



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

HONORABLE LORENZO C. BATES
SPEAKER, 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

May 4, 2016

STATEMENT FROM SPEAKER LORENZO BATES REGARDING MEDIA COVERAGE OF ASHLYNNE MIKE

The tragic death of 11 year-old Ashlynn Mike and the kidnapping of her younger brother have left our communities and the entire Navajo Nation in grief and disbelief. This senseless and brutal act has led to continuous news stories with many news outlets rushing to break the latest information. I would like to say that I understand the rush to be first, but I cannot. As a representative of the community in which Ashlynn was taken and in which she grew up in, I must say that I am deeply troubled and disappointed to see some media outlets continue to share the brutal and tragic details of the last moments of her young life with no regard for the family's privacy or emotional state. While the family, relatives, classmates, and community members continue to shed tears and continue to comfort Ashlynn's brother, I strongly urge certain media outlets to exercise better judgment in their reporting.

I understand that the media will point out their right of freedom of the press, but that liberty should also come with responsibility and a sense of reverence in a situation such as this. Ask any of your viewing audience who are parents if they would like the brutal details of their young child's last moments displayed for public viewing all in the rush to be first. As parents we try to protect our children, to give them opportunities that we did not have, but how can we explain to our children that we cannot protect them from the news media? Some news outlets have shown great irresponsibility by re-victimizing Ashlynn and causing deeper anguish to her family and relatives.

Traditional family ties hold the Navajo Nation together and losing a young innocent life in a senseless manner brings us closer. It will take time to heal our community and Ashlynn's family will never forget her. We will try to understand this tragic event, we will grieve, and we will hold our children closer each night. The community welcomes the support of all who have been there for the family and those who mourn the loss of a young life. Thank you to all who we lean on during this time.

In Remembrance of Ashlynn,

LoRenzo Bates, Speaker
23rd Navajo Nation Council