



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council approves the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund Income Act

WINDOW ROCK – On Tuesday, the Navajo Nation Council convened for the second day of the 2017 Fall Council Session, in which they considered Legislation No. 0343-17. The bill seeks approval for the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund Income Act that would amend Navajo Nation Code Title 12 Chapter 10 Section 1171 (A) and 1175 (A)(B).

According to the legislation, the trust fund principal would consist of all supplemental appropriations, and the trust fund income would consist of all earnings such as interest, dividends, other related earnings generated by the principal income of the fund, as well as annual set-asides by the Navajo Nation Council.

Primary sponsor for the legislation Council Delegate Tom Chee (Shiprock) said the legislation is to amend and clarify existing definitions contained within the establishment of the Veterans Trust Fund to provide additional funds for the benefit of Navajo veterans.

“Amending the definition of the trust fund income allows the annual allocation to veterans services to increase, and that’s the aim of what we are trying to do. We want to improve services for our veterans and this is one option that we believe will be successful in doing that,” said Delegate Chee.

Delegate Chee said he worked closely with Navajo veterans as well as the chair for the Budget and Finance Committee, Council Delegate Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh), to draft a long-term plan that would sustain improved services for veterans for years to come.

Legislation co-sponsor Delegate Damon clarified that the “principal” and “interest income” are two separate resources, and said that the funding utilized is derived from the interest income that is generated each year, not the principal amount which continues to grow each year.

“We are trying to avoid a one-time supplemental funding for services that Navajo veterans use. We are planning for the long-term, as well as providing additional funding for the Navajo Nation

Veterans Administration by including interest and earnings as another source of funding,” said Delegate Damon.

Council members voted 13-0 to approve Legislation No. 0343-17, and the President will have ten calendar days to consider the bill once it is sent to the Office of the President and Vice President.

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