

Native American regalia, like many cultural, refers to clothing, artifacts, and sacred colors that are used in various meaningful ceremonies. Native American regalia often will differ between tribes, but there can be similarities between them. These are significant to personal identity, tribal identity, and spiritual connection. An eagle feather, for example, often represents the spirit. Therefore, Native American regalia in concept is no different than the religious garb that students have worn in graduations past, such as a crucifix, hijab, or yarmulke. However, that is the beauty of religious tolerance: respect and inclusion.

Every student's cultural identity should be celebrated and not oppressed at the most poignant time in their life. When we talk about a group of people (Native Americans) we must acknowledge historically they been told to suppress their cultural identity, and this mentality has had a generational impact which is still evident contemporarily. This is compounded by the ignorance of influential individuals whose treatment disregard Native American regalia as part of cultural/religious expression. As a result, micro decisions have macro consequences in a student's life and feeling of connection in the community. Therefore, it is time for decisive action to make it explicit. It time to guarantee inclusion. It is time to guarantee a student's right to express their cultural identity and religious freedom by wearing their tribe's regalia.