



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Law and Order Committee supports the Civil Rights of Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2017

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee considered Legislation No. 0469-17, which seeks to enact the Civil Rights of Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2017, consisting of amendments to Title I § 3, Title 15 § 604(B), Title 10 § 1402, and Title 13 §§ 4501-4510 and 4801-4809 of the Navajo Nation Code.

Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels), who is the sponsor of the legislation, asked for the committee’s support to improve policies and to increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

“In harmony with traditional and common law, it is the tribal government’s responsibility to respect and protect all individuals and communities, regardless of any limitations. This legislation will shine light on individuals with disabilities and address their issues and concerns on the Nation,” said Delegate Hale.

According to U.S. Census data from 2000, provided by the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development, 70-percent of Navajo people 65 years or older, 28-percent of Navajo people 16 years to 64 years, and five-percent of Navajo people five years to 15 years are disabled.

LOC member Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Shonto, Naa’tsis’Áán, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin), spoke in support of the legislation, commended the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disabilities for amending and updating the current policies and procedures to insure that services are provided in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner.

“Updated policies are highly needed throughout the Nation for individuals with disabilities. We have family members and community members with disabilities that need access to community services, employment opportunities, housing, social services, transportation, recreation, education, and training,” said Delegate Daniels.

The bill proposes changes to various sections of the Navajo Nation Code intended to identify and clarify the civil rights of individuals with disabilities which relate to housing, employment, education, voting, incarceration, government services, and public accommodations.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), stated that the amendments would also address public safety issues and concerns regarding individuals with disabilities.

“This is a critical issue on the Nation because many of the individuals with disabilities are not accommodated. This legislation would allow to address safety at the home, workplace, and public facilities,” said Delegate, who also commended the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disabilities for their advocacy and commitment.

The Law and Order Committee issued a “do pass” recommendation for Legislation No. 0469-17 with a 2-0 vote. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority for the bill.

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