



Schools Retire Old Mascots, Select New Ones as State Legislatures Consider Native "Themed" Mascot Bans

"Native Americans are Americans...we are not animals, we are not those who you make a mockery of, we are not those who are treated without dignity. This little bill just says we are going to heal, and honor and respect one another."

-- WA State Representative Debra Lekanoff (Tlingit, Aleut), sponsor of HB 1356

North High School (KS) "R*dsk*ns"

On February 8, [the Wichita Public Schools Board of Education voted unanimously to discontinue use of the "R*dsk*ns" mascot at North High School.](#) The 6-0 vote to retire comes after months of community discussion and follows the recommendations of a committee tasked with "looking into the mascot." The school expects to phase out its newly retired moniker within the next two years and will compete as "Wichita North" until a new mascot is installed.

Four More Schools Select New Mascots

Carthage College (WI) did away with any Native American imagery associated with its "Red Men" and "Lady Reds" mascots years ago, but [only recently retired the monikers.](#) The College announced last week that it [will now compete as the "Firebirds."](#) Marion High School (IA), once the "Indians," [will now compete as the "Mavericks."](#) The new mascot, officially approved by the Marion Independent School District Board of Education last Monday, was selected through a community survey and is expected to be in place for the next school year. Saugatuck High School (MI), also once the "Indians," [will now compete as the "Trailblazers."](#) The decision was approved by the Saugatuck Public Schools Board of Education last Monday night, as "Trailblazers" beat out the two other finalists, "Lakers" and "Storm." Also approved last Monday nights, Weyauwega-Fremont High School (WI) [will now compete as the "Warhawks."](#) After retiring its "Indians" mascot last October, the Weyauwega-Fremont School District Board of Education conducted multiple community votes before "Warhawks" won out over three other finalists.

Legislative Update

Several state legislatures across the country are considering legislation banning race-based mascots. In Washington, [HB 1356](#) passed through the House with a [bipartisan 92-5 vote](#) last Tuesday and has now been referred to the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee for consideration. If signed by Governor Jay Inslee, school districts would have time to phase out the old mascot, but would be required to select a new one to take effect

by the end of the 2021-22 school year.

In Massachusetts, Sen. Jo Comerford refiled [SD.417](#), a bill that would [prohibit the use of Native American mascots at public schools in the state](#). A concurrent House bill, [HD.646](#), was also introduced. If signed into law, the bill would require the state's school board to establish a deadline for schools in violation of the new regulations. "It is nearly impossible for Indigenous students to thrive and feel confident in their skin when their heritage is mocked and continuously stereotyped by their school mascot," said Shawna Newcomb (Mashpee Wampanoag), a teacher at Hanover Public Schools.

In Colorado, Sen. Jesse Danielson introduced [SB 21-116](#), a bill that would [ban the use of Native American mascots](#), giving schools in the state until June of 2022 to make the necessary changes or face monthly fines of \$25,000. "It's long overdue," said Glenn Morris of the Colorado chapter of the American Indian Movement. "There's just no logical justification for them continuing it and it's just a matter of privilege getting in the way of doing the right thing." The bill is now in the Senate Education Committee for consideration.

***Ending "Indian" Mascots** is an informational service provided by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), which is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities. It has been leading Indian Country's movement to eradicate offensive "Indian" mascots from sports and popular culture for the past 50 years by educating schools, sports leagues, and the general public about the [many harms they cause Native people](#). To learn more, please click [here](#).*

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians is the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country. NCAI advocates on behalf of tribal governments, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people and rights.

