



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 17, 2019

## High-school Cheerleaders Disciplined for Posing With Trump MAGA Banner

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A group of cheerleaders at a North Carolina high school found themselves in hot water after a [photo](#) of them posing in front of a giant Trump “Make America Great Again” banner was posted to social media.



The cheerleaders at North Stanly High School were placed on probation by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA),” reported the *Charlotte Observer*, adding that the governing body had not defined the terms of the probation “and the team is expected to continue cheering, the school district said in a release.”

The best the NCHSAA could muster by way of an explanation for its action against the cheerleaders was that “the focus of Friday night football games should be on our students — the players, cheerleaders, band members — the focus should not be on politics.”

In a prepared statement NCHSAA Commissioner Que Tucker insisted that the probation, which can last as long as a year, is not punishment. “It serves as a notice of behavior or action that is against NCHSAA Handbook Policy or contrary to expectations of sportsmanship and proper behavior,” Tucker explained, adding, however, that further infractions could lead to fines or suspensions for the school or individuals.

*The Observer* reported that in a photo posted to Facebook August 30, “[at least seven North Stanly cheerleaders in uniform are seen posing around a banner](#) reading ‘Trump 2020: Make America Great Again.’ The students appear to be on a high school football field with referees in the background.”

According to the *Stanly News & Press*, “Friday night’s game ... was promoted as having a theme of ‘American Night.’ Students were encouraged on social media to ‘wear your patriotic red, white and blue to support the Comets!’”

While the paper claimed the photo made some individuals “uncomfortable,” Todd Starnes, a conservative Fox News commentator, said that parents of the cheerleaders had told him that “the photo was completely innocent and the picture was snapped in just a matter of seconds.”

The mother of one of the cheerleaders said: “These kids really had no ill intention. They really just wanted to snap a picture. They’re labeling these cheerleaders these terrible, derogatory names. They’re calling them racists, they’re calling them bigots, they’re calling them these things that they are not.”

Nonetheless, the *Stanly News & Press* reported that “due to the fact the incident caused concern for many and helped create a negative athletic environment, according to [NCHSAA Commissioner] Tucker, the NCHSAA decided to reprimand the cheerleaders by putting them on probation.”



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In an effort to distance itself from the actions of the cheerleaders, the Stanly County Board of Education said in a statement that district policy prohibits political advertisements on campus or at school events. "This policy does not prohibit students from speaking their minds or engaging in protected First Amendment activities," insisted district officials in a statement. However, "because the cheerleaders were in uniform and were acting as representatives of the school, the display of the sign could be perceived as the school or school system endorsing a political campaign."

At least one local individual expressed his anger at the school district for allowing the students to pose with the banner. "Why in the world would the school board allow this to happen," the individual wrote on social media. "I am sad and very disappointed with NS. This is a High School football game, not a political rally. Shame on them."

By contrast, another local citizen wrote that she was "shocked" by the disciplinary action against the students. "I never post my opinion about politics on Facebook because everyone has an opinion and everyone is entitled to your opinion," wrote the local resident. "However, this is totally absurd! ... I don't care if you are a Republican or a Democrat, you should have the right to openly support the president of the USA!"

And the group NC Conservatives posted: "Cheerleaders at North Stanly high school Stanly County NC were put on probation for the rest of the football season for holding a TRUMP 2020 banner! People said it made them feel 'uncomfortable' but this High School Athletics Association is the same nonprofit that just voted to allow boys access to girls athletic teams. They have an agenda and it's bad for our students."

[President Trump himself also weighed in](#), tweeting to the cheerleaders: "Thank you for your support in the great state of NC! Let's keep AMERICA GREAT at #NorthStanlyComets / #MAGA2020."

Image: [Screenshot of Facebook page](#)



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