



Naat'áji Nahat'á Hane'
Legislative Branch News
23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
WINTER COUNCIL SESSION - JANUARY 2018

Council approves bill to reallocate sales tax revenue to benefit Navajo Nation Fire and Rescue Services

By Crystalyne Curley

During the final day of the 2018 Winter Council Session on Jan. 25, the Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0356-17, which seeks to amend Title 24, the "Allocation of Sales Tax Revenue" in the Navajo Nation Code, to reallocate approximately 17-percent of the Navajo Nation Sales Tax non-retail and retail revenue to the Navajo Nation Department of Fire and Rescue Services.

Council Delegate Benjamin L. Bennett (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill), who co-sponsored the bill, urged his Council colleagues to support the reallocation of the sales tax revenue to the fire and rescue services to better protect individuals and communities.

"I strongly urge the Council to support and invest in the Nation's Fire and Rescue Services. Currently, the Navajo Nation does not have nation-wide fire

protection. The allocation would financially assist the fire department to operate and deliver services on the Nation's 27,000-square miles land base," said Delegate Bennett.

Pursuant to the Navajo Nation Tax Regulations, the current sales tax rate is five-percent, which applies to all gross receipts for goods or services sold on the Navajo Nation.

See "FIRE AND RESCUE", Page 2

Navajo Nation branches stand in solidarity to end human trafficking

By Jolene Holgate

On the opening day of the 2018 Winter Council Session, the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches came together to stand in solidarity against human trafficking on the Navajo Nation through an awareness walk and the signing of a proclamation officially declaring the month of January as the Navajo Nation Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

The walk began at the parking lot near Wells

Fargo in Window Rock and concluded at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber. Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T'iis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland), Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé alháoz't'l'i), Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta), Vice Pres-

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PHOTO (above): The Navajo Nation "Blue Campaign" Human Trafficking Awareness Walk to the Navajo Nation Council Chamber on Jan. 22, 2018 in Window Rock, Ariz.

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FIRE AND RESCUE / cont. from Page 1

According to the legislation, the amendment to Title 24 § 620 of N.N.C. would allow the net revenue, after the allocation of set-aside funds, from the sales tax to be disbursed as follows:

- 50-percent of the non-retail revenue collected shall be deposited into the Navajo Nation's general fund and 50-percent of the retail revenue collected shall be deposited into the chapter general fund
- Approximately 17-percent of the non-retail/retail revenue collected shall be deposited into the judicial/public safety fund
- Approximately eight-percent of the non-retail/retail revenue collected shall be deposited into the scholarship fund
- Approximately eight-percent of the non-retail/retail revenue collected shall be deposited to the economic development fund
- Approximately 17-percent of the non-retail/re-

tail revenue collected shall be deposited into the Navajo Nation Fire and Rescue Services fund to be appropriated pursuant to a fund management plan approved by the Budget and Finance Committee

Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), stated that the sales tax revenue allocation to the Fire and Rescue Services fund would allow the fire department to address and improve fire protection throughout the Nation.

"This is the first step to improve fire and rescue across the Navajo Nation. During budget session, the fire department receives pennies to operate, but the allocation would significantly assist them to provide quality services," said Delegate Yazzie, who chairs the Law and Order Committee.

Department of Fire and Rescue Services fire chief Larry Chee, said the department operates 24/7

to provide fire protection, education, and medical services, however, the biggest challenge is inadequate funding for personnel, personnel training, equipment, and community education.

During the debate, Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) stated that fire protection is essential for economic development and growth.

"The Nation cannot push and support economic development without fire protection. Navajo communities are growing and they need fire protection. This should be a priority before any development," said Delegate Pete.

The Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0356-17 with a vote of 16-0. The president will have ten calendar days to consider the resolution once it is delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President.

Navajo Nation Council issues unanimous support for Navajo veterans bill

By Jared Touchin

Prior to recessing on the second day of the Winter Council Session on the evening of Jan. 23, the Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved Legislation No. 0191-17, which seeks final approval from the president to increase the funding available for direct services each year for Navajo veterans through the Veterans Trust Fund.

The Council created the Veterans Trust Fund in 1998 to fund services for Navajo veterans and also to reinvest a portion of the annual set-aside into the principal to grow the trust fund. The annual set-aside is obtained from the Navajo Nation's annual revenues, meaning that the current policy allows for four-percent of the overall revenues to be set-aside for the trust fund each year.

The legislation approved by the Council on Jan. 23 would increase the four-percent set-aside by adding new language to Title 12 of the Navajo Nation Code, stating that 75-percent of the total annual income earned, plus the current projected set-aside of the trust fund would be used as supplemental funding for programs and services to benefit veterans on an annual basis.

Furthermore, the fund's income earned at the end of the previous audited fiscal year plus the current fiscal year projected set-aside will be used to determine the allowable expenditure. The excess of the fund income over expenditures shall be reinvested in the

trust fund to cover the rate of inflation and to provide or reasonable fund growth.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Seth Damon (Bááháá'í, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) said the new language would clearly define the amount of funding that would be available for veteran services each year, without overspending or having to use funding from the trust fund principal. He added that the funding would help Navajo veterans with housing improvements, stipends for food, assistance with hardships, and other services.

Following the Council's approval of the legislation, Delegate Damon thanked the various veteran organizations and individuals who helped develop and advocate for the changes to the trust fund.

"The Navajo Nation Council has been working on this for almost a year and three months. Tonight, we send a message across the street to the president, the vice president, and to the Navajo Nation veterans out there across the world, that the Navajo Nation Council supports [Navajo veterans] in your endless efforts in what you do for our country and for our Nation. I can honestly say it's been a privilege and an honor to help assist in this process. With that my colleagues I say from the bottom of my heart, thank you for taking a stance with our Navajo veterans tonight."

Council Delegate Tom Chee (Shiprock) also conveyed his appreciation to the veterans who helped

develop the legislation and to the dozens of veterans who were seated in the audience in the Council Chamber to support the bill.

"It's been a long journey. I want to thank all of our veterans for their consistency and for staying the course to get this done," stated Delegate Chee, who was the sponsor of a bill in December to override President Russell Begaye's veto of the Veterans Trust Fund Income Act – a separate legislation that was approved by the Council to clarify specific definitions within the Navajo Nation Code that guide the administration of the Veterans Trust Fund.

President Begaye vetoed the Veterans Trust Fund Income Act on Nov. 6, 2017, which was then overridden by the Council on Dec. 22 with a unanimous vote of 22-0.

Council members have continuously urged President Begaye to approve Legislation No. 0191-17, adding that the Council will once again seek an override if the resolution is vetoed. Included with the legislation are supporting resolutions from each of the five Navajo agency veteran organizations and various chapter organizations.

The Council approved Legislation No. 0191-17 with a vote of 21-0. President Begaye will have ten calendar days to consider the resolution once it is delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President.

UFC Women's Flyweight Champion Nicco Montano honored on opening day

By Jared Touchin

On the opening day of the 2018 Winter Council Session, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council recognized and congratulated Nicco Montano, a member of the Navajo Nation from the community of Lukachukai, who recently won the Ultimate Fighting Championship's inaugural Women's Flyweight Title.

The UFC Champion was joined by family members on the Council Chamber floor as Council Delegate Tom Chee (Shiprock) and Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland), presented her with an honorary plaque and thanked her serving as a positive role model for all Navajo people, particularly Navajo youth.

Delegate Chee thanked Montano for being an inspiration for the Navajo people in a time when the Navajo Nation is dealing with many challenges economically, socially, and culturally.

"In the midst of all of our challenges, there are always special people who find a way to inspire and uplift us," said Delegate Chee. "It is an honor to have the UFC Champion with us today and it warms our hearts to know that you come from Lukachukai – from the Navajo Nation."

Montano became the first-ever UFC Women's Flyweight Champion when she defeated UFC fighter Roxanne Modaferrri by unanimous decision on Dec. 1, 2017.

Speaking on the Council floor, Montano

thanked all of her supporters and her family for providing the inspiration and ambition for her to pursue her goals, which ultimately led to her achievement. Speaker Bates presented a gift to Montano and congratulated her and her family on behalf of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council.

During the opening of the session, the Council also honored and recognized the St. Michael High School girl's volleyball team for winning the 1-A State Championship, two-time American Youth Bullriding Champion Jacob David from Grand Falls, the family of the late Verner V. Duus, and the family of David and Darlene Peshlakai.



PHOTO (above): Speaker LoRenzo Bates with UFC Women's Flyweight Champion Nicco Montano at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber on Jan. 22, 2018.



PHOTO (above): UFC Women's Flyweight Champion Nicco Montano with the St. Michael High School volleyball team, the current Arizona 1-A State Volleyball Team Champions at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.

Navajo Nation Council supports criminal code amendments to address cyberbullying

By Jolene Holgate

On Jan. 25, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved amendments to the Navajo Nation Criminal Code Title 17 to address cyber bullying through Legislation No. 0366-17. The legislation seeks to strengthen the Navajo Nation's ability to hold cyberbullying offenders accountable for their actions and to deter future offenses.

According to the legislation, cyberbullying is defined as the "use of an electronic communication, such as text messages, emails, phone calls, social media, etc. to bully another person." It goes on to state that for the "purposes of determining jurisdiction for offenses involving electronic communications, an offense

is committed within the Navajo Nation if an electronic communication device transmission either originates or is received in the Navajo Nation."

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé alnáoz't'l'i) said cyberbullying is a prevalent issue that has come to light in recent years, and the legislation is an attempt to update current laws to reflect today's crimes.

"It is known that cyberbullying contributes to some individuals engaging in self-harm, or even suicide. Approximately one-in-three children report being a victim of cyberbullying and 87-percent of children

have witnessed cyberbullying. Native youth suicides are three-times the national average. Navajo leaders have to continue to find ways to protect our youth as they are our most precious resource," said Delegate Crotty.

She added that in addition to amending the criminal code, the next crucial steps would be to educate the public on cyberbullying because it is critical to understand its effects on people and to aid in the prevention of online bullying behavior.

The bill's amendments to the criminal code include definitions of offenses under manslaughter, stalking, and harassment:

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ident Jonathan Nez, and Judge Geraldine Benally participated in the walk.

Through the efforts of the Naabik'iyáti' Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee and the Navajo Department of Family Services – Strengthening Families Programs, both entities initiated the awareness walk, and a project to address human trafficking on the Nation, bringing to light confirmed cases that have aided in the development of new data indicating that trafficking activity is occurring in some Navajo communities, border towns, and truck stops.

Delegate Brown, a member of the SAP Subcommittee and the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, said human trafficking is a “silent” issue that many people might not notice, but its existence is present on the Navajo Nation.

“I would like people to know it’s on our Nation, it’s in our communities, and especially rural communities. Our Navajo children are being picked up through social media and trafficked at truck stops or other areas across the United States. In fact, over 51-percent of women and children who are victims of human trafficking are never reported,” said Delegate Brown.

Delegate Brown added that he and his SAP Subcommittee colleagues have begun work on the Navajo Nation’s first Human Trafficking White Paper, and have started collaborating with the DFS - Strengthening Families Programs, Office of the President and Vice President, University of Colorado-Boulder Indian Law Clinic, Casey Family Programs, and the Navajo Nation Missing Persons Update Group.

The Human Trafficking White Paper will be a researched-based document that will allow the Nation to begin understanding human trafficking from a comprehensive and analytical perspective. Upon completion of the White Paper, a strategic plan would be developed

to begin addressing human trafficking policies, laws, and post-vention protocols on the Navajo Nation.

Delegate Crotty thanked the Navajo leaders who participated in the awareness walk and said ending human trafficking on the Navajo Nation is a three-branch effort.

“When we think about the communities within the great Navajo Nation, it’s easy to talk about economic development, land issues, and jobs. However, when we start getting to the root of some of our community problems such as trauma, childhood trauma, violence—it takes a special strength and a special kind of leadership,” said Delegate Crotty. “I want to thank President Russell Begaye, Vice President Jonathan Nez, and Speaker Bates for not only championing this cause, but also being here with us today to show we are combatting this modern day monster.”

Speaker of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council, LoRenzo Bates expressed gratitude to the SAP Subcommittee for initiating the human trafficking project and thanked leaders who participated in the awareness walk.

“I appreciate all of you coming out this brisk morning and taking this walk. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to chairwoman Delegate Crotty, it was through her subcommittee on behalf of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council, that we are bringing this awareness,” said Speaker Bates. “Today is important, and we can’t let it end today, it needs to continue to be moved forward.”

Speaker Bates extended his appreciation to President Begaye, Vice President Nez, and Judge Benally for participating in the walk, and commended the signing of the proclamation declaring the month of January as the Navajo Nation’s Human Trafficking Awareness Month.



PHOTO (above): President Russell Begaye signed a proclamation declaring the month of January as the Navajo Nation Human Trafficking Awareness Month on Jan. 22, 2018 in front of the Navajo Nation Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz.



PHOTO (above): Speaker LoRenzo Bates, Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, the Strengthening Families Program, and the Navajo Nation Missing Persons Update Group began the awareness walk from the parking lot area near Wells Fargo in Window Rock, Ariz. on the morning of Jan. 22, 2018.



PHOTO (above): Participants in the Human Trafficking “Blue Campaign” Awareness Walk at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber after completing the walk included Speaker Lorenzo Bates, Council Delegates Amber Kanazbah Crotty and Nathaniel Brown, Vice President Jonathan Nez, Judge Geraldine Benally, the Strengthening Family Programs, the Navajo Nation Missing Persons Update Group, and legislative staff, on Jan. 22, 2018 in Window Rock, Ariz.



PHOTO (above): Navajo Nation leadership from the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches participated in the Navajo Nation “Blue Campaign” Human Trafficking Awareness Walk to the Navajo Nation Council Chamber on Monday, Jan. 22, 2018 in Window Rock, Ariz.

CYBERBULLYING/ cont. from Page 3

- Manslaughter: "A person commits manslaughter if the person recklessly causes or contributes to the death of another, including via electronic communication device."
- Stalking: "Making unwanted or frightening contact with another through postal mail, Internet, or electronic communication, including but not limited to radio, fax, phone, texting, or email."
- Harassment: "A person commits harassment when that person intentionally or knowingly causes emotional distress to another by repeatedly shaming, degrading, humiliating, placing in fear, or otherwise abusing personal dignity, including via electronic communication device."

Legislation cosponsor Council Delegate

Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels), who serves as chair for the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, said after further consultation with the



PHOTO (above): Photo: Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty worked with Navajo Department of Justice attorney Daniel Moquin, Office of the President and Vice President executive staff assistant Yvonne Kee-Billison, and Navajo Nation Police Department chief Phillip Francisco, in developing the cyberbullying amendments to the Title 17 Criminal Code. They are pictured here at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber on Jan. 25, 2018 in Window Rock, Ariz.

Navajo Nation Office of the Prosecutor, Navajo Peace-

making Program, and the Office of the President and Vice President, his committee supported the bill.

"Navajo Nation laws have caught up to the 21st century in relation to technology. Technology can be a blessing, but there are other negative ramifications in its utilization. In protecting Navajo people, there is a need to monitor people's actions in an effort to preserve Hózhó (harmony and balance) for individuals," said Delegate Hale.

Delegate Hale added that the legislation addresses the consequences of cyber bullying, which provides redress to victims so they can feel validated in their cause to take action against their perpetrators, and can aid in their healing process as they move forward.

Council members voted 14-0 to approve Legislation No. 0366-17. President Russell Begaye will have ten calendar days to consider the resolution once it is sent to the Office of the President and Vice President.

Council appoints JoAnn Jayne as probationary Navajo Nation Chief Justice

By Jolene Holgate

On Wednesday, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council approved the appointment of JoAnn Bitsilly Jayne as the probationary Chief Justice for the Navajo Nation Supreme Court, for a period of two years. After the probationary period, legislation will be introduced to consider Chief Justice Jayne's permanent appointment to the Supreme Court.

According to Legislation No. 0273-17, the Law and Order Committee approved Resolution LOC-JN-08-17 to recommend Chief Justice Jayne to the Supreme Court position, and President Russell Begaye issued the appointment in July 2017.

Chief Justice Jayne is originally from Tohatchi and currently resides there. Her mother's clan is Tábaahá (Water's Edge Clan) and her father's clan is Kinyaa'áanii (Towering House People). Her maternal grandfather's clan is Tódich'ii'nii (Bitter Water Clan) and her paternal grandfather's clan is Tábaahá (Water's Edge Clan).

In support of the legislation, Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreón, Whitehorse Lake) said he believed Chief Justice Jayne met all the qualifications to serve as the head of the Supreme Court, and requested that she review state and federal case law opinions that continue to work against the Navajo Nation in terms of court rulings.

"I would like to see strong reasoning from your office that would confront the thinking of state

and federal judges, and tell them they are wrong in their court opinions that disfavor the Navajo Nation, our laws, and our sovereignty. I am hoping you can address these issues and persevere in these matters," said Delegate Tsosie.

Delegate Tsosie also cautioned Chief Justice Jayne from "legislating from the bench," and encouraged her to remain unbiased in upholding Navajo Nation law and ensuring the integrity of the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Jayne received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Montana School of Law, her Master of Science in Watershed Management/Hydrology from the University of Arizona, and her Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Industry from Arizona State University. She served in the Montana State Legislature as a State Representative from 2001-2008.

Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi Tó'ii) praised Chief Justice Jayne's educational background and her determination to return home to the Navajo Nation to work for her people. He recommended that she begin looking at the court structure and determine how it might aid in economic development.



PHOTO (above): Photo: JoAnn Jayne took her oath of office as the probationary Chief Justice for the Navajo Nation Supreme Court, which was delivered by Associate Justice Eleanor Shirley on Jan. 24, 2018 in Window Rock, Ariz.

"Perhaps an area of focus would be companies that want to do business on Nation, but the hurdle for them is to submit to Navajo Nation jurisdiction. Maybe a business court can address business related issues so that we can create a business-friendly environment. It's a huge area that our courts have not really focused on," said Delegate Phelps.

He added that a potential business court could aid in creating more jobs on the Navajo Nation, and said he looks forward to future dialogue in establishing the court. Delegate Phelps said he is also pleased with the chief justice's education in agriculture, hydrology, and watershed management, which

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Navajo Nation Council confirms probationary appointment of Rhonda Tuni as Navajo district court judge

By Jared Touchin

On the fourth day and final day of the 2018 Winter Council Session, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council confirmed the appointment of Rhonda Tuni, to serve as a probationary district court judge for the Navajo Nation.

Tuni is originally from the community of Mexican Water, Utah. She is Bit'ahnii, born for Naaneesht'ézhi Tábaqhá. Her maternal grandfather's clan is Kinl'ichí'í'nii and her paternal grandfather's clan is Kinyaa'áanii.

Among her professional experience includes serving as a staff attorney with the Ramah District Court, attorney with the Office of Legislative Counsel, assistant with the Office of the President and Vice President, Case Manager Supervisor with the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, and as an extern with the Arizona Supreme Court Legal Services.

Tuni earned a Bachelor Arts in Sociology – Criminology and a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities from Fort Lewis College, and a Juris Doctorate from the Arizona Summit Law School. She is a member of the Na-

vajo Nation Bar Association and the New Mexico Bar Association.

In her presentation to the Council, Tuni attributed her accomplishments and successes to her parents, grandparents, and many others who have inspired and motivated her through Navajo cultural teachings to pursue her goals and to help other people.

Speaking in the Navajo language, legislation sponsor Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) commended Tuni for respecting and valuing Navajo teachings and using them as means to help other people. He stated that the fact that Tuni grew up on the Navajo Nation, left to pursue her education, and came home to help her people sends a positive message to young Navajo people.

On Oct. 30, 2017, the Law and Order Committee passed a resolution recommending the probationary appointment and on Jan. 16, President Russell Begaye issued a letter appointing Tuni as a district court judge.

Law and Order Committee chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) asked the Council to support the legislation, adding that Tuni met all of the qualifications.

"The Law and Order Committee has been working hard to fill all of the judge positions. Last night we accomplished the goal of confirming a chief justice. I would encourage you to support her. We always want our young ones to fulfill their goals and I know she will be there for our people," stated Delegate Yazzie.

The Navajo Nation Council approved the probationary appointment with a vote of 20-0. In accordance with Title 7 of the Navajo Nation Code, Tuni will be required to serve a two-year probationary period. Immediately following the confirmation, Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne administered the oath of office to Judge Rhonda Tuni.



PHOTO (above): Rhonda Tuni takes the oath of office administered by Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne after being confirmed by the Navajo Nation Council as a probationary district court judge for the Navajo Nation at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 25, 2018.



PHOTO (above): Rhonda Tuni with family members and members of the Law and Order Committee after being confirmed by the Navajo Nation Council as a probationary district court judge for the Navajo Nation at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 25, 2018.

CHIEF JUSTICE/ cont. from Page 5

are pertinent to several water issues the Navajo Nation faces.

During the debate on the appointment legislation, some Council members raised concerns regarding Chief Justice Jayne's understanding of Navajo fundamental law, cultural protocols, and the utilization of the Navajo language.

Council Delegate Tom Chee (Shiprock) said he is hopeful that the chief justice, like many Navajo-speaking individuals returning home, will re-learn

her language and continue to acquire additional traditional knowledge as time progresses.

"We need to value the Navajo language because the English language is very limited, but it is through Navajo that we can make our point clearly. It encourages us to understand Fundamental Law," said Delegate Chee. "I presume she will put out the effort and redefine the language for herself. I support her candidacy because she will give inspiration to everyone who are still learning Diné Bizaad."

Chief Justice Jayne is the third female Navajo chief justice to be appointed to the Navajo Nation Supreme Court. Chief Justice Claudeen Bates Arthur served from 2003-2004, and acting Chief Justice Lorene B. Ferguson served from 2004-2005.

Council members voted 17-3 to appoint JoAnn Jayne as the probationary Chief Justice to the Navajo Nation Supreme Court. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority on the bill.

Speaker Bates highlights state legislative priorities in Winter Session report

By Jared Touchin

On Jan. 22, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council unanimously accepted Speaker LoRenzo Bates' (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) report for the 2018 Winter Council Session with a vote of 17-0.

A large portion of Speaker's report focused on the Navajo Nation's legislative priorities for the states of Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona as legislators from each state continue with their annual legislative sessions.

"Through the Council's State Task Force we have been able to meet with various state legislators and introduced legislation to outline the Nation's priorities for each state's legislative session. In the following report, I have provided an overview of the priorities and objectives that we along with our lobbyists will continue to promote," stated Speaker Bates in the written report.

Last Wednesday, the Council's Naabik'iyáti' Committee adopted the Navajo Nation's legislative priorities for the 2018 New Mexico State Legislative Session, which began on Jan. 15. Among the priorities include securing additional state funding for Capital Outlay projects if more funds are available, increasing Navajo Nation representation on the Tribal Infrastructure Fund Board, lobbying for additional funds to improve school bus routes on the Navajo Nation, and advocating for measures to address hate crimes and discrimination, sexual assault prevention, and human trafficking.

Among the priorities for the state of Arizona include modernizing the gaming compact between

the state and the Navajo Nation to ensure greater profitability, a longer duration, and greater security to improve and sustain the Navajo Nation's economy. Other priorities include lobbying for a fairer distribution of the state's Transaction Privilege Tax revenue for road improvements and to benefit capital projects for Diné College and Navajo Technical University.

Speaker Bates noted that the Office of the Speaker continues to work with the Navajo Utah Commission on important Utah policy priorities including, local transportation priorities, Utah Navajo Trust Fund, Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, Bears Ears National Monument, and redistricting for the San Juan County Utah Commission and the San Juan County School Board.

Other items covered in Speaker's report include the Navajo Generating Station, Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, progress of the Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee, housing programs, housing in the Former Bennett Freeze Area, tax recovery claims for veterans



PHOTO (above): Speaker LoRenzo Bates (left) provides his report to the Navajo Nation Council on the opening day of the Winter Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.

in Arizona, and community outreach efforts.

Prior to accepting Speaker's Report, the Navajo Nation Council provided time for President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez to present the State of the Nation Address. The Council voted 11-9 to accept the report from President Begaye.

To view the full report from Speaker Bates, please visit the Navajo Nation Council's website at www.navajonationcouncil.org.



PHOTO (above): Dilcon Veterans Organization posted the colors during the opening day of the 2018 Winter Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.



PHOTO (above): Pastor Tom White of Flame of Fire Ministries of Gallup, N.M. delivered the invocation during the opening day of the 2018 Winter Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.



PHOTO (above): Speaker LoRenzo Bates, Council Delegate Nelson BeGaye, and Diné College Board of Regents sign proclamation celebrating Diné College's 50th Anniversary at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 23, 2018.

Picture Highlights of the 2018 Winter Council Session



PHOTO (above): 2017-2018 Miss Black Mesa Community Princess Haiden Polly Begay and Miss Navajo Nation Crystal Littleben sang the National Anthem at the start of the 2018 Winter Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.



PHOTO (above): Council Delegate Jonathan L. Hale recognize and honor the St. Michael Indian High School volleyball team for winning the 1A Arizona State Championship title, during the opening day of the 2018 Winter Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.



PHOTO (above): Council Delegate Walter Phelps recognize and honor Jacob David for winning the 2016 and 2017 American Youth Bull Riding Finals Championship on the opening day of the 2018 Winter Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.



PHOTO (above): Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty and Council Delegate Jonathan L. Hale recognize and honor the work and service of the late Verner V. Duus, who helped establish the Navajo Area School Association and promoted sovereignty as an essential part of Navajo education, during the opening day of the 2018 Winter Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.



PHOTO (above): Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty and Council Delegate Jonathan L. Hale recognize and extend their appreciation to David and Darlene Peshlakai for their outstanding advocacy work and commitment to combat and raise awareness against drunk driving on the Navajo Nation on the opening day of the 2018 Winter Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.



PHOTO (above): Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie recognize Harrison Dehiya and Beth Miller of KGAK-AM 1330, and Eugene Plummer, Roy Keeto, and Sammy Boyd of KYAT-945 FM, for their outstanding radio broadcasting service and dedication, on the opening day of the 2018 Winter Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 22, 2018.

23rd Navajo Nation Council Standing Committees, Subcommittees, Task Forces, and Commissions

Council Standing Committees

Budget and Finance Committee	Health, Education, and Human Services Committee	Law and Order Committee	Resources and Development Committee
Seth Damon (Chair) Dwight Witherspoon (Vice Chair) Tom T. Chee Lee Jack, Sr. Tuchoney Slim, Jr. Leonard Tsosie	Jonathan L. Hale (Chair) Norman M. Begay (Vice Chair) Steven Begay Nathaniel Brown Nelson S. BeGaye Amber Kanazbah Crotty	Edmund Yazzie (Chair) Raymond Smith, Jr. (Vice Chair) Kee Allen Begay, Jr. Herman Daniels, Jr. Otto Tso	Alton Joe Shepherd (Chair) Benjamin L. Bennett (Vice Chair) Davis Filfred Walter Phelps Leonard H. Pete Jonathan Perry

Subcommittees and Task Forces

Naabik'iyáti' Committee's Sacred Sites Task Force LoRenzo Bates Davis Filfred Jonathan L. Hale Jonathan Perry Otto Tso Dwight Witherspoon	Naabik'iyáti' Committee's Arizona Gaming Subcommittee Alton Joe Shepherd Jonathan L. Hale Walter Phelps Tuchoney Slim, Jr. Otto Tso Dwight Witherspoon	Naabik'iyáti' Committee's Title II Reform Subcommittee Alton Joe Shepherd Norman M. Begay Tom T. Chee Amber Kanazbah Crotty Seth Damon Davis Filfred Jonathan Perry Tuchoney Slim, Jr. Otto Tso	Naabik'iyáti' Committee's Síhasin Fund Subcommittee Leonard Tsosie Steven Begay Nelson S. BeGaye Kee Allen Begay, Jr. Nathaniel Brown Tom T. Chee Seth Damon Davis Filfred Lee Jack, Sr. Jonathan Perry Walter Phelps Otto Tso
Naabik'iyáti' Committee's State Task Force Steven Begay Nathaniel Brown Seth Damon Davis Filfred Walter Phelps Dwight Witherspoon	Naabik'iyáti' Committee's Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee Amber Kanazbah Crotty Nathaniel Brown Jonathan L. Hale Jonathan Perry Otto Tso Dwight Witherspoon	Naabik'iyáti' Committee's Navajo Indian Irrigation Project LoRenzo Bates Kee Allen Begay, Jr. Steven Begay Benjamin L. Bennett Leonard Tsosie	

Commissions

Eastern Navajo Land Commission Leonard Tsosie Norman M. Begay Seth Damon Jonathan Perry Edmund Yazzie	Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Walter Phelps Kee Allen Begay, Jr. Lee Jack, Sr. Alton Joe Shepherd Tuchoney Slim, Jr. Raymond Smith, Jr. Otto Tso Dwight Witherspoon	Utah Navajo Commission Nathaniel Brown Herman Daniels, Jr. Davis Filfred
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For more information on meeting dates, times, and locations, as well as legislations and news, please visit: www.navajonationcouncil.org

2018 Winter Council Session

Legislation Results

*Chaired the discussion - Only votes in the event of a tie

LEGISLATION 0359-17

Authorizing and Approving the Kayenta Township Commission to Form Wholly Owned Instrumentalities under Navajo Law; Extending the Navajo Nation Privileges and Immunities to the Formed Instrumentalities; and Authorizing the Kayenta Township Commission to Waive the Instrumentalities Privileges and Immunities, Including Limited Sovereign Immunity and the Requirements for Tribal Remedies Exhaustion

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Nathaniel Brown

ACTION: FAILED
(Required 2/3 or 16 votes from Council)

YEA (12):
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Norman M. Begay
Nathaniel Brown
Tom Chee
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Jonathan L. Hale
Lee Jack, Sr.
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Otto Tso
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (10):
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Davis Filfred
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Alton Joe Shepherd
Leonard Tsosie
Dwight Witherspoon

NOT VOTING (2):
*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Walter Phelps

LEGISLATION 0401-17

Amending 2 N.N.C. § 164(B), Agreements not Requiring Committee or Council Approval

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.

ACTION: PASSED
(Required 2/3 or 16 votes from Council)

YEA (21):
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Nathaniel Brown
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Jonathan L. Hale
Lee Jack, Sr.
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Dwight Witherspoon
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (3):
*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd

LEGISLATION 0191-17

Approving Amendments to 12 N.N.C. § 1176 of the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Seth Damon

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (21):
Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Nathaniel Brown
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Lee Jack, Sr.
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Dwight Witherspoon
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (2):
*Jonathan L. Hale
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd

LEGISLATION 0348-17

Asserting Sovereignty and taking over Primary Regulatory Authority from the Federal Government, Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement over all Coal Mining Lands located on the Navajo Nation, Enacting a Waiver of Sovereign Immunity; and Establishing New Sections in Title 18 at 18 N.N.C. §§ 1701 ET SEQ

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Benjamin Bennett

ACTION: FAILED
(Required 2/3 or 16 votes from Council)

YEA (14):
Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Benjamin L. Bennett
Nathaniel Brown
Tom Chee
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Lee Jack, Sr.
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Otto Tso
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (8):
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Nelson S. BeGaye
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Jonathan L. Hale
Jonathan Perry
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Leonard Tsosie
Dwight Witherspoon

NOT VOTING (2):
*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Leonard H. Pete

LEGISLATION 0440-17

Amending CD-68-14, The Navajo Nation Sihasin Fund

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Dwight Witherspoon

ACTION: PASSED
(Required 90% or 22 votes from Council)

YEA (22):
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Nathaniel Brown
Tom Chee
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Jonathan L. Hale
Lee Jack, Sr.
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Dwight Witherspoon
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (1):
Amber Kanazbah Crotty

NOT VOTING (1):
*Speaker LoRenzo Bates

2018 Winter Council Session

Legislation Results

*Chaired the discussion - Only votes in the event of a tie

LEGISLATION 0273-17

Confirming the Appointment of Joann Jayne as Probationary Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation Supreme Court

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Edmund Yazzie

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (17):

Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Nathaniel Brown
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Davis Filfred
Jonathan L. Hale
Lee Jack, Sr.
Leonard H. Pete
Walter Phelps
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Leonard Tsosie
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (3):

Herman Daniels, Jr.
Jonathan Perry
Otto Tso

NOT VOTING (4):

*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Alton Joe Shepherd
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Dwight Witherspoon

LEGISLATION 0463-17

Confirming the Appointment of Mr. Vince James, as the Fort Defiance Agency Representative, to the Commission on Navajo Government Development for a Term of Four Years

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Alton Joe Shepherd

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (17):

Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Nathaniel Brown
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Davis Filfred
Jonathan L. Hale
Lee Jack, Sr.
Leonard H. Pete
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Dwight Witherspoon
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (7):

*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Norman M. Begay
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Jonathan Perry
Raymond Smith, Jr.

LEGISLATION 0023-18

Confirming the Probationary Appointment of Rhonda Tuni as Navajo Nation District Court Judge

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Otto Tso

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (20):

Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Nathaniel Brown
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Jonathan L. Hale
Lee Jack, Sr.
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Dwight Witherspoon
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (4):

*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd

LEGISLATION 0355-17

Amending 24 N.N.C. § 620 of the Navajo Nation Sales Tax; Allocating 1 Percent of the Sales Tax to Navajo Nation Fire and Rescue Services

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Walter Phelps

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (16):

Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Jonathan L. Hale
Lee Jack, Sr.
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Dwight Witherspoon
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (8):

*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Nathaniel Brown
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie

LEGISLATION 0356-17

Amending Rule 21 of the Rules of Order for Standing Committees of the Navajo Nation Council such that Recording of Votes on all Motions Before the Committee shall be Recorded by Roll Call

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Steven Begay

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (13):

Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Jonathan L. Hale
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Dwight Witherspoon

NAY (2):

Davis Filfred
Lee Jack, Sr.

NOT VOTING (9):

*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Nathaniel Brown
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Edmund Yazzie

2018 Winter Council Session

Legislation Results

*Chaired the discussion - Only votes in the event of a tie

LEGISLATION 0366-17

Amending the Navajo Nation Criminal Code at 17 N.N.C. §§ 203,209,303.01, 318 and 319 for Purposes of Addressing Cyberbullying

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Amber Kanazbah Crotty

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (14):

Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Jonathan L. Hale
Lee Jack, Sr.
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Dwight Witherspoon

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (10):

*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Benjamin L. Bennett
Nathaniel Brown
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Edmund Yazzie

LEGISLATION 0441-17

Amending 2 N.N.C. §§ 1701-1706, Enabling Legislation for the Navajo Nation Division of Human Resources

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Steven Begay

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (9):

Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Tom Chee
Lee Jack, Sr.
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Raymond Smith, Jr.

NAY (7):

Benjamin L. Bennett
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Jonathan L. Hale
Dwight Witherspoon

NOT VOTING (8):

*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Nathaniel Brown
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Edmund Yazzie

LEGISLATION 0417-17

Approving the Reinstatement of Alvina Ray Gutierrez as a Member of the Navajo Nation

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Jonathan L. Hale

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (16):

Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Jonathan L. Hale
Lee Jack, Sr.
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Dwight Witherspoon

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (8):

*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Nathaniel Brown
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Edmund Yazzie

LEGISLATION 0405-17

Amending Navajo Nation Code Title 24 by Enacting the Uniform Local Tax Code

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Walter Phelps

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (16):

Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Norman M. Begay
Steven Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Benjamin L. Bennett
Tom Chee
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Seth Damon
Herman Daniels, Jr.
Davis Filfred
Lee Jack, Sr.
Jonathan Perry
Leonard H. Pete
Tuchoney Slim, Jr.
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Dwight Witherspoon

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (8):

*Speaker LoRenzo Bates
Nathaniel Brown
Jonathan L. Hale
Walter Phelps
Alton Joe Shepherd
Otto Tso
Leonard Tsosie
Edmund Yazzie