

Dear Co-Chair <insert name>,

On behalf of the members of the 2020 Legislative Council's Standing Interim Committee on State and Tribal Relations, we are recommending for consideration to the Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Racial Disparities the creation of a state grant program to assist those school districts that choose to retire the use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities with the associated costs of doing so, with up to a \$50,000 grant per district.

The Speaker's Task Force on Racial Disparities was created "to focus on ways to address racial disparities, educational opportunities, public safety, and law enforcement policies and standards."

Established research shows the negative educational outcomes associated with the use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities - regardless of intent. According to the [American Psychological Association](#), its continued use "establishes an unwelcome and often times hostile learning environment that affirms negative images and stereotypes that are promoted in mainstream society." Further, it "is a form of discrimination against Indigenous Nations that can lead to negative relations between groups."

We are at a critical time in our history as a state and a nation. Governments, businesses, faith-based organizations and citizens recognize and are calling for an end to policies and practices that promote and establish racial discrimination and disparity, which divides our country and our people.

As an example, earlier this year, the National Football League team for Washington announced after 87-years the retirement of the term 'Redskins' from their official name. Further in 2018 after 71-years the Major League Baseball team for the City of Cleveland retired the 'Chief Wahoo' mascot that so many found racially and culturally offensive.

Ending racial and cultural discrimination is vital toward healing the divisions that exist in our state and our country. While Wisconsin over the past two decades has seen several school districts discontinue the use of Native American mascots and logos, there are approximately 26 that continue the practice today. Some of these districts have cited cost as a barrier to implementing change. Therefore, at this time of working toward ending racial division we are asking the Wisconsin State Legislature through its appropriate committees and task force to consider this request as a legislative bill or budget provision.

Sincerely,