# Massapequa High's Native American mascot standoff escalates with Trump backing



The Massapequa High School in Massapequa, New York, has been at the centre of a contentious debate over its use of a Native American-themed mascot, known as the "Chiefs." This emblem, featuring a stereotypical Native American figure adorned with a headdress, has been a longstanding symbol for the school and the local community.

In April 2025, the New York State Board of Regents unanimously voted to ban the use of Native American mascots, team names, and logos in public schools. The directive required districts to commit to retiring such imagery by June 30, 2025, or face potential loss of state funding. The Board of Regents cited research indicating that the continued use of Native American-related symbols and imagery has a negative effect on all students. ([longisland.news12.com](https://longisland.news12.com/board-of-regents-votes-to-ban-native-american-names-mascots-logos-in-schools?utm_source=openai))

Massapequa High School, along with three other Long Island school districts, filed a federal lawsuit challenging the ban, arguing that the state mandate infringed upon their First Amendment rights. However, in March 2025, a federal judge dismissed the case, upholding the state's authority to enforce the ban. ([newsday.com](https://www.newsday.com/sports/high-school/massapequa-native-american-mascot-ban-qk2xcnwd?utm_source=openai))

Despite the legal setback, the Massapequa community has remained steadfast in its support for the mascot. In April 2025, former President Donald Trump expressed his support for the community's stance. He criticized the state mandate as discriminatory and directed the U.S. Department of Education to investigate whether New York officials were threatening to withhold funding from Massapequa in violation of federal law. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/fc750c700733949805afd8266c69a975?utm_source=openai))

The controversy has sparked a broader national debate over the use of Native American imagery in sports and public institutions. Critics argue that such mascots perpetuate harmful stereotypes and distort Indigenous history, while proponents contend that they honour Native American heritage and culture.

As the deadline approaches, the Massapequa School District faces a complex decision: comply with the state mandate and change the mascot, or continue to defy it, potentially risking state funding and further legal challenges. The outcome of this dispute may have significant implications for other schools and communities grappling with similar issues.

## Massapequa High School's Mascot Controversy Gains National Attention:

* [A town refuses to give up the school's Native American mascot - and gets Trump's support](https://apnews.com/article/fc750c700733949805afd8266c69a975?utm_source=openai)
* [Trump administration to investigate New York's funding threat over Long Island tribal school mascot](https://apnews.com/article/4ff07aa0cb5f9c44be6f5cb7c5b10bf9?utm_source=openai)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://apnews.com/article/fc750c700733949805afd8266c69a975> - This article discusses the controversy surrounding Massapequa High School's Native American-themed mascot, the 'Chiefs,' and the community's resistance to changing it, including support from former President Donald Trump.
2. <https://apnews.com/article/4ff07aa0cb5f9c44be6f5cb7c5b10bf9> - This piece details the U.S. Department of Education's investigation into whether New York state officials were discriminatory in threatening to withhold funding from the Massapequa school district over its continued use of the 'Chiefs' mascot.
3. <https://longisland.news12.com/board-of-regents-votes-to-ban-native-american-names-mascots-logos-in-schools?utm_source=openai> - This report covers the New York State Board of Regents' unanimous vote to ban Native American mascots, team names, and logos in public schools, with a compliance deadline of June 2025.
4. <https://www.newsday.com/sports/high-school/massapequa-native-american-mascot-ban-qk2xcnwd?utm_source=openai> - This article details the Massapequa school district's lawsuit against the New York State Board of Regents, claiming the ban on Native American mascots violates constitutional rights.
5. <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/massapequa-high-school-chiefs-mural-painted-despite-ban-on-native-american-mascots/> - This report highlights Massapequa High School students painting a mural of their 'Chiefs' mascot in apparent defiance of the state mandate to retire Native American mascots.
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massapequa_High_School> - This Wikipedia page provides background information on Massapequa High School, including details about its 'Chief' mascot and the community's connection to the Massapequa Tribe.
7. <https://www.ocregister.com/2025/04/30/native-american-mascot-fight/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data