



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### Council members meet with New Mexico State leaders

**SANTA FE, N.M.**—On Friday, Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) led a delegation of 18 council delegates to attend the 2015 American Indian Day events at the New Mexico State Legislature.

Delegates met with several state officials including Sen. Mary Kay Papen (Dist. 38) who serves as the president pro tem, Sec. of the Dept. of Public Safety Greg Fouratt, Chief of New Mexico State Police Pete Kassetas, and Speaker of the House Rep. Don L. Tripp (Dist. 49).

On Friday afternoon, Speaker Bates along with President Ben Shelly met with Gov. Susana Martinez to discuss several issues, primarily the proposed Gaming Compact with the State of New Mexico which is anticipated to be introduced to the state legislature this week.

“We had a positive meeting with the governor and my colleagues and I look forward to advocating for the passage of the Gaming Compact once it is introduced,” stated Speaker Bates.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'í'í) testified before the Senate Public Affairs Committee in support of S.B. 119, sponsored by Sen. Bill B. O' Neill (Dist. 13).

The bill aims to amend the Hate Crimes Act to add a definition for “homelessness,” and also adds the term to the list of actual or perceived characteristics that are the basis for an intention to commit a crime defined by the Act as “motivated by hate.”

Sen. O'Neill introduced the bill following the brutal killings of two homeless Navajo men who were beaten with cinderblocks and poles by a group of teenagers as they slept in a vacant lot in Albuquerque last July.

“For too long our community members who are citizens of the great state of New Mexico have been vulnerable due to their situations – whether it's mental, financial, or lack of opportunities,” stated Delegate Crotty. “We support this bill. We lost two of our citizens in a very tragic and vulgar act last year.”

The delegates also attended a joint session of the state legislature where Sen. John Pinto (Dist. 3) was honored for his 38 years of service to the state of New Mexico. Sen. Pinto, who received a standing ovation from his colleagues, has served as a state senator since 1977.

Prior to Friday's meetings and events, delegates also met with several members of the governor's cabinet to discuss funding for capital outlay and water projects on the Navajo Nation.

The state legislature convened on Jan. 20 and it scheduled to conclude on March 21.

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