



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Delegates urge President Begaye to approve \$3 million for Navajo youth

WINDOW ROCK — Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'í'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'í'í) and Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) are encouraging Navajo youth and the general public to urge President Russell Begaye to sign into law a section of Resolution CJY-34-15, that would designate \$3 million from the Nation's Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance for the 110 chapters for summer youth employment, scholarships, and educational assistance.

The Council approved the resolution on July 23, with 12 supporting and three opposing votes.

During Thursday's discussion, Delegate Crotty strongly urged her colleagues to support the youth by making them a priority over other proposed projects that also sought funding from the UUFB.

"We have to be courageous enough to say that our children are the priority. Every time the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives a report it's the children asking us to listen and to provide opportunities," stated Delegate Crotty.

Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) also advocated for the funding and introduced an amendment to include language in the resolution to allow up to 50 high school students from each of the Nation's 110 chapters to receive up to \$300 each.

Prior to introducing the amendment, Delegate Begay read aloud a letter from a student worker from Oak Springs Chapter. In the handwritten letter, the student explained that she is the child of a single mother and is working at the chapter for the summer to earn money for school.

"The purpose of my letter is to ask the Navajo Nation Council to relook the summer youth employment legislation and this time approve it. More funding gives myself and other summer youth workers a chance to purchase books, school supplies, and clothing for ourselves without having to rely on our parents," wrote the student.

The letter was from one of six students from the Oak Springs Chapter that wrote in support of the legislation. In addition, Ts'ah Bii Kin and Tófikán Chapters also passed resolutions in support.

The legislation, sponsored by Council Delegate Jonathan Hale, initially intended to fund summer youth employment only, however, Council Delegate Benjamin Bennett (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) recommended including "educational assistance" as well to provide flexibility when chapters expend the funds to youth.

Delegate Brown recalled a recent chapter meeting in which a Navajo student requested financial assistance for school and explained the difficulty he had in telling the student that there was no funding available for students.

“I ask my colleagues to support this legislation to help our youth,” stated Delegate Brown.

Once the Council resolution is sent to the Office of the President and Vice President, President Begaye will have 10 calendar days to consider the resolution.

Delegate Crotty and Delegate Brown are urging the youth to write letters to the Office of the President to urge President Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez to sign the \$3 million appropriation into law to support Navajo youth.

“We want our Navajo students and youth to benefit from the action of Council in approving the funds and we strongly urge President Begaye to sign the bill into law,” stated Delegate Brown.

Letters in support of the funding for youth in Council Resolution CJY-34-15 can be mailed to the Office of the President and Vice President, PO Box 7440, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.

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