

# Resolution for the Discontinuation of Native American Indian mascots in the State of Tennessee

1. Whereas: Approximately 100 Tennessee public schools use American Indian/Alaskan Native mascots in their slogans and/or symbols; and
2. Whereas: Using these mascots in grades K through 12 impact our youth at the most impressionable ages, and present the most damage to the self-esteem of our Native youth; and
3. Whereas: The use of Native American slogans and symbols as mascots are often viewed as derogatory, demeaning, and disrespectful to American Indian/Alaska Native people; and
4. Whereas: In 1993 the National Congress of American Indians denounced the use of any American Indian name or artifice associated with team mascots; and
5. Whereas: In 1996 the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga discontinued use of its mascot, Chief Moccannoga, as “inappropriate in an institution that values and celebrates diversity”; and
6. Whereas: The Governors’ Interstate Indian Council “encourages all public schools, sports teams, and private businesses to discontinue using Native American mascots in their slogans and/or symbols” (1991, 1998); and
7. Whereas: In 2001 the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights denounced “the use of Native American images and nicknames as sports symbols” and began its call “for an end to the use of Native American images and team names by non-Native schools”; and
8. Whereas: In 2001 the Advisory Council on Tennessee Indian Affairs’ Education Committee was charged with recommending to the state Commission of Indian Affairs “the cessation and removal of all indian mascot names and pictures from TN schools”; and
9. Whereas: In 2002 Martin Methodist College in Pulaski changed its sports team nickname from “Indians” to “Redhawks” in reaction to the United Methodist Church’s own opposition to such practices;

THEREFORE Be It Resolved That:

1. The Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs advocate the elimination of Native American Indian mascots and symbols in the state public schools; and
2. The Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs call upon all public schools in Tennessee to voluntarily discontinue their usage of all Native American mascots and symbols; and
3. The Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs, by itself and in coordination with other individuals and organizations, diligently work to eliminate the use of Native American Indian mascots and symbols while providing educational opportunities that accurately represent First Nations peoples and cultures; and
4. The Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs work with the Department of Education to encourage elimination of these mascots and symbols, help develop transition plans with the least financial impact to local school boards, develop educational material that the Department can present to the schools to expedite change; and
5. The Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs request the Tennessee Human Rights Commission and the Tennessee Department of Education also to strongly urge all Tennessee schools using Native American Indian related mascots to discontinue such names and imagery by June 2009.

adopted unanimously by the Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs 3 december 2005 Memphis

Don Merzlak, Greeneville, sponsor

approved by the Advisory Council on Tennessee Indian Affairs, 19 February 2005, as amended 9 July 2005