APA Resolution Recommending the Immediate Retirement of American Indian Mascots, Symbols, Images, and Personalities by Schools, Colleges, Universities, Athletic Teams, and Organizations

Adopted by the APA Council of Representatives on August 21, 2005

WHEREAS the American Psychological Association has recognized that racism and racial discrimination are attitudes and behavior that are learned and that threaten human development (American Psychological Association, June 2001);

WHEREAS the American Psychological Association has resolved to denounce racism in all its forms and to call upon all psychologists to speak out against racism, and take proactive steps to prevent the occurrence of intolerant or racist acts (American Psychological Association, June 2001);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities undermines the educational experiences of members of all communities-especially those who have had little or no contact with Indigenous peoples (Connolly, 2000; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001; Society of Indian Psychologists, 1999; Webester, Loudbear, Corn, & Vigue, 1971);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities establishes an unwelcome and often times hostile learning environment for American Indian students that affirms negative images/stereotypes that are promoted in mainstream society (Clark & Witko, in press; Fryberg, 2003; Fryberg & Markus, 2003; Fryberg, 2004a; Munson, 2001; Society of Indian Psychologists, 1999; Staurowsky, 1999);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities by school systems appears to have a negative impact on the self-esteem of American Indian children (Chamberlin, 1999; Eagle and Condor Indigenous People's Alliance, 2003; Fryberg, 2004b; Fryberg & Markus, 2003; Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs, 2001; Society of Indian Psychologists, 1999; The Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes, 2001; Vanderford, 1996);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities undermines the ability of American Indian Nations to portray accurate and respectful images of their culture, spirituality, and traditions (Clark & Witko, in press; Davis, 1993; Gone, 2002; Rodriquez, 1998; Witko, 2005);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities presents stereotypical images of American Indian communities, that may be a violation of the civil rights of American Indian people (Dolley, 2003; King, 2001; King & Springwood, 2001; Pewewardy, 1991; Springwood & King, 2000; U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities is a form of discrimination against Indigenous Nations that can lead to negative relations between groups (Cook-Lynn, 2001; Coombe, 1999; U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001; Witko, 2005);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian symbols, mascots, images, and personalities is a detrimental manner of illustrating the cultural identity of American Indian people through negative displays and/or interpretations of spiritual and traditional practices (Adams, 1995; Banks, 1993; Nuessel; 1994; Staurowsky, 1999; Witko, 2005);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities is disrespectful of the spiritual beliefs and values of American Indian nations (Churchill, 1994; Gone, 2002; Sheppard, 2004; Staurowsky, 1998);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities is an offensive and intolerable practice to American Indian Nations that must be eradicated (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001; Society of Indian Psychologists, 1999);

WHEREAS the continued use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities has a negative impact on other communities by allowing for the perpetuation of stereotypes and stigmatization of another cultural group (Fryberg, 2004b; Gone, 2002; Staurowsky, 1999; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association recognizes the potential negative impact the use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities have on the mental health and psychological behavior of American Indian people;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association encourages continued research on the psychological effects American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities have on American Indian communities and others;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association encourages the development of programs for the public, psychologists, and students in psychology to increase awareness of the psychological effects that American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities have on American Indian communities and others;

AND

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association supports and recommends the immediate retirement of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams, and organizations.

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