

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why does the James Caldwell High School ‘Chiefs’ Mascot Need to Change?

As recent events have pushed everyone to question how unintentional biases and racism have their ways of penetrating daily life, even subconsciously, it is important to reflect upon our own actions and community to ask how we can do better. As the Caldwell/West Caldwell community, we are bound together by our school mascot and town-wide unifier, the ‘Chiefs.’ While our town has seen some of our brightest moments when all connected as one, it is the mascot of the ‘Chiefs’ that often even unknowingly continues to perpetuate stereotyping and the appropriation of a culture that does not belong to us.

We know that when traditions are called into question, it can feel uncertain, confusing, and even like an attack. However, the most important thing we can do is take the time to reflect and understand the real issues at hand. Imagine if high schools and colleges chose to have their sports teams represented by mascots, such as “The Jews,” “The J*ps,” “The Slaves,” or any group of people throughout history that have been unjustly terrorized, oppressed, and discriminated against. Now imagine the people who use these mascots to represent their teams are the very descendants of those who did the worst oppressing to these marginalized groups. This is exactly what is happening in the U.S. with the practice of Native American mascots. We must take this time to practice empathy, educate ourselves on perspectives other than our own, and understand that unlearning something that seems ingrained in our community will take effort and patience. We can come together to make Caldwell/West Caldwell a true place of possibilities for everyone.

1) Why should we change the mascot if it has nothing to do with Native Americans, since it was originally created to recognize Harris Bonnel?

- a) Although some claim that the intentions of honoring Harris Bonnel through our school’s mascot had nothing to do with Native Americans originally, that reality has changed. The imagery of our school’s mascot is an overt stereotype of a Native American, and with the passage of time, significantly less people have associated our school’s mascot with a great coach and more with what the imagery it actually reflects: Native Americans. Although the intentions of honoring Bonnel were positive, opposing teams, spectators, and most members of the Caldwell community do not know the entire history and context of why our mascot is what it is, and only associate it with the Native American imagery that they have seen their whole lives in this town. The mascot has everything to do with Native Americans because of its imagery and because of people’s perception of the mascot.

- b) It is contradictory to claim that the name ‘Chiefs’ has nothing to do with Native Americans, while simultaneously defending it by saying that Harris Bonnel was bestowed the name by a Native American tribe. Also, our logo was directly inspired by the Washington Football Team’s old logo, which is obviously incredibly offensive, as well as directly depicts Native American imagery.
- c) In [2005 when concerns regarding our community’s use of racist practices](#) in relation to our mascot were most recently addressed, there was no mention of Harris Bonnel, nor the fact that the name was initially created in his recognition. Throughout several Board of Education meetings, not one account of Harris Bonnel was mentioned. This is relevant only to point out that it seems that using Bonnel’s name to defend this mascot is only a recent practice, and not rooted in Caldwell’s history as many are claiming.
- d) If we want to honor Bonnel, let’s invite more people to root for the school and sports he loved by adopting a more inclusive symbol and make Caldwell a place where all people feel welcomed to support our high school sports teams.
- e) Legends Park and Bonnel Field are tangible ways that Harris Bonnel can continue to be honored where students and community members are actually informed about his impact. Community members are drastically better informed of Bonnel’s legacy through the eponymous name of our school’s main field than they ever have been through the in-depth history of our mascot. Students are never taught that the ‘Chiefs’ name is in reference to Bonnel. Instead, they are met with Native American imagery and appropriation, which has now become the main connection made when people hear the ‘Chiefs’ name or see our logo. It would not be enough to simply educate students on the history of Harris Bonnel in relation to the mascot in an attempt to dissociate the mascot from Native Americans. The association has been too deeply ingrained, and will continue to be made, especially outside of our community.

2) This will be too expensive! How will we pay for this?

- a) To begin, we should not allow potential cost to prevent us from disassociating our community and selves from racism. The impact of this decision will be priceless! Additionally, it is important to clarify that at the end of the day, this decision will be up to the Board of Education. We are simply attempting to display community support and elucidate the need to change our mascot. While we have several suggestions as to how to make this a reality, it will not ultimately be our responsibility to make these choices. It is also important to note that no major change like this can be fully completed overnight. This will be a gradual process in the pursuit of immense progress. The following bullets compile suggestions and methods to implement a cost effective way to change the mascot:

- i) Every school year, each grade's respective class council creates tee shirts to be ordered by students. These shirts display the grade's respective colors for pep rallies, and are usually accompanied with the current 'Chiefs' mascot and logo. These orders can be easily changed to reflect the new mascot, and students can purchase brand new merchandise each year, as they do currently.
- ii) This will be a gradual and incremental shift. A free way of supporting this change is simply by word-of-mouth. Gradually, stop wearing the old merchandise. Stop common phrases of "Once a Chief, Always a Chief" and "Tribe". Slip ups will happen, but if one sees students or community members wearing the old mascot and using the old name, kindly correcting them will help slowly put an end to the instinctual memory of the old mascot.
- iii) We can easily engage the community and support the arts through accepting suggestions and artwork from students and community members. Painting new murals, creating new artwork, flags, shirt designs and more can all be collaborated on as a community.
- iv) We currently print dozens of banners and stickers with images of the current mascot and name. New decals can be easily and cheaply printed, and banners can be made to temporarily cover old artwork until structures can be completely replaced. Again, this will definitely be a gradual process.
- v) Fundraising and donor support has been seen to help the community in incredible ways. This will be another easy, community driven way to help implement positive change.
- vi) Every few years, sports uniforms are replaced. Slowly, we will recycle out the old uniforms and replace them to support the new mascot. Also, a lot of uniforms in use already only have "Caldwell" displayed, so they will not be necessary to replace. Lastly, our team colors will not need to be changed, making a lot of old merchandise that does not feature the name or logo perfectly fine for continued use.
- vii) Bonnel Field will not have to be 'ripped up', as many people may believe. Turf can be easily painted over to reflect the new mascot, and while this will have a price, it will be much cheaper than replacing a brand new field. The same can be said about the gym floor and walls. Again, not everything has to go immediately. We can take small, cost effective steps in pursuit of eventual full replacement.

3) Why does the mascot need to change?

- a) There are numerous reasons why the practice of Native American mascots are directly harmful to the Native American community and should end. Please read [this thoroughly researched essay](#) dedicated to elucidating why the name and logo must change.

4) The name is intended to honor Native American tribes! A mascot is something that represents strength, power and a fighter!

- a) While perhaps well intentioned, as we have learned from so many activists and people of color, it is not white voices that get to decide when things are appropriate or not. Even if initially well intentioned, the reality of the situation reads very differently to those who are directly affected by it. Our country was founded on exploitation of these people who we continue to take from, and then use their culture and arts when we feel it benefits our own cause. To make time to hear the voices of those directly affected, Caldwell resident of Choctaw descent Jonathan Hawk himself has shared how, “we are real people, we are not mascots. Think of your heritage as represented by some shallow understanding of who you are. If it is not known, that image could shape the perceptions of our children. Please do not dehumanize our culture and teach 'shallow history'. Our peoples have contributed greatly to the history of this country. Honor us by leaving our representation in images, to our own.”
- b) Even if we claim we are using the mascot with intent to honor, when the result is offensive, that intent becomes less important. Several organizations such as the [National Congress of American Indians](#) and the [American Psychological Association](#) have widely researched and discussed the harmful implications of the continued use of Native American stereotypes as mascots. It is not up to white people to decide what ‘honor’ means when in relation to another culture or race. There [have been studies](#) done which prove that, “stereotypical representations of Native Americans resulted in lower self-esteem, even if the images were labeled as positive by a previous Native American group.” No matter the intent, the result is harmful and affects real people negatively.
- c) Having a “Chief” mascot is cultural appropriation. To show spirit for one's mascot, it is typical to dress up to embody it, or even to do chants reflecting it. However, with our current mascot, students are not able to participate in full appreciation without crossing an offensive line of cultural appropriation. Wearing headdresses, using face paint, or doing cheers like the tomahawk chop take parts

of Native American culture that are sacred and allow them to be mocked or misrepresented, therefore offending those who are truly part of Native American culture.

- d) By using a Native American mascot, we are perpetuating a stereotype of Natives as being ‘savage’ or aggressive fighters, which are harmful and inaccurate.
- e) There are plenty of mascots that represent strength and power without exploiting an entire race of people that would be a great fit to represent Caldwell’s pride.
- f) Native mascots diminish a race of people and fail to portray them as a dignified and entire group. It shows an entire culture as just a picture or mascot, which often is the limit of education regarding the race.
- g) The argument that the ‘ridding of the mascot diminishes Native history’ insinuates that natives are *only* mascots, and lack all real history. Rather than simply seeing Native American imagery as a mascot, to truly honor and learn about Natives, we should be researching positive contributions coming from indigenous people themselves, as well as a broader history regarding the struggles and oppression of Native people.
- h) It takes strength to grow, change, and admit to being wrong. Let’s be Caldwell Strong and change our racist and inappropriate mascot.

5) Why don’t we keep the ‘Chiefs’ name, but just change the logo if that is what is so offensive?

- a) It is not enough to just change the logo. We must change both the name *and* the logo. For far too long, the logo and name have been associated. By simply changing the logo, we still allow the connection to live on. It permits students to continue wearing the same merchandise with the old logo, it permits the same racist tomahawk cheer to be used, it permits the fans to still be called ‘tribe’, and more. By continuing to use ‘Chiefs’ we send a message that these behaviors are still permissible based on the deep associations that **will** continue. We must have a clean break so there is no confusion on what behaviors are acceptable, and which behaviors are racist and harmful.
- b) When community members leave Caldwell, the name ‘Chiefs’ is perceived to be related to Native Americans, because the imagery has been associated with the logo for so long, at a local and national level (i.e the Kansas City Chiefs). When our neighbors are met with images of Native American caricatures and problematic stereotyping, most people would never get the chance to know the Caldwells for what they really stand for, or even think it would be worth the while to hear out our ‘good intentions.’ We should be advertising outwardly a place of inclusivity, not having to prove it. When asking ourselves ‘what as a community

are we putting out into the world to make our town seem desirable and welcoming to all kinds of people?,’ the answer right now is nothing.

- c) When leaving our own community and stepping into the real world, it is hard to feel pride in one's school while wearing merchandise contributing to the exploitation of Native Americans. While within our town we may understand the initial intent of the mascot, this same information is not clear when leaving Caldwell/West Caldwell. Whether the logo is visible or not, the connection made between the use of ‘Chiefs’ as a mascot and Native American imagery is too solidified. Again, why should we expect outsiders to hear out our good intentions, when we are leading with a racist name and logo, rather than overtly displaying that we are an accepting community.
- d) [As we have seen in 2005](#), when an initial movement began in support of distancing Caldwell from racist practices in regards to our mascot, there was a major pushback from community members, as, “one former student likened the ban [of using Native American chants] to the same oppression the American Indians faced.” This connection is obviously incredibly offensive and indescribably ignorant. When the ban on cheers and offensive practices was under review, parents, “threatened to protest the decision by wearing Native American costumes to [a] home game against Montville and by playing the Florida State Seminoles' theme music from the bleachers.” Additionally, weeks after the school board decided on a, “compromise for the use of Native American chants and cheers at Caldwell High School sporting events, the football booster club held a pep rally with a woman in a headdress riding on horseback while speakers blared the Florida State University Seminoles theme song. Some people in attendance said the public address system blared, "You are on our chiefs' reservation" during the rally, held the night before Thanksgiving. The rally ended when the woman on horseback threw a makeshift spear onto the football field.” As we have seen throughout Caldwell’s history, it appears that the association is extremely difficult for community members to break. Therefore, it is critical that we make this transition easier, and less likely to result in even more aggressive and offensive counter-protests by simply changing the logo *and* the name. Compromises within our town in regard to this issue have historically been proven to only incite further backlash and overtly racist practices under the guise of protecting tradition. We must send a message to our community that this will not be tolerated. The easiest way to achieve that, is by changing the mascot and the logo.

6) But what about ‘Once a Chief, Always a Chief?’ How can we maintain pride in our town?

- a) The great thing about being a member of the Caldwell community is that we never needed the ‘Chief’ mascot to be the thing to unite us. We know what we can accomplish when all of us come together for great change. The memories made at the high school, the sports played, the clubs joined, the friends gained, and more will all remain intact. If you truly believe in the ‘once a chief, always a chief’ motto, then a simple name change should not be enough to diminish that sentiment. You can more accurately continue to express pride in your high school experience by maintaining the friendships you made and spreading the values you learned while at James Caldwell High School. We will be just as united as before. In fact, with a new mascot, we can be even prouder knowing that we were able to come together as a community and make tangible change in pursuit of making all feel welcome. People will feel more pride in our community with a mascot that is not racist and offensive, further uniting us as a town.

7) Why should we change our mascot if professional sports teams have Native American mascots?

- a) How can we feel comfortable speaking out about some injustices, but turn our back on others that we have the power to put an end to? How can we call ourselves allies, while perpetuating stereotypes proven to be detrimental to Native American youth? How can we call ourselves a ‘Place of Possibilities’ or a ‘Stigma Free Town’, when those titles do not apply to all students? Teams like the Washington Football Team have been facing backlash for years to change their name and mascot as well, and recently made that change. Being that our own logo was [directly based off of the Washington Football Team’s old logo](#), it is crucial that this offensive portrayal be changed immediately. Let’s work together and be on the right side of history.
- b) Just because something is famous or popular, does not mean that it is positive or acceptable. There have been times throughout history where federal laws have reflected discrimination and hate. It is up to the people to challenge what is commonly accepted and work to make their own communities a better place, and even inspire larger change.
- c) For several decades, there have been hundreds of organizations [calling on professional sports teams to change their names](#). Simply because several major teams refuse to do so does not mean that their names are not still harmful.

8) This change will erase Caldwell's history, and the memory of Harris Bonnel.

- a) What are we losing about Caldwell's history if the name of our mascot is different? All of your memories and great parts about the school will remain exactly the same. In fact, we will be able to be even prouder of our community, because we will no longer be promoting harmful practices. What is truly being erased is a full, dignified account of Native American history by portraying an entire race of people as a caricature. By putting the memory of one man, although an incredible inspiration for our community, over the livelihoods of an entire race of people, we are majorly contributing to the continued exploitation of a historically oppressed group.
- b) The mascot is not a tool that is used to teach or embrace the history of Caldwell or Harris Bonnel. Incredibly few people know the history of the mascot and its relation to Harris Bonnel, with even less awareness of the connection outside of the Caldwells. The vast majority of town residents do not know the history of Harris Bonnel, even with our mascot being called the 'Chiefs' for many years. When opposing teams, spectators, visitors, and tourists come to town they immediately associate our mascot with Native Americans because of the offensive imagery they see, with no knowledge of who Harris Bonnel was.
- c) In [2005 when concerns regarding our community's use of racist practices](#) related to our mascot were most recently addressed, there was no mention of Harris Bonnel, nor the fact that the name was initially created in his recognition. Throughout several Board of Education meetings, not one account of Harris Bonnel was mentioned. This is relevant only to point out that it seems that using Bonnel's name to defend this mascot is only a recent practice, and not rooted in Caldwell's history as many are claiming. While Bonnel is a huge part of James Caldwell High School's sports history, he is honored in several ways at the school currently, and will continue to be honored through these means.
- d) Legends Park and Bonnel Field are tangible ways that Harris Bonnel can continue to be honored where students and community members are actually informed about his impact. Students are never taught that the 'Chiefs' name is in reference to Bonnel. Instead, they are met with Native American imagery and appropriation, which has now become the main connection made when people hear the 'Chiefs' name or see our logo.
- e) Even if Harris Bonnel was named an honorary 'Chief' years ago, several activist groups and individuals have come forward and expressed specifically to Caldwell residents and school officials that the practice is offensive. Additionally, if the

right was given for Bonnel to have the nickname ‘Chief,’ we were never given the right to use the name as a mascot, especially with Native American imagery.

- f) It is incredibly contradictory to say ‘the name has nothing to do with Native Americans’, while simultaneously claiming that Bonnel was bestowed the name by a Native American tribe, making the mascot acceptable.

9) Won’t getting rid of our mascot prevent us from learning about Native American history?

- a) How are we currently learning about Native American history through the exploitation of their culture? The Caldwell/West Caldwell school systems do not use our mascot as an opportunity to educate our students about Native American culture and history, because there is no way to properly educate students about Native American history in relation to a mascot that does not accurately represent Native Americans. What history are we learning directly in relation to our current mascot? We will seize the opportunity in changing our mascot to devote thoughtful time and thorough research to properly teach about the exploitation of Natives, as well as hopefully show a more well rounded depiction of indigenous people, their contributions, and current day lives. See our linked [website](#) for more information and educational resources.
- b) The argument that the ‘ridding of the mascot diminishes Native history’ insinuates that Natives are *only* mascots, and lack all real history. Rather than simply seeing Native American imagery as a mascot, to truly honor and learn about Natives, we should be researching positive contributions coming from indigenous people themselves, as well as a broader history regarding the struggles and oppression of Native people.

10) What good does it do to change the mascot? It's just a sports team, it does not matter.

- a) There has been extensive research by the [American Psychological Association](#) regarding the harm that Native American mascots have on the self esteem of Native students. In a [study published by ESPN](#) and compiled by psychologist Michael A. Friedman, Ph.D, it was found that, “stereotypical representations of Native Americans resulted in lower self-esteem, even if the images were labeled as positive by a previous Native American group. These findings were replicated in two other studies using slightly different methods.” Studies such as this, as well groups such as the [NAACP](#) and [National Congress of American Indians](#) expressing their opposition to the use of mascots show that it is not just a sports

team. Our actions and words have legitimate repercussions on Native communities, whose lives should not be reduced to inaccurate imagery.

11) I understand why the Washington Football Team needed to change their name, but why do we?

- a) No mascot of Native Americans is okay. There is no such thing as a mascot that “honors” a group of people. In American society, we do not use mascots to honor cultures of people. Mascots inherently make a mockery of Native culture as sporting event spectators are given the opportunity to drunkenly imitate sacred practices and symbols. We, as white people, do not get to dismiss racist actions through claims of ‘honor,’ in the faces of those who we are claiming to ‘honor’ insisting that our actions are offensive. Additionally, our baseline for deciding our mascot should not be a normalized [racial slur](#). We can, and should do better, by promoting positivity and acceptance actively. We can still do better on all fronts and distancing ourselves from racist practices is the first step.
- b) Native leaders have been historically disrespected in the United States. Calling ourselves the ‘Chiefs,’ the highest level of respect and leadership in Native American culture, is offensive and perpetuates exploitation. Offensive practices such as calling our student section the ‘tribe,’ performing tomahawk chop cheers, and wearing headdresses, become permissible with our current mascot, all which have been present at Caldwell sporting events every year.

12) Why are you complaining? This doesn't affect you.

- a) While the passionate organizers of this movement may never understand personally or be victims of the harmful stereotyping and exploitation of Native American people, that is all the more reason to speak up and use our voices for good! It is disappointing that it must take the voices of largely white students to allow this issue to be heard, when for years, Native American people have expressed, [directly to our community](#) and nation, that our practices are harmful and offensive. When people come into the Caldwells for the first time, they should feel welcomed, respected and as though they will have an equal opportunity to thrive here. However, if only met with images of Native American caricatures and problematic stereotyping, most people would never get the chance to know the Caldwells for what they really stand for, or even think it would be worth the while to hear out our ‘good intentions.’ We should be advertising outwardly a place of acceptance, not having to prove it! This could be an excellent first step.

- b) Let us listen to the words of a Caldwell resident of Choctaw descent, Jonathan Hawk, who has expressed that as a resident of this community, he is offended by the mascot and supports its change. He has said, “Please be reminded, community, we are real people, we are not mascots. Think of your heritage as represented by some shallow understanding of who you are. If it is not known, that image could shape the perceptions of our children. Please do not dehumanize our culture and teach 'shallow history'. Our peoples have contributed greatly to the history of this country. Honor us by leaving our representation in images, to our own. Yakoke laua (many thanks).”
- c) How can we sit in history class and learn about the genocide and continued oppression of Native Americans at the hands of the American people, only to look down and see ourselves using those victims as our mascot? It comes off especially tasteless and is only amplified through the [lack of racial diversity we see in our community and school](#).
- d) If the issue of having a Native American mascot does not personally affect you, that is even more reason to change it. Due to our predominantly white population, it is not reflective of our community to be represented by a Native American symbol and name. For Native Americans who are personally offended and affected, this is a huge issue, and that should be enough reason to change the mascot and name.

13) There are more important things going on than just a mascot. Let’s focus on bigger issues.

- a) Addressing systemic racism is one of the most important things we can do. Words and culture matter, and we have to confront our racist history as soon as possible. Right now, Caldwell is allowing and advertising a racist practice, but it does not have to be that way. The Caldwell Board of Education has recently released a statement which says, “we will call out behavior that demeans individuals based on the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, their sexual orientation, or gender identity. We believe that equity and inclusion for all of our students is essential for the academic and social-emotional wellbeing of all.” We cannot stand by statements such as these currently while our mascot and team name remains.
- b) The value of a movement is not diminished just because there are other movements that need attention as well. We are not saying to *only* focus on this issue. We are saying let's focus on this *too*. We have the opportunity to make tangible change in our own backyards. We hope this encourages people to educate themselves further on all fronts and continue making changes, however small or large, to make a positive impact on the world around them.

- c) All small changes are part of a larger movement. This issue does not end with simply changing the name. This is one step in the pursuit of a more accepting climate and culture in the Caldwell community. We should all be working towards dismantling a system that we have all been a part of perpetuating, whether intentionally or not. There are changes within the school curriculum that must be done to further educate us on the history of Native oppression so we can better understand and unlearn what has been made to feel so acceptable. Additionally, we need to do better at [educating ourselves about important contributions and positive depictions](#) about Native Americans. This fight does not end with simply a mascot.
- d) In our community, all issues of intolerance are connected. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once stated, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” We are cultivating an exclusionary environment by allowing our mascot to continue as is. By sending the message that our mascot is permissible, it contributes to a climate at the school that not all offensive behavior is problematic, as long as one claims they personally are not offended. This lends towards a culture where women, the LGBTQ+ community, students of color, disabled students and other minorities are receiving a message that their experience with oppression can be easily dismissed when those in power deem it ‘not offensive *enough*’ to change. Students are watching, listening and depending on a significant change to be made and message to be sent that their voices matter. Racism and prejudice of all kinds must be addressed, starting with changing our racist mascot and team name.

14) I'm part Native American and I think the mascot is fine?

- a) Even though some Native Americans may not be offended by mascots, there is no question that [numerous indigenous tribes, organizations, and individuals have spoken out against Native American mascots](#), citing the psychological harm it inflicts on their communities, and how offensive the cartoonish imagery is to their sacred culture.
- b) Please see the American Psychological Association [article](#) on the negative implication on mental health that these mascots contribute to. Even if you personally are not offended, we should be considerate of the larger population who we are affecting.
- c) [Research at the University of Michigan](#) has revealed that Native Americans have expressed, “high rates of opposition to not only the use of gestures and chants, but also to Native American mascots and team names like the NFL’s Washington R*dsk*ns”. Especially among Native Americans who most often engage in tribal and cultural practices, tomahawk chops and war chants were particularly offensive.

15) When will this ‘cancel culture’ end?

- a) This will be a teaching moment! We are not going to pretend our mascot was never the ‘Chiefs.’ We want to educate the community, not ‘cancel’ it. Cancel culture does not equate with racism. Being racist is being racist, which is what our current mascot represents. No one is trying to change the name and act like it never existed. We should be taking accountability for what we have all been a part of, while [pushing ourselves to learn more](#) about why it is wrong.
- b) Addressing all facets of systemic racism in our society is urgent. The ‘Chiefs’ mascot and logo is one of the most overt symbols of racism prominent in our community. As said, the fight does not end here. There is no harm in attempting to reflect in all of our daily practices and taking note in the ways that we can make changes to be more accepting on all fronts.

16) I’m not offended, so why does it matter?

- a) It is not up to white people to decide what indigenous people, or any other race/culture for that matter is offended by. There are [countless accounts from Native Americans voicing their opposition to the practice of Native mascots](#). If you are only hearing white people say they are not offended, maybe consider:
 - i) Why is it that [our town](#) is one where voices of other cultures are not heard?
 - ii) Why do you think your voice as a white person matters more than Native American voices explicitly and repeatedly telling you that they are offended?

17) What about that one study that stated Native Americans were not offended by Native mascots?

- a) *The Washington Post* published an article in June 2016 that claims, “Nine in 10 Native Americans say they are not offended by the Washington Redskins name.” Jay Rosenstein, a documentary filmmaker and professor of media and cinema studies, explained how flawed this conclusion was by delegitimizing the *Post*’s method of polling in an article published in *HuffPost*. He stated that they conducted their poll by telephone, where anyone could claim they were Native American whether they were or not, or even knew what the term meant. Their conclusion lacks credibility because of the uncertainty of the polling population.
- b) Further, Rosenstein cited numerous examples of specific Native American tribes that have published resolutions in opposition to Native American mascots. [This resolution](#) from 2001, was signed by The Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes, including the Chiefs of the tribes of Muscogee, Chickasaw,

Choctaw, Oklahoma Seminole, and Cherokee Nations, opposing the use of Native American mascots in public schools. In addition, the National Congress of Native American Indians adopted many resolutions over the past several decades in opposition of Native American mascots. Aaron Payment, chairman of the Sault Ste Marie tribe of Chippewa Indians, and an executive officer of the National Congress of Native American Indians [expressed how he believes](#) mascots are, “denigrating, whether they intend it or not. It's objectifying us... We're the only race that is subjected to this.”

- c) Please read through this [study](#) that was conducted in response to the *Post's* inaccurate initial study for further information.
- d) Jacqueline Keeler is a founding member of an activist group called Eradicating Offensive Native Mascotry. Her parents moved to Cleveland as part of the "Termination Policy," which was the federal government's efforts in the 1950s to shut down reservations. [She has stated](#) that mascots, “make being Native that much more difficult... Most Americans are not aware tribes are not just social clubs, they're actual sovereign states... Most Americans are completely clueless (about Native American history), and mascots don't help.”
- e) Even though some Native Americans may not be offended by mascots, there is no question that numerous indigenous tribes, organizations, and individuals have spoken out against Native American mascots, citing the psychological harm it inflicts on their communities, and how offensive the cartoonish imagery is to their sacred culture.

18) **What do you want to change the mascot to?**

- a) Our movement is more focused on James Caldwell High School abolishing its Native American mascot than it is on making the final choice of a new mascot. However, we recommend potentially establishing our new mascot as The Patriots. We believe our incredibly patriotic community could rally behind this mascot as it actually reflects a symbol of our town: the Revolutionary War hero James Caldwell, who James Caldwell High School is named after. A more inclusive mascot that reflects the values of our community without being overtly offensive is an incredibly viable option. If not the Patriots, then any non-appropriating or offensive mascot will be perfect! Our community has the chance to come together and unite behind choosing a brand new mascot.

Sources

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