

# Mass. Senate candidate fights city order to remove anti-Warren 'fake Indian' signs

Shiva Ayyadurai accuses city of political bias, free-speech violations



*Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., winks as she jokes with other senators on the Senate Banking Committee ahead of a hearing on the nomination of Marvin Goodfriend to be a member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, Tuesday, Jan. 23, ... more >*

---

By Valerie Richardson - *The Washington Times* - Monday, April 23, 2018

A Massachusetts Senate candidate is fighting an effort by city officials in Cambridge, home of Sen. Elizabeth Warren, to take down prominent anti-Warren campaign signs calling the Democrat a "fake Indian."

Shiva Ayyadurai, an independent challenging Ms. Warren's 2018 re-election bid, filed a federal lawsuit Sunday accusing the city of free-speech violations after he was told to remove two identical signs showing the Democrat in an Indian headdress with the

slogan "Only a real Indian can defeat the fake Indian."

"This is a political vendetta by City officials who are supporters of Elizabeth Warren," said Mr. Ayyadurai, who was born in Bombay, India.

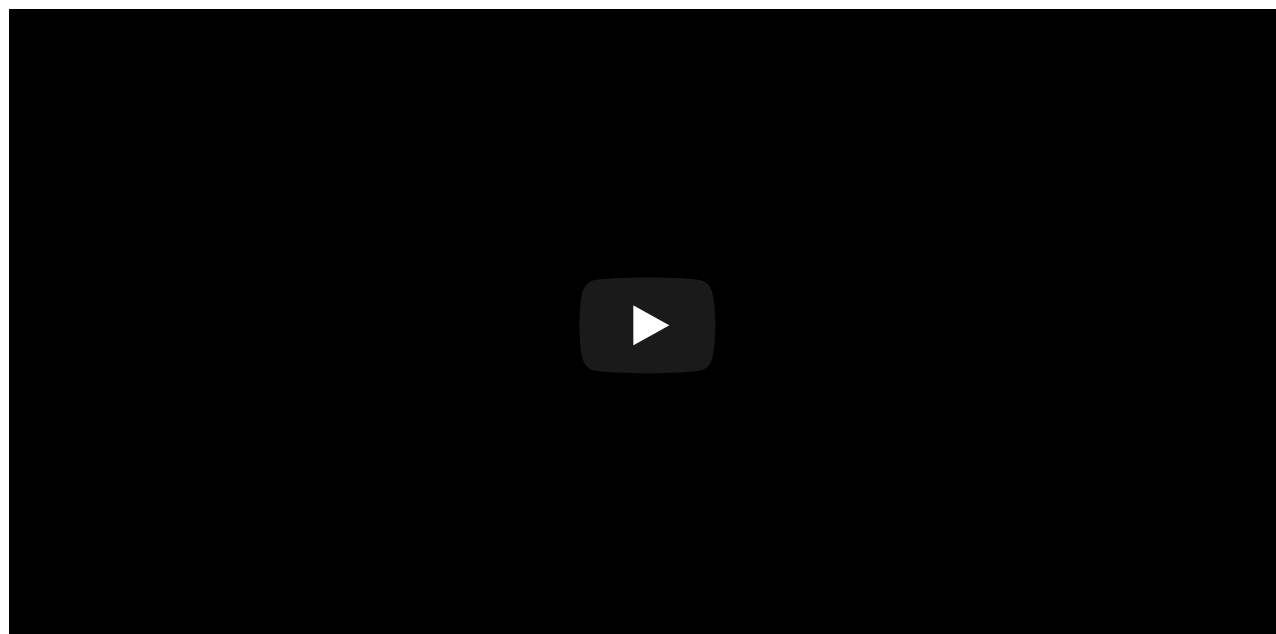
Cambridge communications director Lee Gianetti said officials had not yet been served with the lawsuit, adding that "it is not the City's practice to comment on ongoing litigation."

In an April 5 letter, Cambridge building inspector Branden Vigneault said his department had received "a series of anonymous complaints" about the large signs, which are posted on either side of a school bus parked in front of an office building owned by Mr. Ayyadurai.

Mr. Vigneault said an inspection had determined that the signs, each of which takes up almost the entire side of the bus, were posted "without approvals and permits," and violated the city zoning ordinance.

"These signs must be removed immediately," Mr. Vigneault said in a letter released by the Ayyadurai campaign. "Failure to do so, may result in fines up to \$300.00 dollars per day and legal action."

Cambridge officials did not respond immediately Monday to a request for comment, but Mr. Ayyadurai argued that the signs are not subject to the city's building code because they are posted on a bus in his parking lot, not a building.



"We will not remove the slogan from our bus," Mr. Ayyadurai said. "We will defend the First Amendment, and we will fight this egregious attack on the First Amendment, at any cost."

He said this is the first time the city has complained about the bus signage even though he has displayed messages previously in the same manner for more than a year.

In March 2017, he posted a banner on the side of the bus with the message "Shiva 4 Senate/Be the Light," which he later replaced with "Shiva U.S. Senate/Fight for America."

The "fake Indian" sign has been on display in the parking lot since March 17, Mr. Ayyadurai said, adding that Ms. Warren lives about a mile away.

"They didn't say anything when we had the first sign," he said. "It was only when we put, 'Only a real Indian can defeat the fake Indian,' so it's clearly trying to censor speech."

Before she was elected to the Senate in 2012, Ms. Warren claimed Cherokee ancestry as a professor at Harvard Law School, citing family lore, even though she is not an enrolled member of any tribe.

Ms. Warren has insisted that she never benefited professionally from her claim of Native American heritage, although critics have accused her of gaming the system to advance her career.

Copyright © 2018 The Washington Times, LLC. [Click here for reprint permission.](#)

### **The Washington Times Comment Policy**

The Washington Times is switching its third-party commenting system from Disqus to Spot.IM. You will need to either create an account with Spot.im or if you wish to use your Disqus account look under the Conversation for the link "Have a Disqus Account?". Please read our Comment Policy before commenting.

---

## **Popular In the Community**

