



Written by [David Kelly](#) on February 2, 2024

New DOI Rules Erasing Native Americans From Society

New rules by the Department of the Interior (DOI) meant to strengthen nation-to-nation relationships, ensure that progress in “Indian Country” endures for years to come, and protect Native American culture are having the opposite effect, with museums across the country shuttering Native American exhibits.

The DOI issued [new rules](#) in December to bolster the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act ([NAGPRA](#)), which became law in 1990 to provide for the protection and return of Native American human remains, including funerary objects, sacred objects, and more. The rules require museums and federal agencies to seek informed consent from lineal descendants and/or tribes before allowing any exhibition, and to identify and send back stolen sacred items to their respective tribes.



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“The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act is an essential tool for the safe return of sacred objects to the communities from which they were stolen. Among the updates we are implementing are critical steps to strengthen the authority and role of Indigenous communities in the repatriation process,” said Interior Secretary Deb Haaland in a [press release](#). “Finalizing these changes is an important part of laying the groundwork for the healing of our people.”

In response to the new rules, the American Museum of Natural History in New York [reportedly](#) closed two halls dedicated to Native Americans this week, and “the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Field Museum in Chicago have both covered up several displays while they figure out if they are complying with the regulations.”

According to [The Washington Post](#), the president of New York’s American Museum of Natural History, Sean Decatur, announced in an email last week:

While the actions we are taking this week may seem sudden, they reflect a growing urgency among all museums to change their relationships to, and representation of, Indigenous cultures. The Halls we are closing are vestiges of an era when museums such as ours did not respect the values, perspectives, and indeed shared humanity of Indigenous peoples. Actions that may feel sudden to some may seem long overdue to others.

The new DOI rules, however, as the *Washington Examiner* [shared](#), are “both inconsistent and tedious. They do not apply to the Smithsonian, which is also lagging behind in its compliance with the law. It helped employ even more bureaucrats at Harvard University, which has doubled the size of its staff



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dedicated to complying with the law. But most notably of all, these rules that are supposed to benefit Native Americans are actually completely erasing them from museums, where people go to learn about history and would presumably be able to understand those cultures and what happened to those tribes better.”

While museums struggle to adhere to the whims of government bureaucrats bent on enforcing their new woke rules, battle lines are forming across the country as Native American groups seek to reclaim their heritage from acts of cancel culture. The renaming of sports teams such as the Washington Redskins and Cleveland Indians, as well as the removal of Native American images, nicknames, and tributes nationwide, has sparked the ire of activists who are in rebellion against wokeness.

One pro-Native American activist, Lisa Davis in Cedar City, Utah, told [Fox News Digital](#), “We’re actually fighting an anti-American movement. The people trying to erase Native American culture are the same people trying to remove Thomas Jefferson and bashing American heritage.”

Davis and a number of other Cedar City residents, according to Fox, “formed the grassroots organization [VOICE](#) (Voices of Iron County Education) after the school board voted to eliminate the high school’s traditional Redmen name and logo in 2019.”

Fox further shared:

“It was an honor to be called the Redmen,” Julia Casuse, a “full-blooded Navajo” and graduate of Cedar City High School, told Fox News Digital.

The silversmith said she tells visitors at the family’s shop, Navajo Crafting Co., “I’m a Redmen through and through.”

The school’s nickname is now the Reds.

In addition to imposing the new rules to supposedly protect Native American culture, the DOI has been on the wokeness warpath for two years seeking to whitewash away long-standing names, according to a 2022 [press release](#), of “more than 660 geographic features with the name ‘squaw,’ which was officially declared a derogatory term as a result of [Secretary’s Order 3404](#).

“Words matter, particularly in our work to make our nation’s public lands and waters accessible and welcoming to people of all backgrounds. Consideration of these replacements is a big step forward in our efforts to remove derogatory terms whose expiration dates are long overdue,” [said](#) Secretary Haaland. “Throughout this process, broad engagement with Tribes, stakeholders and the general public will help us advance our goals of equity and inclusion.”

It now appears as though the truth of the federal government’s woke policies in the name of “inclusion” have been exposed. As the *Examiner* [stated](#) regarding the rules affecting museums:

This obsession with racism, racial categorization, and racial grievances is counterproductive in many ways, dividing people by race and pitting them against one another based on what people did hundreds of years ago. In this case, this obsession is isolating Native Americans and erasing them from our shared society and history while claiming that this is how to respect or honor them. You couldn’t come up with a more backward “logic” than this.

Regarding the Cedar City High School name change, [Davis lamented](#), “We went from honoring



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centuries of American and Native American history to honoring communism.”



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