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KOAT Newcasters Call Pueblo Deer Dancers' Regalia “Crazy costumes” and “Almost frightening”. *Newscasters covering the annual Balloon Fiesta made inappropriate comments about Pueblo Deer Dancers' regalia*

Albuquerque, NM, October 16, 2017 – Two newscasters for KOAT Channel 7 News made inappropriate comments about Pueblo Deer Dancers' regalia while covering the 2017 Balloon Fiesta, calling the regalia “crazy costumes” and “almost frightening”.

“In a state where nineteen Pueblos call home, these comments are incredibly insensitive and ignorant. Most traditional dances and ceremonies are done in private, so for the public to witness a deer dance is a blessing,” said Rachael Lorenzo (Laguna Pueblo, Mescalero Apache, Xicana), founder of Indigenous Women Rising. “Many Pueblo communities in New Mexico have a traditional deer dance and these are among the sacred dances that Pueblo peoples, including the Pueblo community I come from, participate in during the fall and winter time. KOAT must issue an apology and commit to cultural competency training.”

New Mexico is home to nineteen Pueblos, two Apache tribes, and Navajo Nation- all of which are federally recognized.

Marty Fragua (Jemez Pueblo) says, “Traditional regalia is a very important part of indigenous culture and prayer. To label them as anything less is ignorant and incredibly disrespectful.”

“The ways that Indigenous peoples are talked about in the media has direct impacts on the ways we are treated and talked about in public and politics while influencing the policies that impact our people. Language matters. Again, I demand that KOAT issue an apology and collaborate with Indigenous Women Rising or another Native led and Native centered organization that will work with staff at KOAT on how to appropriately cover our Indigenous communities.”

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Indigenous Women Rising is a growing collective of Indigenous women that centers indigenous women and families in reproductive justice movements, dialogue, policies, and culture shift strategies. Follow Indigenous Women Rising on Facebook ([@IWRising](https://www.facebook.com/IWRising)), Twitter ([@IWRising](https://twitter.com/IWRising)), and Instagram ([@indigenouswomenrising](https://www.instagram.com/indigenouswomenrising)) and visit the website: iwrising.org.