



Date: February 11, 2014
To: Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee
From: Reyn Leno, Chairman, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal Council
Subject: Support Senate Bill 1509

Chair Hass, Vice Chair Knopp and members of the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee, my name is Reyn Leno and I am the Tribal Council Chairman with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. I am here today in support SB 1509.

As a sovereign nation, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde has worked diligently to build positive government-to-government relationships across all levels of government. We have done so on federal, state, and local levels, including with our local school districts.

High School mascots are supposed to be inspirational. High schools do not adopt "losers" or "slugs" as their mascots; they adopt admirable and inspirational figures. The banned names – Indians, Braves, Warriors, and Chiefs – are inspirational Native images and we do not view their use as de facto derogatory.

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, along with other Oregon Tribes, prefer a solution that would allow schools to keep their Native mascots if they collaborate with a representative Tribe on positive portrayals or integrated cultural studies to combat stereotypes.

There are nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon. The history of our peoples who have lived in Oregon since time immemorial covers the breadth of the state, and is either ignored or briefly mentioned in our schools. Most Oregon students learn more about the Sioux and Apaches than they do about the Umpqua, Molalla, Rogue River, Kalapuya or Chasta.

The history of Oregon did not start with the arrival of Lewis & Clark. It was occurring for thousands of years before they set foot on our land, and many of those Indians, Braves, Warriors, and Chiefs are worthy of being honored as high school mascots.

Let's work on something that truly makes a difference for the benefit of Tribes and all Oregonians. Let's take a long and serious look at teaching all of Oregon's students about the history and culture of Oregon's nine unique sovereign governments.

If more Oregonians were educated about Tribal history, society and culture, it would do much more to solve the problems attributed to Indian mascots than simply outlawing the practice.

Thank you for your time and I encourage your support of SB 1509.