

Dear House Education Committee Members,

Thank you for considering bill S.139, which would provide more inclusive environments in Vermont schools by eliminating ethnic themed mascots. Our group, More than a Mascot, has been working to educate the community about this issue, and why we believe it is imperative to pass this bill during this legislative session.

As you discuss this important bill, MTAM wanted to specifically direct your attention to the public comment and testimony that was presented to the Senate Education Committee this session. These documents reflect the opinions of Indigenous Vermonters, mental health and education professionals, and Vermont students who oppose the use of ethnic themed mascots. Please take time to review this thorough sampling of opinions from Vermonters who want to see our schools become more positive, inclusive environments for all students. Each document is attached as a separate pdf, and we ask you to include them in your supporting documentation for the House Committee..

[The Psychosocial Effects of Native Mascots - Laurel Delano - Davis Statement - Carol McGranahan Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs.](#)
[Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network Statement](#)
[Joseph Bruchac Statement - Ndakinna Center and Nulhegan Abenaki](#)
[More than A Mascot Statement](#)
[Coalition for Natives and Allies Statement](#)
[Don Stevens - Melody Walker Statement - Elnu Abenaki](#)
[National Association of Social Workers](#)

Additional testimony and public comment is available at - [Senate doc page](#)

There is a wealth of data and information relating to the negative impacts of Native mascots and the opposition to these mascots expressed by the Indigenous Community both locally and nationally. We have included many additional resources about the national mascot discussion on our website - [Morethanamascotvt.com](#), Our organization has been collecting additional information and resources about the use of Native Mascots in schools, and we encourage you to [visit our website](#) to review these resources. On our website, you will find the Civics Program that we hosted with Vermont Students - [Pride Without Prejudice](#), in which a panel of Indigenous activists answer student questions about the use of these stereotypical mascots.

Finally, another excellent resource we would encourage you to watch is the film, [Fighting Indians](#), which tells the story of the mascot issue in the state of Maine and the events that lead to their current statewide mascot ban. This film is available to rent on demand, but More than a Mascot will also be hosting a virtual screening of this film on **Monday, March 28 at 7PM**. The film will be followed by a panel discussion with the filmmaker, Vermont students and Vermont Indigenous Community members. Film maker, Mark Cooley is offering this free opportunity to Vermont legislators, students, and community members as a resource for those considering bill S.139.

To attend this screening, [please follow this link](#). You may also share this link. We hope you will be able to join us for this informative event.

We also have several suggestions for students, Abenaki community members, and education and mental health professionals who would be willing to provide testimony to the House Education Committee and we would be happy to provide you with a list of names.

Thank you again for considering bill S.139. As you can see, there is a great deal of data and public comment in support of this positive change for Vermont schools. The decision to not take up this bill this session may suggest to the Indigenous Community that the welfare of Indigenous students in Vermont schools is not a priority in Vermont. Please do not let that happen. We hope you will join us on Monday night.

We ask that the House Education Committee take up bill S.139 , and we hope Vermont will ultimately join other states in eliminating harmful school branding.

With Hope.

More Than A Mascot