



America Reckons With Racial Injustice

A New Nevada Law Bans Racial Mascots In Schools And 'Sundown Sirens'

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Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak has legislation requiring schools to change any name, logo, mascot, song or identifier that is racially discriminatory.

Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak met with members of the Nevada Indian Commission in Carson City on Friday as he signed legislation removing racially discriminatory identifiers or language from schools. Additionally, counties can no longer sound "sundown sirens," which once signified it was time for certain people to leave town.

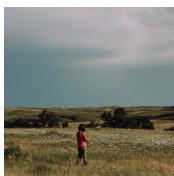
The law will require schools to change any name, logo, mascot, song or identifier that is "racially discriminatory" or "associated with the Confederate States of America or a federally recognized Indian tribe."

Under Assembly Bill 88, exceptions can be made only with tribal approval. The legislation applies to public schools and charters, universities and community colleges.



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THE PICTURE SHOW

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Friday's signing took place at the Stewart Indian School, which served as a federally run Native American educational institute for 90 years. Children were forced to attend, plucked from their families and homes to assimilate them into American culture, the National Park Service said.

The American West was not kind to its original people. But another portion of AB 88 aims to amend part of Nevada's troublesome past. Not that long ago, some Western communities had policies in place that required people of color to leave town by nightfall, member station KUNR previously reported. They became known as "sundown towns."

An evening siren was once seen as a signal for Native Americans to leave town

Just south of Carson City is the 3,000-person town of Minden. Every night at 6 p.m. sharp, a siren sounds across the valley. And while town officials say the sirens sound for maintenance reasons, some residents say the siren can be attributed to a racially charged past.



NATIONAL

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In the early 1900s, Minden — and the rest of Douglas County — required Native Americans to leave town by 6:30 p.m. Some residents say the siren sounded at 6 p.m., as it does today, as a warning for not-so-welcome visitors, alerting them to leave within the next 30 minutes.

However, as of Friday, Nevada now prohibits counties, cities and unincorporated towns from sounding a siren, bell or alarm "at a time during which the siren, bell or alarm was previously sounded on specific days or times in association with an

ordinance enacted by the city which required persons of a particular race, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin or color to leave the city by a specific time," the law reads.

WORLD

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The new law goes one step further, which could result in the renaming of any racially discriminatory destinations in Nevada. The state will receive and evaluate "all proposals for changes in or addition to names of geographic features and places in the state." A list of advisers with Nevada knowledge and expertise would assist with making official recommendations on each proposal.

The renaming of mascots and places, as well as the outlawing of certain sirens, is a point of contention in Nevada. AB 88 passed the state Assembly 36-6. But it barely cleared the Senate, with 12 members in favor, eight opposed and one excused.

native americans nevada

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