



Resolution of the NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTION # 2016 - 5

TITLE: To Support the Discontinuance of Racist and Stereotypical Depictions of Native Americans in American Sports

WHEREAS, the National Native American Bar Association (“NNABA”) works to promote issues important to the Native American community and to improve professional opportunities for Native American lawyers, we do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, NNABA was founded in 1973 and serves as the national association for Native American attorneys, judges, law professors and law students, and NNABA strives to be a leader on social, cultural, political and legal issues affecting American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, American professional sports and educational athletic programs have a long time tradition of using so-called “Native” names, images, mascots, and behaviors, e.g., the “Washington R*dskins” professional football team; and

WHEREAS, in part due to substantial efforts by Native Americans and Native communities, use of such references has declined over time, these references remain pervasive within American sports, with nearly 1,000 such references still used throughout the country;¹ and

WHEREAS, these kinds of sports references evoke and perpetuate race-based stereotypes that harm Native American people and communities; and

WHEREAS, studies conducted on the impact of such references have concluded they lower self-esteem and sense of worth among Native Americans, limit and narrow Native Americans’ sense of self, and facilitate negative associations towards Native Americans by others;² and

WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association has determined that these representations also undermine the ability of Native nations and people to portray themselves

¹ COURTLAND MILLOY, *If the Redskins Care About Honor . . .*, THE WASHINGTON POST, Sep. 23 2009.

² See American Psychological Association, *Summary of the APA Resolution Recommending Retirement of American Indian Mascots*, <http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/indian-mascots.aspx>, last visited January 22, 2016.



accurately as distinct and diverse cultures, and that stereotypical images are a dominant culture's prejudiced representations of a racial or ethnic minority group;³ and

WHEREAS, in many instances the stereotypical references overtly depict Native Americans negatively, and in some cases constitute racial slurs, e.g., the term "Redskins," which results in increased harm and discriminatory impact;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NNABA denounces the perpetuation of race-based stereotypes including the use of so-called "Native" names, images, and mascots in American professional sports and educational athletic programs;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NNABA calls on the legal community and elected officials to help combat the ill effects of race-based stereotypes in sports, including by using the bully pulpit to inform Americans that the use of these names, images, and mascot characters constitute race-based stereotypes that harm Native Americans' sense of self, and encourage discrimination and prejudice towards Native American people;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NNABA calls on the Secretary of Education to urge all schools, which have a federal nexus and make these so-called "Native" references to change their team names, logos, and mascots to those that do not perpetuate race based stereotypes;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NNABA commends the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the Census Bureau for their practice of not showing any "Native" names, logos or mascots of the teams of athletes they engage to promote the Census, and urges that this practice be continued during this Census cycle;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NNABA commends the Secretary of the Smithsonian and the Director of the National Museum of the American Indian for the NMAI Symposium on Racist Stereotypes and Cultural Appropriation in American Sports (March 2013), and encourages other federal entities to conduct and support similar symposia and programs;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NNABA commends faculty members, administrators, school boards, state officials and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), who are making change, school by school, district by district and state by state to combat the use of these so-called "Native" references in educational athletic programs and the harm that the uses cause;

³ *Id.*



NOW BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the National Native American Bar Association authorizes its officers and staff to communicate the content of this resolution to other bar associations, advocacy groups, members of Congress, the Administration, the press, and to whomever else NNABA board deems suitable to receive the information; and

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board of the National Native American Bar Association on January 22, 2016 with a quorum present.

Linda Benally, President

ATTEST:

Makalika Naholowa'a, Recording Secretary