



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2016

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### **Navajo Nation Council approves funding for the 2016 Navajo Nation Chapter General Elections**

**WINDOW ROCK** – On the third and final day of the Fall Council Session, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Navajo Nation Council approved approximately \$510,000 from the Navajo Nation’s Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance for the Navajo Election Administration to hold chapter elections on Nov. 8.

Council Delegate Lee Jack, Sr. (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) was the primary sponsor of the legislation, however co-sponsor Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Shonto, Naa’tsis’Áán, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin) presented the legislation to Council on Wednesday along with NEA director Edison Wauneka.

Wauneka stated that the funds would be used primarily for the cost of printing ballots and the cost of paying for poll officials. He added that there remain approximately 70 chapter positions that no one has applied for, which will likely result in the need for a special election after the Nov. 8 general election to fill the vacancies.

In September, the Council approved the FY2017 Comprehensive Budget, which included funding for the election from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance. However, President Russell Begaye used his line-item veto authority to deny the funding for the election based on the incorrect notion that the funds would come from the budget of the Office of the President and Vice President.

“This is amendment No. 16 by the Navajo Nation Council that moves funding from OPVP to the Election Office,” wrote President Begaye in his veto message in reference to his reasoning for denying the funds for the upcoming election.

On Wednesday, Wauneka confirmed that he had spoken with OPVP and they had been under the notion that the funding was being taken from OPVP for the election and therefore line item vetoed the funds in the Comprehensive Budget.

“That tells me that the president did not read the budget,” stated Budget and Finance Committee chair Council Delegate Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí’, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh). “This shouldn’t have been line item vetoed.”

At the conclusion of Wednesday's discussion, Council members voted 13-2 to approve Legislation No. 0362-16. The resolution was delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President on Thursday. President Begaye will have until 5:00 p.m. on Oct. 30 to consider the resolution.

The Council adjourned the Fall Council Session after completing the agenda items on Wednesday evening.

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