

November 13, 2013

The Honorable Scott Walker  
115 East State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Walker:

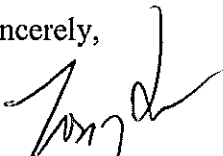
I am writing to request your veto of 2013 Assembly Bill 297 (AB 297) related to the use of race based mascots and logos. I am deeply concerned about the long-term effects of this bill on our ability to provide a quality education for every child.

There is a growing body of research documenting the negative educational outcomes associated with the use of American Indian mascots, logos and nicknames, regardless of intent. Based on research showing a clear link between the use of mascots, logos, and nicknames and psychological harm, the American Psychological Association (APA) adopted a resolution in 2005 calling upon schools to end the use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities for their athletic teams. In 2007, the American Sociological Association (ASA) cited this same research in calling for the discontinuation and elimination of the use of Native American nicknames, logos, and mascots. AB 297 is taking us in the wrong direction.

Moreover, by requiring the signatures of 10 percent of a school district's membership in order to file a complaint, AB 297 enshrines in statute an unacceptable level of discrimination. This provision removes an individual's recourse through the state complaint process by requiring others in the community to validate his or her own personal experiences. In what other situation is the victim of harassment, stereotyping, bullying, or discrimination required to gather signatures in order for a hearing to be held or the matter even considered?

Attention to and respect for diversity, including differences in race and culture, is critical if we are to provide a learning environment where every child can succeed to their fullest potential. AB 297 will hurt these efforts. Please veto this bill.

Sincerely,



Tony Evers, PhD  
State Superintendent

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