

February 7th, 2014

Members of the Oregon House Committee on Education
Members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Education and Workforce Development
Governor Kitzhaber

RE: Oppose SB 1509 and HB 4136

Dear Oregon State Lawmakers:

Oregon has a legacy of objectifying and racializing people of color which has a long-term negative impact on the health and opportunities for our communities. Asians and Pacific Islanders have been dehumanized and marginalized through such efforts in the past. As a state we can do better.

I am writing today to urge you to oppose Senate Bill 1509 and House Bill 4136. This is consistent with our past opposition to the use of Mascots as communicated to the Oregon Education Investment Board and State Legislature.

Research Supports Our Position

Research has shown that the continued use of American Indian mascots, names, symbols, images, and personalities has a negative effect on not only American Indians students but all students by undermining the educational experiences of members of all communities. Our public schools already face tremendous pressure to achieve, and removing racialized mascots improves the learning environment for all students. APANO works extensively with immigrant and refugee families, and American Indian mascots negatively reinforce historic stereotypes. American Indian mascots have the impact of undermining positive community relations and strengthen community cohesion. This is particularly important in rural areas which are experiencing Oregon's fastest growth of communities of color, including Asian and Pacific Islanders, and in areas where American Indian communities have long lived.

Proposed Legislation Out of Step With Oregonian's Values of Equal Opportunity for All

Oregonians have become leaders in innovation and moving forward to create opportunity and ensure equity for all communities. American Indian mascots are out of step with these values, and degrade real people in our communities that ultimately weaken our state as a whole. We need strong family values, and our public institutions should be supporting and not undermining strong families. Asians and Pacific Islanders have a long history of relationship with American Indians in Oregon, going



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back generations, and we have historically opposed all forms of racial stereotyping due to the damage it causes to our children and families.

Please protect Oregon students and continue to provide socially and psychologically safe learning environments for all students free of objectification and stereotypes that are damaging.

Sincerely,

Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons
Executive Director
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