



Colorado School Mascot Ban Signed Into Law, Washington Law Taking Effect, New York School Retires Mascot

"For too long, the presence of derogatory mascots has promoted inaccurate and offensive portrayals of American Indian individuals and communities."

-- Colorado Governor Jared Polis

Colorado

On Monday, June 28, Colorado Governor Jared Polis [signed into law SB 21-116](#), prohibiting "the use of American Indian mascots by public schools, including charter and institute charter schools, and public institutions of higher education as of June 1, 2022." According to NCAI's [school mascot tracking database](#), this law applies to 28 schools representing 14 districts in the state. Pursuant to Governor Polis' [SB 21-116 signing statement](#), these schools are eligible to apply for a grant operated by the Colorado Department of Education for funds to make any structural renovations necessary to help with the transition. "I am committed to ensuring that Colorado is a national leader in deeply valuing and respecting the American Indian communities in all manners, and continuing to support the needs of our schools," stated Governor Polis.

To read SB 21-116, click [here](#).

Washington

More than two months after Governor Jay Inslee [signed into law HB 1356](#) banning the use of Native "themed" mascots in Washington, schools are beginning to retire their mascots at the request of local Tribal Nations. While the new law does not apply to schools on or adjacent to tribal lands, or schools that consult with and receive approval from the nearest federally-recognized tribe, Tribal Nations are being proactive in their approach. Marysville School District [notified its community members of the coming mascot changes](#) at Marysville Pilchuck High School and Totem Middle School, home of the "Tomahawks" and "Thunderbirds", respectively; the changes were requested by the Tulalip Tribes Board of Directors. Renton High School also [retired its mascot at the request of the Tulalip Tribes](#), choosing the "Redhawks" as a replacement for its "Indians" moniker.

Cambridge Jr./Sr. High School (NY) "Indians"

On Thursday, June 17, the Cambridge Central School District Board of Education [voted to retire its "Indians" mascot](#) following a lengthy review process. The mascot and all associated imagery will be discontinued by July 1, 2021. The school will also develop a committee tasked with selecting a new nickname. "Doing the right thing is not a popularity contest," added BOE President Neil Gifford after the process caused some division within the community.

Camanche High School (IA) "Storm"

On Monday, June 21, the Camanche School District Board of Education [voted to accept a committee recommendation to change its mascot to the "Storm"](#). The district previously voted to retire its "Indians" mascot in March. A committee headed by leadership from the High School and Middle School was tasked with gathering community input to select a new mascot. "I can sit in front of you tonight and say everybody's voice was heard in all [of our] meetings," said Camanche Middle School Principal Justin Shaffer at the Board meeting in June. The "Storm" moniker won out over two other finalists announced in late May.

***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.

