



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ATL-14-011

TITLE: Urging the U.S. Secretary of Education to Take Substantive Action Regarding Schools with “Native” Sports Stereotypes

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
Brian Cladoosby
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Randy Noka
Narragansett Tribe

RECORDING SECRETARY
Robert Shepherd
Sisseton Walpeton Oyate

TREASURER
Dennis Welsh
Colorado River Indian Tribes

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

ALASKA
Jerry Isaac
Tanana Chiefs Conference

EASTERN OKLAHOMA
S. Joe Crittenden
Cherokee Nation

GREAT PLAINS
Leander McDonald
Spirit Lake Tribe

MIDWEST
Aaron Payment
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

NORTHEAST
Lance Gumbs
Shinnecock Indian Nation

NORTHWEST
Fawn Sharp
Quinalt Indian Nation

PACIFIC
Rosemary Morillo
Soboba Band of Mission Indians

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
Ivan Posey
Eastern Shoshone Tribe

SOUTHEAST
Ron Richardson
Halawa-Saponi Indian Tribe

SOUTHERN PLAINS
Stephen Smith
Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma

SOUTHWEST
Manuel Heart
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

WESTERN
Arlan Melendez
Reno Sparks Indian Colony

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jacqueline Johnson Pata
Tlingit

NCAI HEADQUARTERS
1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
202.466.7767
202.466.7797 fax
www.ncai.org

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI called on the U.S. Secretary of Education “to urge all schools, which have a federal nexus and which use “Native” sports stereotypes, to change their team names, logos, mascots and behaviors to those that do not violate the human or civil rights of Native Peoples or of any students” (*Commending Efforts to Eliminate Racist Stereotypes in Sports and Calling on the U.S. President and Congress to Combat These Continuing Affronts to Native Peoples, NCAI Resolution #TUL-13-050, October 18, 2013*); and

WHEREAS, even though one year has passed, the Secretary of Education has not urged any schools to change their team identities or behaviors; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Education has not issued guidance to schools on the injurious nature of these practices or taken any substantive action whatsoever; and

WHEREAS, the Education Department’s Office of Civil Rights has consistently ruled against Native Peoples’ interests, regarding complaints in this issue area; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Civil Rights and the White House Initiative on Indian Education urged the Education Secretary to undertake “listening sessions” on the subject, however, the Department of Education did not schedule any listening sessions for an entire year, and then conducted only minimal outreach and scheduled one hearing with two day’s notice; and

WHEREAS, there has been scientific research conducted to determine the harmful psychological effects these “Native” sports mascots on our Native youth; and

WHEREAS, according to studies conducted by Dr. Stephanie Fryberg and her colleagues, American Indian and Alaska Native high school and college students had a consistent, negative reaction to stereotypical mascots, such as Chief Wahoo of the Cleveland Indians, because these images and names remind Native youth of the limited ways in which others see them, which in turn restricts how they see themselves; and, importantly, non-native youths self esteem rose when presented with the same images; and

WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association has determined that these representations also undermine the ability of Native nations and people to portray themselves accurately as distinct and diverse cultures, and that stereotypical images are a dominant culture's prejudiced representations of a racial or ethnic minority group; and

WHEREAS, while we support the Department of Education's efforts to hold these listening sessions in Indian Country, it still has not taken any formal action to change these "Native" sports stereotypes in schools today.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI again urges the U.S. Secretary of Education to urge all schools, which have a federal nexus and which use "Native" sports stereotypes, to change their team names, logos, mascots and behaviors to those that do not violate the human or civil rights of Native Peoples or of any students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI urges the Secretary of Education to issue guidance to schools regarding the injurious nature of educational athletic programs' practices of "Native" name-calling, mascotting and cultural appropriation, and that these practices are emotional violence and bullying against Native students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI urges the Secretary of Education to take substantive actions to benefit Native students and to take such actions in accordance with those provisions of the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the United States has endorsed, regarding discrimination against Indigenous Peoples and the right of Indigenous Peoples to determine our own identities and to not have false identities or personalities imposed on us; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI urges the Secretary of Education, in coordination with other federal entities, to conduct listening sessions, notifications, data collection and reporting in a transparent manner, and to expedite consultation with Native Peoples on the draft conclusions and recommendations resulting from the sessions; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2014 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, October 26-31, 2014 in Atlanta, Georgia, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary