



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #TUL-13-050

TITLE: 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

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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, Native Peoples and non-Native supporters have succeeded in eliminating over two-thirds (2,000+) of the so-called “Native” names, images, mascots and behaviors from educational athletic programs, beginning with the first nationwide, the University of Oklahoma’s retirement of “Little Red” in 1970, and continuing through this year’s decision to end “Fighting Sioux” at the University of North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, despite these solid successes in colleges and universities, as well as in elementary, middle and high schools, there remain nearly 1,000 of these race-based stereotypes in educational and professional sports; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI has long supported Native efforts to eliminate racist stereotypes and cultural appropriation from American sports, including the litigation against the disparaging name of the NFL Washington franchise (*Harjo et al v. Pro Football, Inc.*, and the ongoing *Blackhorse et al v. Pro Football, Inc.*, to cancel existing trademarks, and the pending *Harjo et al Letters of Protest* against new requests to trademark the same racial slur), and supports legislation that would accomplish the same purpose as the litigation, H.R. 1278, the *Non-Disparagement of Native American Persons or Peoples in Trademark Registration Act of 2013*, which was referred to the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet, and any other legislation to eliminate racist stereotypes in sports; and

WHEREAS, there are many ways in which the President and the Administration could address these same issues, including using the bully pulpit to inform Americans that the use of race-based stereotypes and the practice of cultural appropriation may make some fans feel good or even superior to Native Peoples, but they lower the self-esteem of Native youth and have led to emotional violence and physical bullying inflicted on them by others.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI calls on the President and the Administration to help Native Peoples combat the ill effects of race-based stereotypes in sports and to make public statements to raise awareness about problems arising from these “Native” sports stereotypes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI calls on the President to support H.R. 1278, the *Non-Disparagement of Native American Persons or Peoples in Trademark Registration Act of 2013*; calls on the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet to hold a hearing on H.R. 1278; and calls on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to build on its record of oversight hearings to develop legislation to address this issue; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI commends the sponsors of H.R. 1278 for their ongoing commitment to educating other Members of Congress and the general public about the issues, and commends those who have pursued and are pursuing the matter in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and in the federal courts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI calls on the 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 the NCAI commends the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the Census Bureau for their practice of not showing any “Native” names, logos or mascots of the teams of athletes they engage to promote the Census, and urges that this practice be continued during this Census cycle; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI commends the Secretary of the Smithsonian and the Director of the National Museum of the American Indian for the *NMAI Symposium on Racist Stereotypes and Cultural Appropriation in American Sports* (March 2013), and encourages other federal entities to conduct and support similar symposia and programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI calls on all federal entities to take 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 and personalities imposed on us; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI commends all those students, families, Native Peoples, scholars, faculty members, administrators, school boards, state officials and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), who are making change, school by school, district by district and state by state; all those Native Peoples, organizations and attorneys who are making inroads on the professional sports front; and the Oneida Indian Nation in New York and the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin for their innovative approaches to addressing the issues; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI commends all those newsrooms, editorial boards, editors, producers, columnists and others in media, who have called for an end to these stereotypes in sports and in their papers and broadcasts, and calls on more media professionals and media organizations to follow their example and editorialize, opine, and take positions geared toward ending stereotypes in sports and in their papers, broadcasts and associations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI commends its sister organizations for working together on behalf of the vast majority of Native Peoples to consign these stereotypes and cultural distortions to museums and history, and condemns the Washington NFL franchise and all other offending team owners who are engaged in the time-dishonored practice of “chief-making,” as if the voice of individuals who support their continuing offense, and who may or may not be Native or chiefs, offsets those of the major organizations representing every segment of Native Peoples in the United States today; 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 2013 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Cox Business Center from October 13 - 18, 2013 in Tulsa, Oklahoma with a quorum present.



 President

ATTEST:



 Recording Secretary