



# Coalition of Natives and Allies

## Cultivating Unity to End Racism

March 3, 2022

### To: Vermont State Legislators, Senators and Representatives,

The Coalition of Natives and Allies (CNA) -- a Pennsylvania-based coalition led by Native voices -- was founded in early 2020 because of the overwhelming need to have Native voices heard over concerns about harmful Native American mascots.

CNA wholeheartedly **supports** and **endorses** Vermont State Bills and Legislation banning Native themed Mascots, Logos and Names.

There is a growing body of research concerning the negative impact these mascot stereotypes, iconography and stolen names have on Natives and non-Natives. Supporting one stereotype teaches others that stereotypes and cultural misappropriation are acceptable, leading to more bias and discrimination.

Schools claim to be honoring the Natives whose homelands they reside on, but it is a grave misunderstanding to think that schools with Native American race-based sports team names and imagery honor Natives at all when in reality they are causing harm.

School boards and administrators create and revise policies to protect minorities from harm which they then blatantly disobey by allowing Native mascotry to continue. Therefore, Native American students, their families and communities are not being included in the protection those policies claim to provide. Tribal Council and community letters and statements explaining the mental, emotional and physical harm of Native mascotry all too often go ignored and unanswered.

It is of the utmost importance that the voices of original Indigenous peoples be heard and respected nationwide.

The use of Native American mascotry, images and nicknames provokes students and community members to mock Native cultures by dressing up in feathers and paint, chant, dance and perform that violent tomahawk chop. They insist these practices to be respectful and honorable for Natives, but then refuse to allow Natives to speak about the harm caused. School Boards and administrators refuse to protect Native peoples from mascotry, racism and the hate that they promote.

Schools also continue to waste educational tax dollars to defend discriminatory traditions of Native American and race-based mascotry. In the case of Neshaminy School District in Pennsylvania, nearly \$500k of taxpayer money has been spent fighting to keep their racial slur nickname (r\*dsk\*ns) and imagery. Money that would better be spent on educational improvements.

Although over the years there has been progress in reducing the numbers of schools which partake in these archaic traditions there are many which still do so.

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Our coalition is determined to terminate the use of Native American and race-based sports mascots, logos and nicknames in Pennsylvania school districts and beyond.

There is never a wrong time to work towards a more fair and just society for all.

Sincerely,

Coalition of Natives and Allies (CNA)  
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**CNA is a cross-cultural collaboration of Native Americans and allies who value cultural diversity and respect for all peoples. Through education and advocacy, CNA aspires to teach the truth about Native American histories, modern day Native issues and bring awareness to the trauma caused by negative and archaic stereotypes used for sports mascots. By highlighting the bias and prejudice these stereotypes cause, CNA strives to end the harmful use of Native American misrepresentation in schools.**