

UPR OF US: YOUTH SUBMISSION ON STATE-SPONSORED HATE SPEECH

Indigenous Peoples have become a marginalized race of Peoples since the European religious concept of 'Manifest Destiny' first targeted for extermination the First Peoples living in the land Europeans invaded. Still today Indigenous Peoples suffer worse afflictions than any other racial group in the United States. The U.S. Government holds a special trust relationship with the hundreds of sovereign indigenous nations within the 50 states, yet treaty rights continue to be ignored and Indian services are severely neglected in federal spending priorities. As a result, Reservations have become concentration camps where the descendants of genocide victims are expected to either lose their indigenous identities, leave, and assimilate, or to continue suffering in silence. Centuries of wrongful U.S. policy has demonstrated the desire to erase cultural identity from the indigenous peoples, to reap tribal lands of resources for the benefit of the non-indigenous and leaving pollution in its wake, and continually neglect the high youth suicide rates, murdered and missing indigenous women, and discrimination on indigenous peoples by outside communities.

Not only is tribal self-determination not being adequately promoted, but the mainstream US is being taught a biased history of the vast crimes committed on Indigenous Peoples. The skewed US view is multiplied when their only modern exposure to Indigenous Peoples are the grotesque and stereotypical caricatures, racial slurs, and cultural appropriation used as mascots in educational systems and lucrative sports industries. These inaccurate representations perpetuate ignorance and provide platforms for hate speech and the continued silencing of Indigenous Peoples who live in fear of verbal and physical repercussions to their dissent of such mistreatment. The continued mascot issue therefore perpetuates and worsens the continued neglect in Indian Country.

According to the Aspen Institute:

- Indigenous poverty rates in 2009 were 23.6%
- Indigenous average household income was \$33,300 versus \$46,200 for US in 2000
- Indigenous in Indian Country have incomes of less than half the National average
- The Indian Health Service estimates, historically, annual Congressional appropriations have only met 52% of indigenous healthcare needs
- In 2009, 24.1% indigenous lacked health insurance coverage, yet had more than double the suicide rate, with indigenous teens the highest suicide rate of any group in the country, a 514% higher alcoholism mortality rate, a 177% rate of diabetes (and the highest Type 2 rates in the country), and 500% higher rates of tuberculosis.
- 16% of students at BIA schools in 2001 had attempted suicide in the preceding 12 months
- The second leading cause of death is suicide, 2.5 the national average indigenous ages 15-24
- In 2003, the national graduation rate was 49.3% for indigenous versus 76.2% for whites, 13.3% indigenous got undergraduate degrees versus 24.4% for the general population
- Drop-out rates for indigenous high school students are more than double the national average, and are over 50% in states with the highest indigenous population
- Indigenous children make up 2% of US children, yet 8.4% of US foster care children
- Violence accounts for 75% deaths in indigenous 12-20 years (malicious injuries, homicide, suicide)

Statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice:

- Indigenous women are 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than women in the U.S. in general
- 1 in 3 indigenous women will be raped in her lifetime versus 1 in 5 of US women in general
- a larger percentage of victimization against indigenous women is committed by white offenders than by indigenous offenders

All of these statistics are relevant to demonstrate how, indigenous youth, women, and whole communities are suffering as a race at unacceptable rates. The U.S. Government is obligated to provide services to these communities and to promote self-determination. However, self-determination requires self-sustainability in four community aspects: environmental, social, cultural, and economical. All four of these components are being inadequately addressed if not completely neglected, as evidenced by these atrocious statistics. Furthermore, the lack of education and the perpetuation of hate speech and silencing of indigenous peoples that revolves around the presence of indigenous mascots in non-indigenous communities directly contributes to these injustices. These symbols encourage the dehumanization of human beings. This dehumanization washes away identity and cultural significance, leading to the cultural appropriation of sacred indigenous symbols and beliefs. The lack of proper education on indigenous histories and current issues contributes to this ignorance. All in all, indigenous peoples are lumped together as a lesser human race and are silenced and continuously marginalized. Youth have lower self-worth and self-respect, and suicide rates remain terribly high. Indigenous women, by the thousands are raped, murdered, missing, and ignored by the populations who are statistically more likely to have committed the crimes in the first place.

So we ask, as indigenous youth who accepted the Gen-I challenge this year, are we expected to accept that we or 2/3 of our friends and family will be raped in our lives? Are we expected to accept the perpetuation of dehumanization against us and all Indigenous Peoples through the continued use of native mascots in our schools and sports? Are we supposed to lose more indigenous friends to suicide, because we are just an expanding statistic? Are we supposed to believe this is what is constitutional to Indigenous Peoples? When will the international community stop ignoring the disparities in between indigenous and non-indigenous communities and the lack of education on indigenous realities in mainstream US?

We are harassed, ridiculed, and live in fear of the consequences when we ask others to stop dehumanizing and mocking us. We fear for our lives and the lives of others, just because we are representing Indigenous Peoples in an overwhelming non-indigenous society.

We ask:

Why does the United States refuse to protect our rights of Indigenous Peoples as defined by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP)?

We recommend:

1. **ALL RACIST MASCOTS eliminated before the close of schools June 1, 2015. Indigenous Peoples will define what is racist. Change how we educate in US on Indigenous Peoples and change how they view the mascot issue. Banish all mascots and public uses of racial slurs such as those by the Washington DC ('R*dskins') football team, Cleveland ('Indians') baseball team, and the hundreds of schools still using these images like the Biloxi Senior High School in Mississippi.**
2. **US comply with all Articles of the UN DRIP and eliminate all derogatory images of Indigenous Peoples and indigenous persons and culture and obtain permission to use indigenous cultural heritage in accordance with Article 11 and other relevant Articles of UN DRIP. Honor all treaties and negotiations without discrimination.**



This is an example of best practices: properly promoting indigenous images in sports. By obtaining Free Prior and Informed Consent with Indigenous Peoples, indigenous agents are empowered to share our culture in a respectful manner.