



Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty urges Navajo Nation to observe Elder Abuse Awareness Day in June

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PHOTO: 96-year old Annette Bilagody is a Navajo entrepreneur who sells handmade jewelry and now has her own website: www.annettebilagody.com. Delegate Crotty urges Navajo communities to support her work and to protect Navajo elders throughout the Navajo Nation.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley Tsé'ahnáozt'íí, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gadiiahi/To'Koi) has committed much of her time engaged in mutual aid relief efforts during the pandemic within her district and throughout the Navajo Nation. During her work, she made Navajo elders a priority in ensuring that they are taken care of and received adequate support and were cared for as the coronavirus (COVID-19) made its way through the Navajo Nation.

“During these challenging times, I want to always call for the safety and support of our Navajo elders and protection can mean many things: sheltering in place, food and water deliveries, ensuring they have access to their medications, and that their livestock are cared for. However, we also need to protect our elders from violence on all fronts,” said Delegate Crotty.

In April, President Trump issued a proclamation that recognized May 2020 as Older Americans Month and designated June 15 as Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The proclamation centers on the meaningful contributions that older Americans have provided to the country and to their families.

In a bipartisan effort, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law, which included funding for nursing home inspections, personal protective equipment (PPE)

for more than 15,000 nursing homes and expanded testing around the country through private-public partnerships.

Last month, a new program addressed the rising price of insulin by providing Medicare patients with new choices of Part D plans that offer affordable insulin at a predictable cost of no more than \$35 for a month supply.

On the Navajo Nation, Delegate Crotty also mentioned the need to support elder entrepreneurs still making art and selling their work, such as Annette Bilagody, an artist who makes Navajo beaded jewelry. She said that the independence of elders is inspiring and that Navajo communities need to ensure Navajo elders receive all forms of support as necessary.

“As we wait for the waning of the pandemic, I want to remind our Navajo people that our elders are incredibly vulnerable at this time. Check on the grandparents in your communities, ask what they need, and see if there is anything that would help make their day better. I would also remind you to protect our living treasures by practicing social distancing, wearing a mask, and sanitizing before coming into close proximity to our elders,” said Delegate Crotty.

Delegate Crotty stated that the pandemic has amplified several issues throughout Indian Country and created challenges for tribes in terms of violence. Recently, the United Nations reported that domestic and sexual violence has increased during the pandemic as an unintended consequence of shelter-in-place orders and families self-quarantining to protect themselves. This resulted in victims enduring increased time with their abusers and access to resources and law enforcement support has been a challenge.

For more information on the Diné Elder Protection Program, please visit: https://newmexico.networkofcare.org/aging/services/agency.aspx?pid=DineElderProtectionProgramDEPPCrownpoint_1534_1_0.

To view the proclamation, visit: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-older-americans-month-2020/>.

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