



# A PROGRESSIVE'S GUIDE TO POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

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How indignant can progressives make themselves? There's a real competition going on. And it's sweeping the nation: progressive vs. progressive competing to see who can most flamboyantly claim to be offended; to proclaim that their feelings have been hurt; or that their sensitivities have been rubbed raw; or their serenity disturbed; or their composure discombobulated, by something that someone has said. Or by something they have seen. Such as a Confederate flag or a building named after Woodrow Wilson.

But, actually, I think progressives are not sufficiently imaginative. There are many more things they could be indignant about. Starting with where I live—Washington, D.C.

The Washington Post newspaper is – if it will pardon the expression – on the warpath against the name of the Washington Redskins football team. The paper says the name is racist, insulting, demeaning, insensitive, and so on. But the Washington Post takes its name from its city...which is named for George Washington, who was not only a slave owner; he was a tobacco farmer, which some progressives probably think is almost as awful.

Surely the Post should change its name—and should demand that the nation's capital be renamed. Perhaps as Eleanor Roosevelt City. Obviously it cannot be named for her husband – he who ordered the internment in concentration camps of 117,000 persons of Japanese descent, two-thirds of whom were native-born American citizens.

And there are hundreds of other towns, counties, parks, and schools named for Washington. Such as Washington and Lee University. Good grief: The name is double hate speech: Robert E. Lee actually commanded the Confederate Army.

Washington is not the only name progressives should scrutinize. The word “Oklahoma” is a compound of two words from the Choctaw language—words meaning “red” and “people.” If it is intolerable to have a football team named “Redskins,” it must be worse to have a state named “Red People.” But let's get back to cleansing America of all mentions of historic figures who were less than perfect progressives.

On the Tidal Basin in Washington there is a memorial for the slave-owning Thomas Jefferson. This memorial should have a “trigger warning” carved into its marble.

Jacksonville, Florida, and Jackson, Mississippi, and many other places and things, are named for Andrew Jackson, the tormentor of Native Americans. All must be renamed for someone who was saintly, as progressives understand saintliness.

And speaking of saints:

Surely good progressives are traumatized by the names of St. Louis, St. Petersburg, San Diego, San Antonio—not to mention Corpus Christi.

Progressives like it when courts rule that non-denominational prayers at high school graduations violate the separation of church and state. Why, then, don't they consider it a constitutional outrage that there are cities named for religious figures? Including Nancy Pelosi's San Francisco. That city is—if progressives will pardon the expression—the Vatican of American progressivism.

Progressives should demand that all such cities be renamed for progressive saints. Tony Bennett could sing, "I left my heart in Nancy Pelosi City." Or we could give these places names that give no offense because they have no meaning.

Joseph Knippenberg is an American rarity—a sensible professor. His droll suggestion is that we spare progressives from discomfort by giving cities and buildings the kind of meaningless names that are given to car models—names such as Acura and Elantra and Sentra.

And what about the state flag of hyper-progressive Massachusetts? Its flag depicts a Native American holding—brace yourself—a bow and arrow. A weapon. Surely progressivism's sensitivity police cannot permit this depiction. It reinforces the hurtful stereotype of Native Americans as less than perfectly peaceful people.

Minnesota, too, should hang its head in shame. Its state seal depicts a pioneer tilling a field, and a Native American riding away -- and carrying a spear. Any progressive can see that this seal conveys multiple racial slurs. The spear—another weapon, another stereotype of Native Americans as violent. The Native American, riding away, is stigmatized as nomadic, hence unproductive. Whereas the farmer, who is white, is industrious. So, the seal communicates subliminal slander—the coded message of white superiority. Who knew that Minnesotans, who have voted Democratic in ten consecutive elections since 1972, embrace white supremacy?

I could go on, but you get the picture. Still, you should feel sorry for the progressive sensitivity enforcers. Those who constantly find reason to take offense are rarely happy people.

The problem, however, is that such people make almost everyone else miserable, too.

I'm George Will for Prager University.