

Committees

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Jessica E. Miranda

Democratic Whip

Chairwoman Manning, Vice-Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee thank you for having sponsor testimony on House Concurrent Resolution 25.

HCR 25 is a non-binding resolution that calls on schools and athletic teams in Ohio to collaborate with the State Board of Education, local school boards, and other interested parties about retiring the use of Native American mascots. It attempts to advance the conversations on this issue and urges Ohio schools to take a reasonable and common-sense step towards making their communities more inclusive.

Most of these schools with Native American mascots have never thought of the imagery and its use as disrespectful. And it certainly doesn't make a graduate, a student, a parent, or a supporter of that school disrespectful or racist, but now we know more about the impact these mascots have on all students from all backgrounds. Instead, this is more about education. We need to teach the Native American story. It is about our nation's history, and while we may not be proud of that the entire narrative, there are things we can do to teach understanding, acceptance, and inclusiveness.

As a former school board president, I have seen this done in my district, and I know that other schools can do away with offensive mascots. Districts should have fun with this process by finding a mascot that matches its history – celebrates its culture and community. We have seen that with the Guardians and the Land O Lakes Butter Company and, like them, we know it is time for a change.

We cannot accept the continuing dehumanizing of people. Some of these logos are far more egregious and offensive than "Chief Wahoo." It is not believable to say you are honoring a person by demeaning and belittling them. This resolution is the first step in creating a just and welcoming Ohio for all.

I want to thank my joint sponsor, Rep. Adam Miller, for introducing this legislation. And thank the Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition (GCNAC) for bringing this legislative need to our attention and for all the work that they do.

Again, Chairwoman Manning, Vice-Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to give sponsor testimony on House Concurrent Bill 25.



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