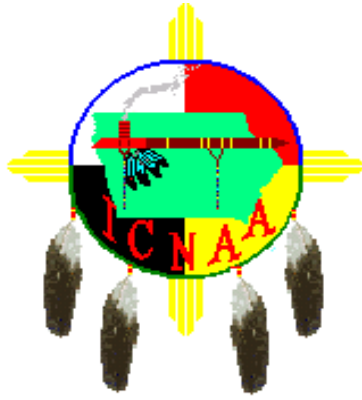
Dear Name:

It has come to the attention of the Iowa Commission on Native American Affairs there is a need to address the use of Native American people and spiritual symbols as sports team names and mascots. The use of a Native American symbol or likeness is degrading to our culture and to our people. We see it as offensive and an invasion of our spiritual way of life. The Commission would like to see all Iowa schools remove racially based team names. Images of Native American sports mascots are especially harmful to Native youth; they tend to contribute to lower self-esteem and limit feelings of community worth. Often these mascots portray Native Americans as bloodthirsty killers or comic idiots and degrade Native American spirituality.

The NCAA banned the use of offensive Native American nicknames, mascots and logos in college sports in 2006. Iowa has a long history of being progressive on this issue. The University of Iowa put a policy into place before the NCAA ban not to play teams with a Native American mascot. The National Congress of American Indians began to address the issue of negative stereotypes in print and other media in 1968. Schools across the nation have already begun the process of banning these demeaning mascots. We urge you to create a policy that will not allow for the portrayal of our people as mascots and will discourage the use of our images and spiritual practices for the sake of school spirit. For more information and expert advice on how this can be accomplished please contact the Iowa Commission on Native American Affairs, or Jill Avery at 515-242-6334.

Respectfully,

Judy Allen, Chair
Iowa Commission on Native American Affairs



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