



November 15, 2016

The Office of the Commissioner of Baseball  
Robert D. Manfred Jr., Commissioner  
245 Park Avenue, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10167

Dear Commissioner Manfred

I am writing to you as the President of the American Sociological Association (ASA) on behalf of our organization. We are a nonprofit association founded in 1905 - with over 13,000 members - that is dedicated to advancing sociology as a scientific discipline and profession to serve the public good. In the interest of serving the public good, we reach out to you now in light of your upcoming meeting with the owner of the Cleveland baseball club.

Sociologists and scholars from allied social and behavioral science fields (e.g., anthropology and psychology) have conducted research on the topic of Native American sport nicknames and logos. The findings from these studies are clear: these nicknames and logos involve stereotyping that harms Native Americans. This letter is accompanied by a copy of the resolution ASA passed in 2007 in regard to these nicknames and logos. It is our hope that you consider our resolution and others like it from both academic organizations (e.g., American Psychological Association, American Anthropological Association, National Indian Education Association) and civil rights organizations (i.e., National Congress of American Indians, United States Commission on Civil Rights, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and eliminate Native American nicknames and logos in Major League Baseball (i.e., the nicknames and logos of the Cleveland and Atlanta MLB teams).

Academic research clearly demonstrates the following about Native American sport nicknames/logos:

- These nicknames and logos reflect and reinforce societal stereotypes about Native Americans.
- These nicknames and logos undermine education about - and accurate understandings of - the lives of Native Americans.
- These nicknames and logos harm Native Americans by: depressing their self-esteem, depressing their sense of future possibilities for achievement, and diminishing positive views of their Native societies/tribes.
- These nicknames and logos convey disrespect for Native American spiritual and cultural practices.
- These nicknames and logos create a hostile environment for Native Americans.

The above mentioned findings must be considered in light of statistics that demonstrate that Native Americans experience significantly higher rates of suffering than most other racial groups. For example, Native Americans have

1430 K Street NW  
Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 383-9005  
Fax: (202) 638-0882  
TDD: (202) 638-0981

[executive.office@asanet.org](mailto:executive.office@asanet.org)  
[www.asanet.org](http://www.asanet.org)

especially high rates of poverty and many physical and psychological health problems, including suicide. Stereotypical representations of Native Americans, and an absence of realistic contemporary representations of Native Americans, are not the only cause of the suffering mentioned above, but they do play a role. Retaining stereotypical sport nicknames/logos because they represent tradition, or because there is no intent to harm (or that there is an intent to "honor") Native Americans, is unacceptable given the harm to which these representations contribute.

For these reasons, we urge you to use your power to rid Major League Baseball of all Native American team nicknames, logos, and other such symbols. To do so would contribute to the larger project of generating greater equality and social justice for all.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Lamont', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michelle Lamont, Ph.D.  
President of the American Sociological Association