

Representative Elizabeth Weight proposes the following substitute bill:

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REGARDING NATIVE
AMERICAN MASCOTS AND EQUALITY IN PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**

2021 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Elizabeth Weight

Senate Sponsor: Ronald M. Winterton

8	Cosponsors:	Karen Kwan	Angela Romero
9	Gay Lynn Bennion	Rosemary Lesser	Andrew Stoddard
10	Joel K. Briscoe	Ashlee Matthews	Steve Waldrip
11	Clare Collard	Carol Spackman Moss	Raymond P. Ward
12	Jennifer Dailey-Provost	Doug Owens	Mark A. Wheatley
13	Sandra Hollins	Stephanie Pitcher	
	Brian S. King		



LONG TITLE

General Description:

This resolution recognizes the harm done by using Native American mascots, encourages schools in the public education system to consider retiring those mascots, and encourages the State Board of Education and local education agencies to provide instruction in Native American culture and history.

Highlighted Provisions:

- This resolution:
 - ▶ recognizes that using Native American names, imagery, symbols, and regalia as



- 24 school mascots wrongfully characterizes and causes harm to Native Americans;
- 25 ▶ explains the harmful effects that using these mascots creates in the education and
- 26 development of all students, including the contribution to high rates of school drop
- 27 out and death by suicide among Native American youth;
- 28 ▶ encourages public school leaders to engage with Native American communities to
- 29 develop processes to consider retiring these mascots; and
- 30 ▶ encourages the State Board of Education and local education agencies to include
- 31 instruction on the history, culture, and traditions of Native Americans in public
- 32 school curriculum.

33 **Special Clauses:**

34 None



36 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

37 WHEREAS, the United States of America holds the values of democracy, equality, and

38 justice as fundamental cornerstones upon which to build society;

39 WHEREAS, all people are interconnected as one human family and should be treated

40 with dignity and respect, regardless of their racial and ethnic identity;

41 WHEREAS, Utah is the home of various cultural and racial groups, about 60,000 of

42 them American Indians and Alaska Natives;

43 WHEREAS, Utah is the ancestral home of eight tribes, each with a distinctive and rich

44 heritage of culture and traditions, and each with a sovereign government;

45 WHEREAS, Native Americans are a vital part of Utah's history, its present, and its

46 future;

47 WHEREAS, the tribal sovereignty of Native American tribes includes the right to make

48 or participate in decisions about their citizenry and identity;

49 WHEREAS, all students, including Native American students, deserve a respectful and

50 nurturing school environment that encourages positive educational, emotional, and social

51 development;

52 WHEREAS, all students have the right to receive an education free of discrimination

53 and exploitation, and, according to the United States Department of Education Office for Civil

54 Rights, racial harassment denies students their rights;

55 WHEREAS, Native American names, imagery, symbols, regalia, and characterizations
56 as school or team mascots symbolize a previous era when white Americans constructed
57 inaccurate portrayals of Native Americans to assert their dominance over Native Americans;

58 WHEREAS, such inaccurate portrayals and caricatures strip elements of Native
59 American culture of their sacred meaning and dignity;

60 WHEREAS, hundreds of tribal governments, organizations, and citizens have
61 encouraged schools and other sports teams to retire Native American mascots for the last 50
62 years, and while many schools and athletic teams have stopped using Native American
63 mascots, the tradition persists in some regions;

64 WHEREAS, the National Collegiate Athletic Association requires all participating
65 institutions of higher education to retire Native American mascots except in situations where
66 specific tribal names are used with the express permission from that tribe's legitimate
67 government, and with consensual terms of agreement open to renegotiation;

68 WHEREAS, it is widely recognized and respected that images of other historically
69 subordinated racial and ethnic minority groups are not used as mascots due to the racially
70 discriminating and dehumanizing implications;

71 WHEREAS, despite the rights of a sovereign Native American nation to determine how
72 its identity and citizens are portrayed, Native American mascots were created without
73 permission from Native Americans, and the names and imagery used in these school mascots
74 are dehumanizing to Native Americans and perpetuate insulting stereotypes;

75 WHEREAS, because Native American mascots are among the few depictions of Native
76 Americans in American culture, and because those depictions are often savage in nature, they
77 send powerful and damaging messages to all students about the place of Native Americans in
78 their school, community, state, and country, especially if students have little contact with
79 Native Americans;

80 WHEREAS, in 2005 the American Psychological Association called for schools and
81 athletic organizations to immediately retire the use of Native American mascots because of the
82 damaging effects these mascots have on the self-esteem and heritage of Native American youth
83 and the misleading messages they send about all Native Americans;

84 WHEREAS, there is a growing body of research about how using Native American
85 school mascots creates a school environment that is deeply harmful to Native American

86 students' social and emotional health and development, and is directly related to the high
87 suicide rate of Native American youth and the high rate of violence against Native American
88 peoples;

89 WHEREAS, a 2017 study by the United States Department of Health and Human
90 Services found that suicide was the second leading cause of death for Native Americans aged
91 10 to 34, and the overall death rate for Native American teenage girls was three times higher
92 than the death rate for white teenage girls;

93 WHEREAS, Native American students in Utah's public education system are less likely
94 to graduate from high school than white students and have lower academic outcomes than
95 many of their peers; and

96 WHEREAS, school leaders in the public education system have an opportunity to
97 thoughtfully engage with those who have been harmed by Native American school mascots and
98 create a process to conscientiously assure respect and honor to Native Americans:

99 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
100 Governor concurring therein, hereby encourage all schools in the public education system with
101 Native American mascots -- including names, imagery, symbols, regalia, and characterizations
102 -- to engage with Native American communities and together consider retiring these mascots
103 out of respect for the cultural and spiritual traditions and practices of their Native American
104 neighbors.

105 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and Governor encourage the State
106 Board of Education and local education agencies (LEAs) to include instruction on the history
107 and culture of Native Americans in public school curriculum, specifically the Native
108 Americans who were first on the land in each LEA's geographic region and who live there now.

109 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and Governor hereby encourage all
110 Utah citizens -- including non-Native American citizens -- to learn about the history and
111 heritage of Native Americans, including the history of indigenous peoples who live on and
112 have lived on Utah lands.