



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on October 16, 2018

Warren's Attempt to Use Identity Politics Backfires

Senator Elizabeth Warren's continued insistence that she is part Cherokee Indian does not appear to be helping her greater political ambitions. The Massachusetts liberal is believed to be considering a bid for the Democratic Party nomination in 2020, to challenge the reelection of President Donald Trump, but her attempted use of Native American ethnicity to advance that challenge is getting pushback.



First, of course, is from President Trump himself, who ridiculed the alleged effort by Warren to advance her academic career by claiming American Indian heritage by nicknaming her "Pocahontas." Ironically, one of the most principled constitutionalists ever to serve in Congress, John Randolph of Roanoke, was a descendant of John Rolfe (one of the original inhabitants of English America) and the Powhatan princess Pocahontas, but in the early 1800s, political opponents attempted to use his Indian blood against him.

Trump said Monday morning that he would be glad to see Warren as his opponent, as he predicted she would be "very easy" to beat. "I do not think she'll be difficult [to beat] at all," Trump added.

And not because of the controversy over whether she is of any indigenous blood. Trump argued that it was mostly her leftist political viewpoint that Americans would reject: "She'll destroy the country. She'll make the country into Venezuela."

"I never expected my family's story to be used as a racist political joke, but I don't take any fight lying down," Warren said, responding to Trump's continued mockery of her embarrassing efforts to claim Cherokee heritage. Of course it was Warren who interjected her "Native American" blood claims into the process, even producing a campaign video, "Elizabeth Warren's Native American Heritage."

It is not surprising that the president ridiculed her continued attempts to argue for Indian ancestry, despite not being able to cite one ancestor who is Native American, beyond family "stories." Warren has even offered such vague proof that one of her ancestors was known to have high cheek bones.

The Trump jabs must have been scoring on Warren, because a few days ago, she released the purported results of a DNA test, which she claimed proved that she had at least some Indian blood. According to her ancestry report, prepared by a professor from Stanford, "the great majority of [Warren's] indentifiable ancestry is European." But, no doubt to Warren's delight, the report added, "The analysis also identified 5 genetic segments as Native American in origin at high confidence."

This means that Warren probably has some American Indian ancestry between six and 10 generations back, making her as little as 1/1,024 Native American. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* on Monday, James Freeman noted that, while Warren claimed "vindication" after publishing the results of her genetic test, she perhaps has "less of a claim than the average white person in the United States."

In Oklahoma, where Warren graduated from Oklahoma City's Northwest Classen High School, the Cherokee Nation also poured cold water on Warren's DNA test. "A DNA test is useless to determine



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tribal citizenship. Current DNA tests do not even distinguish whether a person's ancestors were indigenous to North or South America," explained Cherokee Nations Secretary of State Chuck Hoskin, Jr. in a statement released Monday.

Hoskin added, "Sovereign tribal nations set their own legal requirements for citizenship, and while DNA tests can be used to determine lineage, such as paternity to an individual, it is not evidence for tribal affiliation. Using a DNA test to lay claim to any connection to the Cherokee Nation or any tribal nation, even vaguely, is inappropriate and wrong. It makes a mockery out of DNA tests and its legitimate uses while also dishonoring legitimate tribal governments and their citizens, whose ancestors are well documented and whose heritage is proved. Senator Warren is undermining tribal interests with her continued claims of tribal heritage."

The sharp rebuke from the Cherokee Nation, headquartered in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, is particularly damaging to Warren's continued effort to use Indian ethnicity politically, since Bill John Baker, the chief of the Cherokee Nation, is an ardent Democrat.

Another ardent Democrat who found Warren's latest feeble effort to attach herself to an Indian tribe counterproductive is Jim Messina, who was President Barack Obama's campaign manager during the 2012 reelection campaign. Messina lamented that Warren's persistence — and timing — on this issue is damaging to Democratic Party hopes for the mid-term.

"Argue the substance all you want," Messina tweeted, "but why 22 days before a crucial election where we MUST win House and Senate to save America, why did @SenWarren have to do her announcement now? Why can't Dems ever stay focused?"

In many ways, Warren's focus on whether she can somehow claim some blood other than white demonstrates one of the problems with the Democratic Party today. Far too many care more about "LGBT rights," identity politics, and what color someone is than they do about substantive issues.

As Freeman said in the *Wall Street Journal*, "If the Massachusetts senator is now a person of color then the term has no meaning."

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