



April 12, 2022

Dear Chairman Webb and Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Lynn Stanley, and I am the Executive Director of the Vermont Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW VT). I am writing to express our support for S. 139: an act related to public schools' team mascots.

There are schools in Vermont that continue to use Native American mascots and NASW VT decries any entity or educational institution that practices this misappropriation of culture. NASW VT stands with our Native American peoples and other mental health professions in recognizing the damage that the normalizing of often stereotypical and hurtful representations can cause. NASW VT is committed to supporting anti-racist policy and promoting communities that celebrate, not mock, cultural diversity.

We are concerned that in some communities this has become divisive and contentious with individuals becoming elected to school boards on this one issue. Clear and decisive legislation would eliminate this problem.

The National Congress of American Indians, the largest and most representative national organization for hundreds of Tribal Nations have clearly stated that "sports mascots are symbols of disrespect that degrade, mock, and harm native people."

The social work profession strives to reform discriminatory practices and envisions a society that equally values all its' members regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, place of birth, age, crime victim status, or physical or mental condition.

We urge you to vote yes on S 139.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Stanley, LICSW
Executive Director
NASW VT