



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 15, 2017

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Navajo Nation Council encourages Navajo veterans to submit claims to recover income taxes

WINDOW ROCK – The Navajo Nation Council is encouraging Navajo veterans to submit claims to the states of Arizona and New Mexico to recover income taxes that were unlawfully withheld on military wages for certain periods of time, in violation of the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act (SSCRA), which was passed by congress in 1940 to prohibit states from taxing the income of military service members.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) was joined this week by Wide Ruins Veterans Organization Commander Cassandra Morgan and Klagetoh Veterans Commander Samuel Joe, to help spread awareness to Navajo veterans and to encourage them to contact the states to determine if they may be eligible to recover income taxes.

“Our Navajo warriors deserve our upmost respect and honor and that includes the benefits and services that should be afforded to them from the federal government.. Unfortunately, for a period of time many of our veterans unlawfully had their military wages taxed by certain states,” stated Speaker Bates.

In Arizona, the U.S. Department of Defense began withholding taxes on active duty military income in late 2003 and this continued until the end of 2005. In July 2016, the state legislators established the Native American Veterans Income Tax Settlement Fund and set aside \$2 million to refund veterans who were wrongfully taxed. Veterans have until the end of 2019 to file a claim through the Arizona Department of Revenue.

In 2008 the state of New Mexico also created a fund for the purpose of issuing settlement payments to Native American veterans who had their taxes withheld.

Speaker Bates also stated that there may be thousands of Navajo veterans that have yet to file claims with the states. The Navajo Nation Council began reaching out through the media to bring this to the public’s attention to prevent the potential loss of tax income for our veterans.

“We want our veterans to be well aware of this opportunity to submit a claim to the states to recover what is rightfully theirs. Through press releases, local newspapers, radio, and social

media, we are doing our best to ensure that our veterans receive the full income they are due for serving our country,” Speaker Bates added.

The Council is encouraging Navajo veterans that reside in Arizona to visit the Arizona Department of Veterans Services website at www.dvs.az.gov, or contact Scott Fincher by e-mail at nasf@azdvs.gov or by phone at [\(602\) 234-8432](tel:(602)234-8432).

For Navajo veterans residing in New Mexico, please visit the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department’s website at www.tax.newmexico.gov, or contact Alan Martinez by phone at [1-866-433-8387](tel:1-866-433-8387).

To view a video of Speaker Bates and Wide Ruins Veterans Organization Commander Cassandra Morgan and Klagetoh Veterans Commander Samuel Joe providing information, please click on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYM1YTNSHUs&t=41s>

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