



Oneida Nation
Oneida Business Committee
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January 8, 2021

Superintendent Thomas Parker
[Camanche School District](#)
937 9th Avenue
Camanche, IA 52730

Submitted electronically: tparker@camanchebsd.org

Dear Superintendent Parker,

As the Chairman of the Oneida Nation and on behalf of the 17,000 Oneida Citizens I represent, I am writing to say the Oneida Nation strongly objects to the use of Native American Mascots and Logos and calls upon the Camanche School District to change your school's mascot.

Resolutions in opposition to the use of racial mascots have been passed by all Native American Nations in Wisconsin, by the Great Lakes Intertribal Council, by the National Congress of American Indians and numerous other Tribal Nations and supporters expressing their opposition to the use of Native American images and names for sports teams and mascots.

Professional sports are also recognizing the national movement to eliminate stereotypical monikers. The Cleveland professional baseball team has had its moniker since 1915 and recently proclaimed that it will change its name. The NFL's Washington football team held its name since 1932, and is also in the process of making a name change. To provide some insight, the Washington football team's moniker is a dictionary defined racial slur. The slur's origin is rooted in government bounty announcements calling for the bloody scalps of Native Americans in the 1800's. The team name was selected in 1932 at a time when Native people were continuing to experience government and social policies intended to terminate Tribes, assimilate Native people, and erase Native and human and civil rights. In 1932, the federal "Civilizations Regulations" were still in place, confining Native people to reservations, banning all Native dances and ceremonies, confiscating all Native American cultural property and outlawing much of what was Native traditional life. The owner of the Washington football team at that time was well known for being a segregationist and racist, and in 1933 became a self-appointed leader amongst NFL owners. He instituted what would become a 13-year ban on African American players.

The fact that we are still dealing with this issue indicates that there is still a wide gap in understanding Native American Community. To have these symbols and depictions of this cultural history used in inappropriate ways and without an understanding of the cultural significance and history behind them is a practice that must stop. Decades of comprehensive

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social science research indicates that derogatory Indian sports mascots have serious psychological, social and cultural consequences for Native American people, especially for our youth. The stereotypes created are consequentially linked to the high rates of hate crimes committed against Native American people.

The adage "we are honoring them" in fact does not. When school districts honor other people, they do so most often by naming a school after an individual. Honoring is not achieved by depicting a race of people in a stereotypical image. Honoring could occur through the curriculum where a true and honorable representation of Native individuals and their nations could be conveyed to the students. Honoring does not include war whoops, tomahawk chops, and other antics that accompany such mascots at sporting events.

The Oneida Nation has made a concerted effort to create a standard of living in our community which provides our people with a vision for the future and an appreciation for the rich, cultural history and traditions of the Iroquois people. This is reflected throughout the Oneida community through our buildings, community programs, and signs within the reservation.

Once again, for all the reasons stated above, the Oneida Nation calls upon the Camanche School District to change the school's moniker.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (920) 869-4420 or via email at thill7@oneidanation.org

With a Good mind, a Good Heart, and a Strong Fire,



Tehassi Tasi Hill, Chairman
Oneida Nation