



TO: Senate Education Committee

FROM: Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director, Vermont School Boards Association

RE: S.139 - Mascots

DATE: February 10, 2022

The VSBA Board held its monthly meeting on February 9, 2022. Prior to the meeting, Board members reviewed the following documents in preparation for the discussion:

[S.139 as introduced](#)

[S.139 Version 1.1](#)

[Summary of Mascot Laws in Other States \(prepared by Legislative Counsel; St. James\)](#)

[State Board Chair Oliver Olsen's Slide Presentation: School Branding](#)

They also reviewed the February 8, 2022 video of both Chief Don Stevens' testimony and Chair Olsen's testimony to the Senate Education.

After vigorous discussion, the Board passed the following motion regarding Chair Olsen's presentation, with all attending members voting yes except for one abstention:

*The VSBA believes a public school, or independent school receiving public funds, shall not have, adopt or retain a name, symbol, or image that depicts or refers to a racial or ethnic group, individual, custom, or tradition and that is used as a mascot, nickname, logo, letterhead, or team name of the school. The VSBA does not support the proposed role of the State Board of Education.*

Points that can be gleaned from the Board's discussion and this motion:

- There should be a state level solution to the mascot issue
- The solution should be developed by the Legislature (elected representatives) and should not involve the State Board of Education (appointed)
- The solution should apply to both public schools and independent schools that are approved to receive public tuition

- The solution should consider the impact of mascots and imagery for all racial and ethnic groups, individuals, customs and traditions
- If there is a body responsible for developing guidelines and/or rules for school mascots, its composition should be diverse and inclusive