

From: [Fifth Ward](#)
To: [Molly Kapeluck](#)
Subject: Resolution to address racism in high school sports
Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 6:06:41 PM
Attachments: [RES - Racism opposition athletic events-1.pdf](#)

Dear Honorable Members of Council,

My name is Edwin Martell and I am a councilman for the City of Portsmouth. I am writing to ask for your council's support for a resolution recently adopted by Portsmouth City Council. Following conversations with school administrators and coaching staff at Portsmouth High School, we felt it was necessary to pass a resolution that asks the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) to develop specific policies to properly address racist language and behavior in high school sport. We found that the current bylaws of the OHSAA currently do not have specific rules and or disciplinary guidelines pertaining to racism during athletic events. We believe new policies should be developed to identify and respond to racist incidents in high school sport. Our city has volunteered to host a conference for all interested participants to help develop these new policies.

Many years ago, former Portsmouth resident Branch Rickey demonstrated how sport could provide an opportunity to advance racial equality when he helped to desegregate Major League Baseball by signing Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers. We believe that sport continues to provide this opportunity, and it is vital for school systems across our state to promote sport cultures that do not encourage racist behavior. Rather than allowing racist incidents to take place in athletic events between schools, high school sport could provide students with opportunities to meet new people and learn about new places around our state. We strongly believe new OHSAA policies will help move sport culture in that direction.

Please find our resolution attached to this email. We are seeking the support of city councils and school boards around our state to clearly demonstrate how important this issue is for all Ohio students. If you have any questions about the resolution, please feel free to call me at 740-821-8914 or email me at Fifth-wardcouncilperson@portsmouthoh.org

Yours Sincerely,

Councilman Edwin Martell
728 Second St.
Portsmouth, OH 45662