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Native American Mascots Banned

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porters say the mascots are a way to honor Native American history, evoking values of strength and bravery.

"It is racist. It is harmful. It is shaming. It is dehumanizing," Seah-dom Edmo, vice president of the Oregon Indian Education Association, told the board.

In 2006, the Oregon Board of Education adopted a nonbinding recommendation that schools stop using Native mascots. A handful did, but some small communities have resisted the trend, saying the nicknames are a source of pride.

"It's a chance for us to talk about family and tradition and loyalty," said Jim Smith, principal of Banks High School -- home of the Braves -- who grew up on the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana.

Banks has a logo depicting an Indian head on the gymnasium floor and walls, and even on the hurdles used by the track team.

Some critics of the ban said

they were concerned about the costs of changing sports uniforms and equipment, school letterhead and street signs.

In some areas, schools have worked with nearby tribes to change their practices without changing their nickname. Roseburg High School, home of the Indians, switched a logo depicting a Native American to a simple feather. Molalla High School changed sports jerseys to say "Molalla" instead of "Indians" and stopped using a mascot dressed like a Native American to lead cheers.

Students and teachers from schools with Native American nicknames packed two public hearings on the topic. Some suggested they be allowed to keep their Indian nicknames if nearby tribes consent.

The board rejected that idea, with board member Artemio Paz describing it as a "search for acceptable levels of racism."

Native American mascots are a form of oppression that contributes to isolation among Native Americans and its social conse-

quences, said Tom Ball, assistant vice president of equity and diversity at the University of Oregon. Those include high rates of suicide, incarceration and school dropout.

Oregon Department of Education officials say Wisconsin is the only other state to enact restrictions on Native American mascots. Wisconsin's law, approved by the Legislature in 2010, requires school boards to prove that their Indian mascots don't promote discrimination, harassment or stereotyping if someone complains. Dozens of Wisconsin schools still have Native American mascots.

The NCAA limits the use of imagery and names considered hostile and abusive, and a debate still rages over the University of North Dakota's "Fighting Sioux" nickname and a logo with the profile of an American Indian warrior.

The Oregon Legislature voted in 2001 to eliminate the word "squaw" from geographic names because many Native Americans consider it offensive.

--Associated Press

Obituary

In Loving Memory Sylvester Kelsey Jr.

Family and friends gathered Monday for a Homegoing service and celebration for Sylvester Kelsey Jr. at Allen Temple C.M.E. Church in northeast Portland.

He was born Oct. 3, 1930; and passed on May 15, 2012.

Arrangements were under the direction of Threadgill Memorial Services.



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