



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2016

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Council establishes Navajo Nation Naat'áanii Day

WINDOW ROCK – On Thursday, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council approved the establishment of the Navajo Nation Naat'áanii Day, formerly referred to as “Navajo Nation President’s Day,” but was changed through an amendment during a Naabik’iyáti’ Committee meeting on April 13.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Tecnospos, Tóíikan, Red Mesa) said Naat'áanii Day would not be a paid day off for Navajo Nation employees. However, it would be an annual recognition day during the regular workweek on the third Friday in the month of March.

Delegate Filfred said although this is an unpaid observance day, he said it was important to remember all elected Navajo leaders who took an oath to serve Diné citizens and provided a voice for their communities.

“The legislation was intended for President’s Day and to be a paid holiday. It was to acknowledge leaders from Sam Akeah to Russell Begaye, but the Council said ‘no’ and changed it to Naat'áanii Day. However, this will be a day to remember past and present elected officials such as presidents, chairmen, council delegates, judges—anyone who took an oath and swore to serve the Navajo Nation,” said Delegate Filfred.

Delegate Filfred said that Naat'áanii Day would include recognizing chapter, grazing, farming, irrigation, school board, and election officials, as well as supervisors and vice presidents.

According to the Navajo Nation Department of Personnel Management, the Navajo Nation currently has 13 paid holidays—5 Navajo and 7 federal holidays.

Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) said that adding another paid holiday would take away from important services that Navajo people utilize during the workweek.

“The main aspect of this recognition day is we do not want to give ourselves another day off where our Navajo Nation employees will not be available to our Diné citizens. There are already 13 paid holidays that can cost millions of dollars, which should be used towards serving our Navajo people,” said Delegate Brown.

Delegate Brown commended Council colleagues for establishing Naat'áanii Day and said it was also important to honor youth, community, and grassroots leaders that work for Navajo people at the local level who promote growth, culture, language, and development in their communities.

Council members voted 14-6 to approve Legislation No. 0091-16. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority on the legislation.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council