



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2018

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Law and Order Committee hears concerns over alcohol and drug related crimes within the community of Kayenta

KAYENTA, Ariz. – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received reports from Kayenta Chapter officials, Kayenta District Court, Kayenta Police Department, and Kayenta Unified School District superintendent Dr. Bryce Anderson regarding, public safety issues and concerns within Kayenta and surrounding communities.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), stated that many of the critical public safety issues and concerns that were heard are the responsibilities and duties of the Office of the President and Vice President and the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety.

“We sympathized with all the communities that come forward to the committee regarding public safety concerns. However, as a committee we do our best to work with the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety to improve public safety services. The committee went as far as making directives and legislations to have NNDPS improve services,” said Delegate Begay.

According to Kayenta Chapter president Stanley Clitso and Dr. Anderson, the increase of alcohol and drug related crimes within the communities have affected businesses, families, and school districts.

LOC member Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Shonto, Naa'tsis'Áán, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin), stated that the Navajo communities along Arizona State Highway 160 are exposed to a high volume of traffic throughout the year, which includes the transportation of drugs through the Navajo Nation.

“Highway 160 is a gateway road for drugs and alcohol. The need for police officers is critical. Crime is on the rise within the communities because there is no visibility of public safety,” said Delegate Daniels.

Kayenta District Court administrator Lavonne K. Yazzie, stated that since October 2017 there have been approximately 964 criminal cases, 202 traffic cases, 199 domestic violence cases, and 220 family court cases, which includes delinquency, drug, and alcohol crimes. There has been a drastic increase of court cases, added Yazzie.

LOC member Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) expressed the need for stringent charges for drug and alcohol related crimes on the Navajo Nation.

“I understand the frustration of community members. It is true, when a person is caught for public intoxication, possession of drugs, bootlegging, or other related crimes they are released the next day. Those charges need harsher punishments, so they can stay off the streets longer and possibly receive rehabilitation services while in jail,” said Delegate Tso. “The committee has been waiting on policy recommendations from the Office of the Attorney General and NNDPS regarding this issue.”

The Law and Order Committee approved the reports with a vote of 2-0.

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