



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

---

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2017

### MEDIA CONTACTS

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

### **Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. seeks support to amend the Navajo Nation Veterans Act to improve services for Navajo veterans**

**WINDOW ROCK** – Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) is requesting the support of Navajo veterans and the Navajo Nation Council to amend the Navajo Nation Veterans Act through Legislation No. 0198-17, which seeks to change the current Veterans Advisory Council to a Board of Commissioners and to improve qualifications for the proposed commissioners, in an effort to advance veterans issues and to improve services for veterans.

The Navajo Nation Veterans Act, which was signed into law by President Russell Begaye in February 2016, established the Veterans Advisory Council and the Navajo Veterans Administration under the Office of the President and Vice President to ensure that quality services, outreach, and benefits are provided to Navajo veterans. The 11-member Advisory Council was also tasked with retaining an executive director for the Veterans Administration to carry out the office's plan of operation.

Delegate Begay, who is a veteran and the sponsor of the legislation, pointed out that since the Veterans Act took effect nearly a year and a half ago, many Navajo veterans and veteran organizations continue to voice their concerns over its lack of effectiveness. He also noted that an executive director has yet to be secured since the law was enacted.

"The implementation of the Veterans Act under the Office of the President and Vice President is proving to be ineffective and the problems continue to grow," stated Delegate Begay, who added that he has met with many veterans at the chapter and agency levels who continue to voice their disappointment with the Veterans Act.

"We continue to have a majority of Navajo veterans that remain homeless, the housing program for veterans remains idle, access to medical care is limited, unemployment rates remain high, and educational funds are not provided for veterans," Delegate Begay added.

The proposed Board of Commissioners would replace the current Advisory Council, which would be comprised of a total of five commissioners – one representative each from the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, and the National Guard. It would also require that three of the members be commissioned officers with a rank of O-3 or higher, and two non-commissioned officers with a

rank of E-5 or higher or with a rank of E-1 through E-4 with a bachelor of science or bachelor of arts degree.

Each of the commissioners would also be required to have an occupation specialty in the field of financial management, administrative, engineering, health care, public affairs, or leadership.

“I believe the Navajo Nation has plenty of highly-trained veterans that can make a big difference by utilizing their skills and leadership in these positions,” Delegate Begay stated. “It’s a matter of reaching out to them and seeking their advocacy for Navajo veterans.”

Legislation No. 0198-17 is assigned to the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, Law and Order Committee, Naabik’íyáti’ Committee, and the Navajo Nation Council. The bill will require two-thirds approval, or 16 supporting votes, to be approved by the Council. The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee is scheduled to consider the legislation during a special meeting on June 5.

The legislation may be viewed at [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org). Public comments may be submitted by e-mail to [comments@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:comments@navajo-nsn.gov) and written comments may be mailed to: Executive Director, Office of Legislative Services, P.O. Box 3390, Window Rock, AZ 86515.

###

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