



The State of Washington Bans Native "Themed" Mascots, Logos, and Team Names

"It is well past time to phase out Native-themed mascots and logos. It is degrading that we are being portrayed as no different than a token."

-- WA House Representative Debra Lekanoff (D-Bow, Tlingit)

On Monday, April 26, Washington Governor Jay Inslee [signed into law House Bill 1356](#) (H.B. 1356). Sponsored by Washington House Representative Debra Lekanoff (D-Bow, Tlingit), H.B. 1356 prohibits "...the inappropriate use of Native American names, symbols, or images as public school mascots, logos, or team names." In signing the legislation, Governor Inslee stated, "this bill will end the disrespectful use of Native American imagery in our public schools."

Notably, this bill will not apply to schools on or adjacent to tribal lands, or schools that consult with and receive approval from the nearest federally-recognized Tribal Nation. Schools that do not meet these criteria have until December 31, 2021 to retire their Native "themed" mascots, logos, or team names. If a school is to make the change by September 1, the bill authorizes the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide grants to those schools to fund part or all of the transition to a new mascot. This grant aims to incentivize schools to make the decision well before the H.B 1356 deadline in December.

According to the state's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, there are 32 schools in the state of Washington that use Native "themed" mascots, logos, or team names. Nationally, there are still more than 1,900 schools employing Native "themed" mascots according to NCAA's [mascot tracking database](#).

To read H.B. 1356, click [here](#).

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.

