



JEFF KRUSE
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 1

COMMITTEES:

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Human Services
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Members of the Board of Education,

As the sponsor of two bills dealing with the mascot issue, both of which passed in the Legislative Assembly, I wanted to give you a bit of why we are here. Many of us felt the State Board had overstepped its bounds when they instituted the outright ban. The first bill basically reversed the decision, but was unfortunately vetoed by the Governor. The second bill, which the Governor signed, was an attempt to simply modify the existing rule. The product of the subsequent workgroup is what is now in front of you.

Clearly I have "a dog in this fight", because I am a Roseburg Indian and rather proud of that fact. Additionally in my 18 years in the Legislature I have been involved in the development of the government to government relationship between Oregon's tribes and not only state government, but local governments as well. I think it is safe to say that what we have developed is a model for the rest of the country. I would not want to do anything to undermine all of the great things we have accomplished.

However, I think the outright ban would in many cases take many of these relationships backwards. In the case of Roseburg, there have been many conversations between the school and the Tribe over the years and an agreement has been reached where both sides are satisfied with the use of the name and symbols involved. Clearly not all districts have had that level of discussion with their tribes, and I think it is appropriate for those discussions to happen. This is the type of activity I believe the modification of the rules will allow. I think the relationship between the tribes and all levels of government are best severed if the agreements are reached at the local level and not dictated from above. To achieve this objective I believe the role of the State Board should be to insure that all issues have been addressed by the local participants. This should include the use of names and images, as well as a defined dispute resolution process.

Despite what some may tell you, most people's view of their school is one of pride. I truly believe to go in the opposite direction will actually harm relationships at the local level. When we combine the requirement of going through this process with an increased emphasis on the teaching of tribal history, I think the end result will be positive.

I am asking the State Board to assign themselves an oversight role in this process. We are all best served if the actual decisions are made at the local level in a conscientious process. Thank you for taking the time to hear my views.

Sincerely,

Senator Jeff Kruse