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Native American Mascots in Oregon
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, March 2, 2019, 4:07 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Native American Mascots in Oregon topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes the questions you are addressing.
Do NOT simply leave it RE: Native American Mascots in Oregon

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon
by [Taylor Dotson](#) - Tuesday, March 5, 2019, 5:13 PM

I come from a school where we use to be the braves but now are school mascot is the Vikings. I have always been proud of being the braves and Vikings because it was not based solely on the mascot it was based on the what the mascot represented. We were fighter, survivors, and proud of who we represented. The town of Reedsport was known as the braves as well. They were affected by the law and having to change their name. They simply dropped the “s” and are now known as brave. This is an example of it not being about the mascot but the name itself. It is having respect for who you are representing is what matter most. If tribes were not offended with the decision to have the mascot represent their heritage, then we should support them in the decision. For some it was an honor and as long as the school does not demoralize the mascot then the school should be allowed to represent the tribe. As a school athlete when I put on the uniform it was not just representing myself and school it was representing my community as well. In the matter of offending one person I would say you can not please everyone. There is a greater chance we could offend more people by removing the mascot then it would if it were to offend just one person. I do not think the state should have stepped in and it should have been left to the discretion of the community and the tribe within that community. One issue with having all the schools change their mascot is they are located in several places throughout the gym. They are on the floors, on the walls, and in the school. It takes money to have the floors redone, walls painted, and new uniform bought. I certainly know my school would not have the money to change and redo everything without the aid of help funding the money to change it. In this case where would the state get all the money to provide for these changes? The money they could provide should be used in creating a better curriculum for the students rather worrying about the mascot that may not even offend the local tribe.

-Taylor

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon

by [Jessica Cole](#) - Friday, March 8, 2019, 9:32 AM

I used to go mentor at Reedsport High as well and I remember when the law passed the principle was talking to me (he actually used to be a high school teacher of mine at a different school!) about the cost associated with trying to replace all of the memorabilia. It is not simply removing a plaque - like you mentioned, it involves redoing floors, entire gyms, football fields, etc - as well as the enormous cost of uniforms for all the teams. I completely agree that if the local tribe(s) were ok with the mascot, then the money would be better spend working with the council to educate the students with an informative curriculum. I mentored many schools in Douglas County after I graduated (Glendale), for my job, and I remember thinking that I never met a school where the mascot wasn't a sign of pride. While I am aware that in many other states, the Native American population is not as well received - in Oregon there seems to be a sense of pride. I think that is also because so many who live here have some sort of Native American ancestry. I agree that by removing the mascots, if the local tribe does not have an issue, is actually more offensive. It is also offensive because the law only targets one ethnicity. The article mentions other schools in the area, such as the Riddle Fighting Irish. By only addressing Native American mascots, and not mascots that depict any ethnicity in general, the law is actually promoting a sense of segregation and racism.

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon
by [Emma Mather](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 5:00 PM

When you said " it was not based solely on the mascot it was based on the what the mascot represented." I think that perfectly explained what I have gathered from listening to the schools in my district talk about their mascots. I competed against two schools who had Native American influenced mascots. Siltez Warriors and the Mohawk Indians. Both schools delt with this controversy differently despite both schools being created in honor of Native American Tribes. Mohawk changed their mascot to the Mustangs but Siletz, a school that is located on a current reservation kept their mascot and just like you said they are proud of it because of what it represented not what the mascot is itself. I also agree with how you brought up all of the money it would cost to actually change the mascot because of how many places the mascots name or image has been painted or placed. I also agree with your statement "The money they could provide should be used in creating a better curriculum for the students rather worrying about the mascot that may not even offend the local tribe."

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The concerns of a few versus mass opinion
by [Jessica Cole](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 1:23 PM

I may be a bit biased as I grew up in Southern Douglas County, Oregon. I am not trying to be prejudice when I say that the area is very redneck in it's thinking; however the most vocal in that area proudly identify with that lifestyle and are very outgoing about their love of Country, Republicans, big truck driving, hunting, etc. The rest of the area is dotted with "hippies" and "yuppies", and while everyone in Douglas County doesn't exactly fall perfectly into these two niches (especially in the larger city of Roseburg) - the majority of the general populace in the rural areas does with the exception of the Native American population. I only bring up the abundance of rednecks because it seems like these would be the people who would discriminate against the Native Americans in the area. I was a transplant to the area from Minneapolis and tended to think my point of view was generally elevated to those around me. Many of the rednecks were indeed racist, so I was incredibly surprised when this racism didn't seem to extend to Native Americans. Overall, the rural population was proud of the Native American culture. There would be gatherings and Pow Wows put on by local tribes, and so many people would show up to attend - even those of non native descent. I grew up in the area as the Seven Feathers Casino was being built, which brought massive jobs and much needed economic uplift to the area. I didn't attend Roseburg High, but I can remember when the news broke that the mascot might not be allowed, many people were upset, including friends of Native American descent. Especially after the casino was installed, the Cow Creek Tribe really expanded their efforts to connect with the community. They offered scholarships and other opportunities that have warmed the community even more towards them. I am not saying there are not a few racist people in the mix in Douglas County, and there are many bitter to losing their money at the Casinos - however overall the trend of the populace in Southern Douglas County is friendly, protective and even proud of the local Native Americans and their culture.

I know my experience growing up in the area isn't exactly a winning well researched factual argument to support my point of view - but I think it is important to point out how well overall the communities work together. The outrage for changing the mascot was not just met with negative reactions by those going to school - it was met with a

negative response by the Native Americans as well. The local Cow Creek Tribe already works in educating local schools and putting on events for the general public to help educate them in the culture and lifestyle of their tribe. I knew a few members of the tribe, who like Sue Shaffer mentioned in the article, didn't feel that the mascots were demeaning. If anything, they felt that by removing the mascots it was in essence trying to eliminate their influences on "normal" American culture. I can think of some mascots that might be seen as demeaning, like perhaps the Redskins - and I can even see how the Roseburg mascot "Indians" might be seen by some as harmful after the politically correct termage switch took place - however for the school and the teams there - the term was intended to be one portraying prowess, importance and power. Don Kordosky mentioned in the article for Oakridge "the high school's Warriors mascot evokes the best in sportsmanship — courage, respect, dignity, perseverance, discipline, integrity. They call it Warrior spirit." I am not sure about other areas of the state or country - but I know this was the same sentiment felt in Roseburg concerning their mascot as well.

Because local tribes did not take offense, and also shared a sense of pride (many local children of Native American descent actually go to the public schools in the area) - I think that Oregon's Education Board overstepped their boundaries. The 2002 poll showed that over 75% of the Native American population didn't have any issue with the mascots. I think that in this politically correct time it is hard to address how a minority can be insulted by an issue and rampage a path for their cause without thought that their opinion might not be the only correct one. Of course, everyone's opinion should be heard - and I completely agree that the treatment of the school's mascots should be addressed - but it comes to a vocal few who often set out to change the status quo despite the fact that most of their peers don't feel the same way. The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians stated that the people who made these decisions were "people who have no knowledge of Indian communities" and that the new rule does nothing to address "the real issues of racism." A Grande Ronde spokeswoman said tribes should be able "to address these issues within their territories" and that the board should focus on better educating students about Oregon tribal history. She also stated that six tribes had actually objected to the policy, not just two as recorded.

As mentioned before, I believe some mascots can be deemed as offensive. I fully agree that the issue needed to be addressed, but instead of the state stepping in and making laws to govern these decisions based on the complaints of a few - I think the issue would have been better dealt with by the tribes working with the schools to educate those who go there on their culture. If a mascot was deemed offensive by a local council, then it should be discussed and changed according to the Native American tribe in that area. I feel that this method would also present an opportunity to spread knowledge and understanding within the schools instead of just eliminating everything all together. An opportunity for collaboration and growth was cut down by the state because of again, testament by a few. It was stated that "research showed that even with positive representations, the mascots could be detrimental to Native students", which could lead to higher suicide rates and depression - however giving the students a chance to be involved in sharing their culture if they chose to would actually present an opportunity to continue expanding their knowledge instead of ignoring it.

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Re: The concerns of a few versus mass opinion

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Saturday, March 9, 2019, 7:52 PM

I totally agree with you that this was an opportunity for collaboration and growth between the tribes and the school system. I never attended a school with a Native American mascot, but I competed against them. I remember thinking that their mascots represented strength and a warrior spirit, not a racist demoralization of a great people. I remember attending a small public elementary school in which children were excused for part of probably one day a week to attend bible study. As offensive as this may sound to many today, I have fond memories of those times. There was also a program in which Native American students were excused to learn about Native culture. We only had one student who attended this in my class but we were all very interested. I think that the educational opportunities which you highlighted are a huge part of the miscarriage of justice which the state or Oregon has undertaken by requiring these schools to change mascots. Growing up as a Caucasian kid in country schools, the information I received about Native American culture never extended much further than Sacagawea and her contributions to Oregon history. If we are going to focus on Oregon history, why not learn about the various tribes in Oregon and their history?

In high school our mascot was a falcon. There is not a lot of heritage in a falcon mascot, but we were proud of the name for no other reason than it was *ours*. If we had a mascot with some history behind it, I imagine that the students would have taken a great interest in learning at lease *something* about that history. By wiping these mascots off the face of the earth in the public school system, we are essentially treating these tribes like they never existed. We are saying that we value your heritage enough to completely ignore you and let you continue existing without any attention whatsoever. This feels to me like the policies of the nineteenth century which increasingly confined Native Americans to reservations so that white Americans could go on living without

having to "worry" about them. When one of my children is annoying another, I tell them "just ignore him and he will stop." This feels like the policy which the state of Oregon has adopted. This is the opposite of honoring someone. When we honor someone we draw attention to them and their achievements. We celebrate the way in which they overcame adversity in order to triumph in the end. Should we not celebrate the Native Americans simply because we were the primary source of their adversity?

America has long had an obsession with righting our wrongs, and we should. What we should not do is try to right our wrongs by creating injustices where they do not exist. If the majority of Native Americans are not offended by these mascots, there is no injustice to correct. We need to take a step back and realize that maybe there is a sense of pride in knowing that local schools are recognizing Native American heritage. Maybe this lets the tribes feel closer to the community instead of feeling shoved away on a reservation to be forgotten. Maybe we need to ask people if they are offended instead of telling them they are offended. Maybe we need to stop listening to the few and let the voice of the many prevail. That is the real issue in America today, not some invented outrage against mascots which most people like.

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon
by [Madeleine Howard](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 9:39 PM

First, I want to say that I think it is a privilege that I can have an opinion about this as it is not something that directly affects me, and that anything I have to say about it is simply that- an opinion.

I do not think schools should be able to use forms of Indian culture as their mascots. I think recognizing them in this way is a piece of duct-tape on a hole on the bottom of a ship. Even though members from tribes in the first article by Anne Williams claimed that they're honored to be recognized as strong, fighting spirits, I find this a reductive portrayal. I also think this plays into stereotypes perpetuated in Disney's Pocahontas, that Indians were, without question, savages. It appears to me that we, as in modern American culture, have taken the same stereotypes and cast them in a positive light. I don't think this has had positive consequences if the ideas we have toward Native Americans are reliant on their "*courage, respect, dignity, perseverance, discipline, integrity (First article, p2)*," especially in the context of everything the United States has put them through. I won't spend time connecting the Indian Removal Act and Trail of Tears as we've already covered these, let alone cover how Columbus treated them far earlier on, although I think they are of the great origins of evil toward Native Americans. In the context of chapter 18, the 1887 Dawes Severalty Act that called for the dissolution of Indian tribes and allowed whites to seize their land for their own use, was an act of cruelty. How can we force Native Americans to fight and then hold them in regard for their prowess?

This is a passage from the letter in The Register-Guard by Steve Bowers:

"The latest diatribes tell us we have "institutionalized racism," harboring "bad intentions" toward our Native American friends. Lane Community College's James Florendo says Indian mascots must be eliminated if affecting "a single student" in a negative manner. OK, let's follow that logic. South Eugene Axemen: Gone. You're offending the loggers. Grants Pass Cavemen: Extinct. Besides, it's chauvinistic. Sheldon Irish: Banned. You're offending an entire nation. Pleasant Hill Billies are no more. The Hatfields and McCoys are up in arms! I have a modicum of Cherokee in my blood. As kids, cowboys and Indians was a mainstay of our fun and games. Any Indian connotation was, and is, held in the greatest respect and admiration."

His entire letter frustrated me, and this long passage was what I resolved to address. First, he is entirely missing the point of this opposition, and it is more than likely because he, like I first said at the beginning of my post, comes from a place of privilege and is not affected by the stereotypes these mascots perpetuate. His argument that he "has a modicum of Cherokee in [his] blood" is dismissive and besides the point. I am assuming, from his use of the word "modicum," meaning a small quantity, that his appearance does not indicate this drop of Cherokee blood. If this is the case, this means that he will not experience life the same way a full-Cherokee man would. That is to say, his white-presenting name and features would never hold him in the bounds of discrimination. It is from a place of privilege that he is allowed this opinion. His argument that all other mascots, none of which are particular to a racial group, would also be eliminated is misguided and reductive of the feelings presented by those who oppose him.

I do not understand, from the third article, how the two tribes would be disappointed with the decision to remove Indian mascots. I suppose the lack of tribes involved and the ultimate decision could feel like an act of removal or ignoring their culture and I don't have the same capacity to understand what that means long-term for these tribes, but I do agree with Siobhan Taylor's point that the board should focus on better education of Indian history.

In context of chapter 18 speaking on the Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee, I don't think it's acceptable to idolize a group for something they were killed for. Further, how is the modern depiction of strong, fighting Native Americans in terms of sports teams much different from the show presented by Buffalo Bill? Are both not forms of entertainment that involve exaggerated ideas of the qualities and appearances of Native Americans?

Ultimately, I recognize that this a sensitive subject with many complexities. I agree most with the notions spoken by Brenda Brainard in the first article:

"I don't believe there were bad intentions at the start," local American Indian educator Brenda Brainard said, referring to school districts' mid-20th-century embrace of Indian mascots. "But hanging on to it? That kind of feels like bad intentions ... Sixty years later, we know better."

We know better.

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Re: Mascots or Native Minstrels?

by [Madeleine Howard](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 11:55 PM

I meant to change this title to Mascots Or Native Minstrels?" and have only just realized after the period to edit the original post. Apologies.

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon

by [Jessica Cole](#) - Friday, March 8, 2019, 9:45 AM

Very well written - I'm assuming by your first sentence that you are insinuating that you don't have any personal connection or ancestry related to this issue -neither do I. In putting forth an opinion on a subject like this, I do feel that my opinion is extremely low in terms of importance compared to those this actually does affect personally. That's why I sided with the removal of mascots only if local tribes were insulted - because so many Native American's that I knew growing up were against the removal and I felt their opinion was more important than mine. Like you , I think that education would be extremely important. I agree that the man who brought up his minimal amount of Cherokee bloodline didn't make a very good point overall - but I do think that there is a segregation between only removing Native American mascots, while not addressing other ethnic mascots. In the other thread about professional sports teams, it is mentioned that by eliminating all references of Native American imagery within sports is actually removing the few public traces of their culture that a Native American can relate too. It is in essence simply removing all traces of Native American culture that many do feel a personal connection to, while only a few are offended. So by eliminating Native American mascots while leaving up the other ethnicity based mascots is like either saying it is okay to stereotype the Irish, but not Native Americans - or it is saying that it is easier to simply push aside Native American issues and take the time to deal with those who might be offended by the Irish. Again, I am not saying that I am against mascot removal - I just feel that the state overstepped their boundaries instead of working with the tribes and letting them make rulings about how they felt.

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon

by [Madeleine Howard](#) - Friday, March 8, 2019, 3:02 PM

Although I see where you're coming from in terms of siding with the views of Native Americans you've been around, I'm going to skip to the middle of this reply to address the separation of focusing on Native American mascots vs. any other ethnic mascots. I developed the argument for Native American mascot removal only because that is the subject of the forum, but I think my stance would apply to any minority ethnic groups. I did additional external research and found that the "Fighting Irish," Notre Dame's mascot, has also been disputed with both ends of the spectrum being "Stupid snowflakes are offended by everything" to "This language shouldn't really have been used in the first place, so why are we using it now?" Surely unsurprising, I lean toward the latter. I don't think Irish people suffer from their attached stereotypes, and I do say this as someone who comes from a large Irish family on my mother's side. You look at any of us and label us white, not Irish. Additionally, a lot of the liberal social media commentary says that if you're white, it doesn't really matter where from. You aren't subject to a lot of internalized racism anybody who is not white faces. Irish people don't have to fight for their rights today, to my knowledge, the same way that

Native Americans do, a prime example being the Dakota Access Pipeline controversy. America is, in those elementary school words, a melting pot. Representation is great, but if people in power (AKA the people who first choose these ethnic mascots/ people who choose to keep them today) are assigning it, to me it loses authenticity, which, we could also say, isn't particularly important to these sports teams. I see two viable options: get rid of the ethnic mascots, particularly ones who are negatively affected by the stereotypes portrayed, and replace them with literally anything else. Or, and I suppose this is more specific to the Native Americans, ask the tribes HOW they want to be represented. Surely not every tribe wants to be considered warriors and fighters, so I think if schools want to use the name and imagery, they should consult who's being represented first.

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon

by [Daniela Rosales Name](#) - Saturday, March 9, 2019, 4:09 PM

I see where you are coming and I half agree with you. I do, like you, believe Oregon's Education Board overstepped their boundaries however I don't think we should be dismissing the nuance in the conversation about mascots and simply siding with the majority. In Oregon's case only two tribes who overwhelmingly disagreed per Ryan Kost's article. I think a far more effective rout would be to allow space for the different Native American Tribes to establish guidelines that would allow Native peoples to feel comfortable with the result. I don't think a blanket statement works in a case like this.

To your point about eliminating Native mascots and not other ethnicities — like Irish. While I agree that all mascots that make reference to a group of people race, ethnicity, ability/disability and other makers should not be permitted I don't think equating the two cases works. We cannot ignore the face that Native Americans have been systematically oppressed for years and that the negative stereotypes have roots in racism. These symbols have been used to oppress Native people and their culture, and to this day they help perpetuate stereotypes and has a [direct impact on Native youth](#).

While the 'Fighting Irish' does base itself on Irish stereotypes it isn't to the same degree to Native mascots. Not to mention these stereotypes don't have the same power to oppress a community as the Native ones, because, at the end of the day Irish people benefit from white privilege and are thus given the benefit of the doubt. Native peoples can't easily escape this categorization and these stereotypes are applied to all Native people equally. This discussion isn't an apples to apples situation, it's more of an apples to oranges. They are in the same ballpark but shouldn't be compared to one another.

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon

by [Alvin Iskender](#) - Saturday, March 9, 2019, 11:52 PM

Madeleine, you cover a lot of ground in your reply. It was an engaging read. I don't think I can address the full scope of your post, but there is a specific aspect I'd like to add to. I recognize that it's not really my place to be making definitive claims about what is or isn't okay, but I feel like it's worth weighing in here.

While thinking about responding to this topic, something came to mind: out of all the significant minority groups in the United States that I can think of, Native Americans are probably some of the least prominent culturally- that is to say, they get some of the least representation. Considering how relevant their history is to this country, it's something that's somewhat strange to say, but not counting the occasional side character in media who happens to be Native American by ethnicity, or the checkered history of old Westerns, I can probably count on one hand any popular depictions of Native Americans that I actually *remember*. Meanwhile, name any other ethnic group and I could probably give you a whole list of movies, games, music, **mascots**, and artwork that feature that ethnic group or their culture and history in some way.

Though I obviously couldn't speak for them, I think this is part of why those two tribes referenced in the article and that you refer to in your reply may have been okay with the mascot. Native Americans get so little representation as it is that it's surely better than nothing that a sports team, for instance, would choose to use Native imagery to symbolize the traits they would want to stand for: courage, strength, tenacity, perseverance. Sure, it would be better to have representation that's less reductive than a simple mascot, but some representation is also surely better than no representation, especially if said representation is used respectfully. One of the most interesting things about culture in general is how, linked by our common humanity, we can reference and incorporate specific aspects of cultures, even those we're not a part of, into the larger discourse.

It's easier said than done when it comes to Native American culture not just because of the history of US policy, but the history of Native American depiction (you refer to Disney's Pocahontas in your post as one you find problematic, for instance), such as through the old Westerns of the early 20th century I mentioned earlier. There's also specific nuances concerning the culture itself that can cause problems when that culture is referenced haphazardly, or by anyone who isn't a part of/doesn't understand it. I wouldn't put my own feelings, someone who is as far from Native American by blood as you can get, above anyone actually directly affected by these mascots, but I don't think I would be so quick to shoot down any depiction outright. I believe, in principle, it's not necessarily a bad thing to allow Native imagery to be represented, even if the manner in which that imagery is represented and who is choosing to represent it isn't ideal. If the Native American community feels that the images do more harm than good, then let them make that decision, but those mascots shouldn't just be shot down without that consideration, I feel.

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon
by [Daniela Rosales Name](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 6:49 PM

I think your response brings up a lot of very interesting points; I don't think I can address every point you have made but, there are a few that really stood out to me. First of all, you say that other ethnicities have a ton of mascots and no one is complaining about that. While it is true that other ethnicities have mascots based on stereotypes, however there aren't a ton. I looked up this [Wikipedia list](#) — so take it with a grain of salt — but the great majority of the schools, teams and colleges have mascots based on Native stereotypes. So I think it is correct to prioritize the change of those who use Native American stereotypes. You also say, that while it may not be the best some representation is better than none. And that the use of Native images are highlight "courage, strength, tenacity, perseverance." However, the [history of the use of Native images in sports teams is filled with racism, xenophobia and based in the cultural genocide of Native people](#).

I would also argue that reductive representation isn't better than no representation at all. [Representation matters](#) — yes this article focuses on Hollywood, but the idea still applies — but it's false to say that, no matter why type of representation it is, it is good. Having representation in education, media, work is important because it gives people —especially young people — the opportunity to see people like them succeeding, it opens opportunities. Representation also helps remove the single narrative surrounding minorities and expands the traditional and — more often than not — stereotypical view of that race and ethnicity. If the representation that is out there is reductive than it defeats the purpose of representation. And I understand not everyone believe this, but the [fact is that young people](#) — in this case Native youth — are negatively affected by seeing this reductive representation of themselves. Yes, some Native people do not care, however, who are we polling? Are we asking young Native people who have to interact with these negative images every day?

I still stand with having Native people in charge of what occurs in their own school districts but we can't ignore that this affects people one way or the other. Instead of being content with this reductive narrative of Native peoples, we should be working to create programs that accurately represent all the facets of the Native experience and culture. We should be working to ensure that the representation Native people are seeking in there without having it be attached to a narrow and stereotypical view of this group of people.

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon
by [Madeleine Howard](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 9:52 PM

I found your assertion that maybe some representation was better than none for groups that don't necessarily have a choice in the matter and sat with it a bit, because it did make me reconsider my argument.

Ultimately, I don't think I agree. They are taking small pieces of information, some not even necessarily accurate, and casting them into characters to fit an aggressive narrative. Your argument did make me explore the corners of my own before more comfortably coming to a conclusion, but my conclusion is that some representation is not better than none. I also could not think of hardly any representation in modern culture, but the places you searched (music, movies, tv, etc.) are, in America at least, white-dominated and

often transparent in their Western origins. And I think these forms of media are something we go into with a different attitude than sports events. Acting an important role in a movie and being a sports mascot are very different things, the former being more desirable in terms of good representation that we should strive for.

To me, holding Native Americans to pretty much one narrative seems wrong and something that we shouldn't continue. I don't think it is so radical as to say every single team needs to change their names by tomorrow, but I think it should be a push towards representing people authentically and beginning to phase out representation that we know is the bare minimum.

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Does one person's opinion matter?
by [Morissa Parliament](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 10:48 PM

I think that overall this is a very important topic to talk about, especially because I believe this is something that can get disregarded as not important fairly often. With this subject in mind and touching on the article that was by the Register Guard it's significant to point out that one persons opinion should always be valued. When focusing on a minority group like this, even if 20 people aren't offended but one person is, that person's values and ideas should still be taken seriously. I do see both sides of this issue at hand though, the opinon that was portrayed in the article could seem cruel to most people, or seen as logical to others. In my opinion though, when talking about this specific topic that if one person is feeling disturbed by something then that needs to be taken into consideration. people's feelings should always be taken into consideration, especially when talking about race and discrimination.

I also believe that when asking the question is my mascot offensive? Then that's the first sign that maybe something is possibly wrong. I absolutely think that opinions of American Indians is important when talking about this subject, because they are the focal point of why we are asking ourselves if what we are doing is offensive.

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Re: Does one person's opinion matter?
by [Taylor Dotson](#) - Thursday, March 7, 2019, 12:54 PM

Morrisa,

Although I believe no one persons opinion should be disregarded at what point is it taken to far? If one person does not agree with the way the curriculum is being run, do we switch the whole curriculum? No, we will take in what they say and maybe make a few tweaks, but we do not switch the whole curriculum. For the tribes it should ultimately be a community decision. What gives the state a right to come into an environment and community and try to change something that has never been an issue. I understand how some mascots can be portrayed as demeaning and offensive and yes, they should change the appearance of their mascot. The name of teams and mascots has such a deeper meaning then what they call themselves. Most stand for fighters, hard workers, warrior teams and schools who never back down when faced with challenges. It is exactly how the Indian although forced from their land persevered and continued to ban together and now we have tribes today who do so much in their community. In my local town we have Indian Education programs that allow children to get in touch and learn about their heritage. If one person does not share this heritage value and feel offended by the program, are we to remove the program that benefits many other children? Like you stated we put on Pow Wows were anyone from the community can come and partake in the event. These events take place in the gymnasium at the school and if we are to remove any signs of Indian culture from the school should the tribes have to find a new place for their Pow Wows? They have also created scholarships focused on children who get involved in their community and heritage. If we remove all signs of them and the Indian culture from our school wouldn't they want to pull the scholarship and not have anything to do with the school? Having them feel a part of the community and environment is important to foster the relationship between the local tribe and community.

-Taylor

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Re: Does one person's opinion matter?
by [Jessica Cole](#) - Friday, March 8, 2019, 9:51 AM

The removal of the mascots in a way seems like simply taking Native American culture and shoving it to the side (like moving Indians to the reservation), instead of dealing with it. Again, (I feel I must mention this every time) I don't have a personal stake in the matter so only base my opinion on those of Native American descent who felt a sense of pride in the mascots - or as a way to reach out and educate the community. I feel it is a way to allow Native American culture to have a spot to shine and allow curriculum within the schools, instead of just removing it all together. Having those who want to get involved and teach others about their heritage is a wonderful way to break down barriers. Instead, by the ruling of the state, as you mentioned, the removal of Native American culture from schools will result in a more distanced state.

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Re: Does one person's opinion matter?
by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Saturday, March 9, 2019, 4:00 PM

Hi Morissa!

I have to say I completely agree with Taylor Dotson, truly she took some of the words right out of my mouth. Yes, every single person and opinion should matter and should absolutely be taken into consideration. Although as Taylor said, "when is it too far?" Changing entire curriculum or image, or whatever it might be because of one person I think is completely wrong. The amazing thing about our country is the diversity we have, and Native-Americans are an amazing part of our country and have a beautiful cultural.

I said in my original post that I believed it should have been a community vote and weighed the tribes opinions more. I still believe that. This is the Native-Americans culture and history, and if they wanted it to remain and not be taken away, then it should have stayed. Yes, considering everyones opinion is important, but if we took one persons opinion and applied it to whatever it may be every single time; our world would never be able to come to a conclusion. We would constantly be switching laws, rules, lifestyles etc. That is just completely wrong and unrealistic. I had said before that this topic is tricky and touchy there is many aspects to the decision. The mascots image could have changed, but changing the logos of everything is expensive. Many schools had to spend their budget on unnecessary items like jerseys, stickers, other miscellaneous things. When really they could have been using that money on much more valuable items such as new textbooks, new desks, nicer schools etc. I also don't believe the mascot itself is offensive. What's offensive is how humans have given stereotypes and degraded a human race. That's offensive and no person should do that ever. A Native-American child could be so proud of their heritage, but could see another child making fun of indians; the way they dress, act, talk etc. These actions could make that same Native-American child feel ashamed because someone else chose to be racist and a bully. I think we need to start educating children and teens; and taking more steps to prevent bullying and racism.

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Should school mascots be changed because of one opinion?
by [Emma Mather](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 11:25 PM

I think each school should handle this change on their own with their community. If the community as a whole views American Indians and having them as a mascot poorly then it should be removed but I don't think if one person is offended by the mascot that the whole school should have to cater to that one opinion. I like how Steve Bowers explained it in his letter on how if you change the mascot for every one person who is offended there wouldn't be any mascots. Simply put everyone can get offended over different controversial subjects but if one person is offended about an American Indian being the mascot of the school I don't think the mascot should change. Especially if the school as a whole uses the mascot to honor local tribes and students themselves are proud to be represented with their school mascot.

With this post however I do want to explain that I completely understand wanting to get rid of the mascot if it is being used in a way that is harmful or racist to American Indians. I have seven adopted siblings who all have Native American roots and if anyone was being racist against them using the school mascot as a way to hurt them or feel bad about their heritage I would without a doubt try to make a change in how the school handled that and even then I personally would not want to change the whole mascot. When I hear that I am playing the Warriors in volleyball I don't immediately think that I am only competing against Native Americans I just think of it as a team, I don't know a single person who would think about that mascot racistly to be completely honest.

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Re: Should school mascots be changed because of one opinion?

by [Taylor Dotson](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 10:05 PM

What Steve had implied about not having any mascots left was well put. As a society we cannot please everyone it is virtually impossible. We can take step to lessen the burden one may feel by trying to understand what is offensive and causing the person to be affected by the mascot. To some extent any mascot out their can be offensive to and individual. What does that individual want us to do go away with sports all together? If we do that then someone will just find another argument to create and have people deliberate about. I believe it is a different matter if the community stand together as one behind the tribe and the school. A school is not just defined by their mascot they are defined by what the name stands for. You pointed out when you played a team called the warriors you do not think of a Native American you think of a team who is a fighter someone who is strong. I too have family of Native American descent and it hurts me to think something as little as a mascot can offend them. If the mascot is portrayed in a positive and inspiring presence, then I believe they should be allowed to keep their mascot. It was an honor for me to represent a strong community who fought so hard for their survival when they had a difficult journey to conquer.

-Taylor

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Whose Opinion Matters?

by [Alvin Iskender](#) - Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 11:54 PM

Mascots can certainly have the potential to be problematic. I believe that if the use of Native American imagery for sports teams *does more harm than good*, that imagery should be resigned- arguments of principle cease to be practical at that point. The question then becomes how does one determine how much harm the use of Native American images and symbols cause, which is certainly not easy.

Part of western expansion in the United States has historically involved the "conquering" of native peoples and lands. It is understandable why the use of their images is touchy. For some those images might invoke an idea of further kicking Native Americans when they're down by co-opting their figures and control of how they're depicted. It's completely understandable. It's not just Native Americans complaining though, and indeed, taking into account the tribes that have given permission to teams to use those symbols, it's not easy to really determine who's right and who's wrong. I myself am not sure if symbols that aren't so obviously caricatured or exaggerated can be considered problematic in and of themselves. After all, couldn't it be argued that the use of Native imagery is meant to evoke tenacity and bravery rather than hatred? It would certainly make sense for a sports team.

I think if the common belief is that the symbols are harmful, then public pressure should alone be the dictator of if they stay. I'm not sure it's a good look for those symbols to be revoked involuntarily, such as through legal means. While there have been plenty of boycotts and protests and the like, I find it hard to imagine that any institution wouldn't budge with enough petitioning, though I admit I may be too optimistic. If the use of Native American mascots is so harmful so as to raise a stink, then that should really be reflected- if the community agrees or disagrees with the notion that it's problematic, it should show.

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Native American Mascots in Oregon-Ban or not to ban?

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Friday, March 8, 2019, 1:15 PM

I will be speaking on the "Native American Mascots in Oregon" while reading the many articles about this topic, the topic was no stranger to me. Growing up especially in high school I played against Roseburg and Marcolla and I heard the mascot conversation come up multiple times. Mostly it was conversation against the ban and how they didn't think it was right. Those conversations were the first time I was introduced to this topic and discussion. I know the stereotypes that are associated with Indians some are very positive and some are very negative. Katie Zimmerman, Oakridge High School student body president said, "I see it as an honor to be a Warrior." I think these words are also very true for many other students. I too, if I attended one of these school would be honored, the Native-Americans were very brave. Of course not everyone in public schools understand the importance of Indians and how noble and brave they are. I think if someone performs anytype of racism and insults the Native-Americans an any way should face some type of discipline. I think that the native tribes should have had final decision over all. They represent the Native-Americans and tribes in Oregon, and overall I think their opinions should outweigh any public school district member. There is many tricky aspects to this topic though. I personally believe that making

these schools change their mascot was not the right decision for all. But at the same time I also believe James Florendo who is a member of the Warm Springs tribe and coordinator of Native American programs at Lane Community College he said, "if Indian mascots affect even a single student in a negative way, they should go." This is also very true, if a student feels harassed or affected by these mascots in anyway then something should definitely be done. Every student should feel comfortable and safe in their learning environment. Although, the mascots showed some stereotypes, I think the students were a big problem too. "Che Butler, a member of the Siletz Tribe and a former Taft High School student, brought the issue before the state board. Butler told The Oregonian at the time that he decided to go to the board after his school played the Molalla High Indians. During the game he saw a student dressed in buckskin and fake feathers performing stereotypical Native American dance moves." This is highly inappropriate and just wrong. I believe that the mascots could start these problems, but students should also not perform acts like these. The school district should have provided classes in school on American history and Native-Americans. There was other changes that could have been done to reduce racism and stereotypes without banning a mascot. Yes, there were Native-Americans who were offended by the mascots, but there were many who were proud of the mascots and their heritage. I think it is very important to take in a majority of how American-Indians feel. If they feel that the mascots are offensive and degrading than they should absolutely go! If they do not think that then they stay. Not every single Indian is going to be happy with the decision, but if the decision was made in the best interest of them, then I think everything will be okay.

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Let's take a vote.
by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Friday, March 8, 2019, 6:59 PM

This post is going to sound like one which I made on one of the other topics in this forum. Regarding who gets to "be Indian," I think that is up to the tribes. I am not familiar with the tribal membership qualifications for the various (or any) tribes. I feel that we should trust that the tribes are only allowing people to join who meet certain standards of membership, and that the verified peoples of the tribes statewide (in this case) need to be polled. If the *majority* (that's over 50%), believe that these mascot names are offensive, then they should be changed.

If, however, this is a case of a *minority* (less than 50%) of the eligible voters on this issue being offended, then the mascots need to stay the way they are. This cannot become an issue like so many others we have seen lately of a minority of voters speaking for the majority simply because they are more vocal. That is not the basis which this country was founded to operate on. I understand the Native Americans were here before there was ever a country to operate in the first place, and I do not dispute that. We must go with the rules and regulations which we have in place, and as of right now that is still majority rule in most cases.

I understand that this opinion will not be popular with everyone, and the decisions which might come of it would undoubtedly anger some people on one side or the other, but that is the nature of a democracy. We cannot allow ourselves to become ruled by the outspoken few over the silent majority. Again, I not submitting that every voter in America should be allowed to weigh in on this issue, I don't think that would be appropriate. I certainly do not feel like I am qualified to vote one way or another on this issue given my lineage. I am simply asking that we use the system which has been in place in this country since its founding and let it work, regardless of the outcome.

I think that once the votes are counted and a majority decision is made, there should be no exceptions made. Even if a school has the blessing of a local tribe to use a mascot, if the majority of tribes or members thereof vote this issue down, that is where it should end. If we let the Register Guard thinking prevail in which names should be changed if even one person is offended by them, then we have lost the foundation of this country. We are not a country which requires a unanimous vote in many circumstances. Those that do require a unanimous vote, like the vote for a death penalty, are only in place because they are issues in which a person's one and only life lies in the balance. If we allow for one single offended person to change the rules set in place for everyone else, we have failed the principals on which democracy was founded. I cannot stress this enough.

There are of course historical examples in which the majority rule was wrong. The Indian Removal Act and the institution of slavery are two popular examples. One of these ended in heartbreak for students of history, the other in perhaps the greatest victory over injustice in our history. The difference is simple: Indian removal was based on racism and greed; the Emancipation Proclamation was based on the idea that racism and greed will not stop us from doing what is morally right.

Is it morally right to turn a group of people into a mascot? No one takes issue with the San Francisco 49ers named after the miners in the California gold rush. No one seems to mind that the professional football team in New England is named the Patriots, not even the people in London who are objecting to the Redskins name, people whose forefathers fought against these Patriots in the American War of Independence. Likewise, the New York Yankees, why isn't half of the country up in arms about the Yankees? It is because the Yankees were the victors in the Civil War, just as the Patriots were the victors in the American War of Independence, and the 49ers were victors in the sense that they were fulfilling the American dream. We have become a culture which is so obsessed with correcting the sins of its past that we are willing to create issues where in fact none exist in order to make ourselves feel better about the

past. Yes, Native Americans were wronged. Yes, Native Americans were forced from their homelands and lifestyles. Yes, Native Americans were murdered and discriminated against and treated like they were subhuman. No, not every Native American thinks these mascots are something to be ashamed of. Let’s create a way to find out exactly how many “real” Native Americans think this issue deserves the attention it is getting. If it is a majority, let’s talk change. If it is a minority, let’s move on. That is the only way our democracy will survive when faced with constant instances of outrage.

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Re: Let's take a vote.
by [Emma Mather](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 5:32 PM

I think your idea for a registered Indians of Oregon- wide vote would be a good idea on how to solve this issue. This would be a great idea to make sure that every person with native blood (probably at least 1/16 Native as I think that is the minimum to be registered) are the only people making the decision because I believe that their voice would be the only one that would matter in this situation. This is a very democratic solution and I think it would have been better than how the situation was dealt with.

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More conversation over dictation
by [Daniela Rosales Name](#) - Saturday, March 9, 2019, 3:03 PM

In my opinion, this decision should be left to Native people. Different tribes of the area in question should come together and make a choice for their area. I think it’s important to not impose our views of what’s right and wrong on to other cultures because we may end up overtaking their voices. I will say, I think it’s important that we don’t ignore the voices of those who are in the minority because they would still be affected by the issue. Open it up to conversation among Native peoples and have them reach a general consensus of what they believe would be a good rule for their area. I know there have already been meetings and committees discussing these issues, but in my opinion they haven’t been structured in the best way possible. Yes, I do think all community voices are valid, however, this is an issue that affects Native people and that should have more weight that the opinion of those who simply don’t want to part with heir mascot. I like the arrangement the Seminoles and the Utes have with their respective sports teams because it was up to the Tribes to dictate what is appropriate and what isn’t. I think this conversation is important in Oregon where we have nine federally recognized tribes and where much of this land belongs and belonged to Native Americans. I just think the process could’ve been more nuanced rather than a blanket order.

I think the larger issue is when the mascots, fans and symbols appropriate and mock Native culture and people. That is something that has to be considered when having this discussion. Is the mascot or the team symbol mocking or stereotyping Native people? Or is it respecting the culture? Can there be more education surrounding the Tribes and their culture in an attempt to educate people? Is there a way to respectfully incorporate Native peoples and culture into the sporting event to pay respect or highlight their culture? Because if none of these measures are taken, then aren’t we allowing stereotypes and racism to be perpetuated? I understand that solving the issue of mascots won’t in any way, shape or form solve racism but could it be considered a step in the right direction? Let’s also address the issue of why Native people are the only people to have their culture and symbols be used by sports teams and mascots. If the mascots are kept, could schools implement a ban on some offensive and appropriative images? That way we wouldn’t see non-Native people using things like headdresses, feather and beads that are important parts of Native culture.

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when does it go too far
by [Katie Lauck](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 5:34 PM



I think you make some really good points and it made me think about some of the questions you asked. In the forum about professional sports teams mascots I touched on the topic of the Washington Redskins and thought why is it okay for someone to paint their face red when they claim they are ‘honoring’ the Native Americans? To me, this would be the point when people are stereotyping and mocking the heritage instead of honoring it as they say they are. I’ve attached this photo I found on google of a couple redskins fans at a game wearing headdresses and have red paint covering their faces. I realize that this forum is addressing high school mascots in Oregon, but I think we need to realize how this picture is portrayed when high schoolers and younger people see it. Not only could it offend Native Americans whose tradition and heritage are being mocked over a football game, but how it could affect how non-Native Americans act as well. Seeing grown adults on live television might make them think it’s okay for them to dress or act the same way, thus perpetuating as you said Daniela or spreading this racism and stereotyping throughout high schools. I think this is why educating people and especially the youth about what the difference between mocking and respecting a culture is and why wearing something like a headdress or feathers and beads or painting their face red would be offensive to that culture.

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Hearing both sides
by [Katie Lauck](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 3:44 PM

I believe that Indian tribes are the only ones who get to have a say in the decision of Indian related mascots being offensive or not. We can have an opinion and try and understand what it might be like to be in their position, but since we are not, I don’t believe we should be the ones to tell them that it’s offensive. With that said, there are going to be Native Americans on both sides, some in favor of the mascots, and some against. I also think it’s very important that both sides are listened to. Even if a poll found that 75% of Native Americans had no problem with the mascot, it’s still crucial that the other 25% is listened to and not pushed to the side. That 25% has a right to be heard too, arguing that the mascots could be destructive for young children growing up, and could promote a higher amount of racism than if the mascot was different (pg 9). “Roseburg High School, home of the Indians, switched a logo depicting a Native American to a simple feather. Molalla High School changed sports jerseys to say "Molalla" instead of "Indians" and stopped using a mascot dressed like a Native American to lead cheers.” (Native American mascots in Oregon, pg 6) When reading this, I began thinking this is a step in the right direction with finding a solution for those who are against the mascots, limiting the amount of exposure of the potentially offensive terms/mascots that the schools are promoting. I think it’s important to realize though that it won’t solve the larger problem of completely eradicating the Native American related names and mascots that are used. This topic is a very complicated and controversial one because it seems that neither side will be satisfied with the outcome.

While many of these articles spoke about those who are against the Indian mascots, there are also those who are in favor. “Meanwhile, a spokeswoman for the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde said its council is "very disappointed that they've trampled our sovereignty and have ignored something that our tribes in Oregon have been calling for years, which is a curriculum that accurately describes". (Native American mascots in Oregon, pg 7). While I could see how having these mascots as a way to honor and remind others the history of the Native Americans, I feel as though it should be done through proper teaching and accurate, informative classes on the history of Indians. I’m not really sure what the case would be for exceptions...possibly having 100% permission from surrounding tribe(s)? With this topic having so many different opinions and viewpoints, I’m not sure if anyone could be completely satisfied with a certain decision. On a larger scale, this topic of discrimination and racism has been going on for decades, with other races added in the mix, and it could go on for even longer. “Their statement questions whether the rule truly addresses issues of racism. Frank said it was simply a step. "Let's just make our path smoother," she said. "Are we going to remove racism? In my lifetime, I don't think so." (Native American mascots in Oregon, pg 9)

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon
by [Christopher Kinney](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 6:02 PM

Christopher Kinney
I think that if the Indians have a problem with Indian mascots they should be able to say yes or no, not a bunch of P.C. people. it should depend on how the tribes feel about it. but it has to be the tribe that is the closest to the school or the name that the school is using. the schools should not use their budget to fix it though if one person has a problem with it. the schools don't have the budget to change it just for one person. if its the tribe that complains then yes change it, because you would be using their face. if its some P.C. protesters the they don't have a say in it. I don't agree with the Oregon ruling. the Schools should do what Roseburg did and work with the nearby tribe. I agree with Steve Bowers "That is just another example of political correctness run amok. What truly offends me is that as a taxpayer, I am funding these individuals who represent an extreme, inconsequential position." i work at a public school and i know we don't have the budget to fix the mascots in our schools. Heck I have no heat in my classroom and when it rains the library leaks. plus we are over crowded in our classrooms. I think would be a honor to have a mascot named after you. when the state banned Indian mascots they were disappointed in the ruling and felt ignored.

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Re: Native American Mascots in Oregon
by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Sunday, March 10, 2019, 7:06 PM

Hi there!

I absolutely agree with you! I think the Oregon school board made a poor decision on allowing this ban to go through. I said something very similar in my original post about the funding as well. I think the choice to ban indian mascots and change the names on everything was a waste. Public schools have an extremely limited budget and the money they do have should not be spent on new uniforms, paintings in the schools, banners etc. My high school had no heat, and was constantly have problems and it was horrible in the winter time. No school should be having leaks in their library, no heat, and many other things that need funding. I value everyone's opinion in this matter and Native-Americans should feel comfortable in their country; but there were other measures I think could have been taken. More compromises, so not everything needs to be changed and waste money. Many Native-Americans are proud of their mascots and feel a sense of pride. The community should have had a vote and worked with their local tribes on what decision should be made. I traveled to Roseburg all the time for sports, and they were proud of their mascot, there was never negativity associated with it. Communities should be working with local tribes and communicating more with them. Thank you for your response!

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