



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 6, 2020

Speaker Damon, VP Lizer, LOC Chair Charles-Newton show support for Navajo, tribal bills at AZ Legislature



PHOTO: Arizona Rep. Myron Tsoie (D-7), Rep. Steve Pierce (R-1), Vice President Myron Lizer, Law and Order Committee Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton, Speaker Seth Damon, Speaker Russell Bowers (R-25), and Rep. Arlando Teller (D-7) on the floor of the Arizona House of Representatives on Jan. 30, 2020.

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Speaker Seth Damon and Law and Order Committee Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton of the 24th Navajo Nation Council were accompanied by Vice President Myron Lizer at the Arizona Legislature for the reading of four appropriations bills aimed at supporting the Navajo Nation and other tribal nations in the state.

House Bills 2192, 2193, 2194, and 2571 were each introduced separately on Thursday, Jan. 30, by Arizona State Rep. Arlando Teller (D-7) and Rep. Myron Tsoie (D-7). The appropriations bills request a combined \$8.9 million that, if approved by the Arizona Legislature, would provide assistance to the Navajo Nation for judicial and public safety complexes in Kayenta and Pinon, and funding for domestic violence and veterans services.

“As lawmakers, it is our responsibility to care-after the interests of our constituents through legislation, bills, resolutions, or whichever form an action takes. In working with Rep. Teller and Rep. Tsoie, we hope the great State of Arizona can better understand the needs of Navajo communities. We look forward to seeing these bills through the Arizona House of Representatives and the Senate on behalf of our people,” said Speaker Damon.

HB2192, sponsored by Rep. Teller, would appropriate \$2 million from the state's general fund for 2020-2021 to the Department of Economic Security to be distributed to Indian Tribes for culturally sensitive domestic violence and sexual assault crisis intervention. HB2193, also sponsored by Rep. Teller, seeks \$3.4 million from the state to assist the Navajo Nation in architectural planning and design of the Pinon judicial and public safety complex.

Rep. Teller is also sponsoring HB2194 alongside cosponsor Rep. Myron Tsosie, which is an appropriation of \$2.5 million from the state to the Kayenta Judicial District of the Navajo Nation for design and construction of the Kayenta Judicial Complex.

"Rep. Tsosie and I are heavily focused on addressing the many infrastructure, courts, and public safety needs in rural Arizona, especially in Indian Country and the Navajo Nation. Additionally, it's important to address pressing issues like violence against women and preserving our indigenous culture. We appreciate the support we receive from the Navajo Nation to try and make these bills a reality," said Rep. Teller.

Rep. Tsosie is sponsoring HB2571 with cosponsor Rep. Teller, which is a \$1 million appropriation to assist tribal members in receiving ceremonies once they are discharged from the military.

"It is always good to see our Navajo leaders here at the Capitol showing their support on legislation that would be in the best interest of our constituents of LD7 and the entire state of Arizona. It is vital that we begin to rebuild the bridges between the tribes and the legislature. The voices of our LD7 constituents are always being heard in the House Chambers. There are so many issues that we have to tackle, and their voice is critical because this is their House," said Rep. Tsosie.

Rep. Tsosie is also sponsoring HB2570, reinstating the Governor's Archeology Advisory Commission, HB2572, appropriating \$2 million from the state to support Navajo veterans housing projects, and HB2573, appropriating \$3 million for an environmental testing laboratory at the Navajo Technical University in Chinle. All three bills are making their way through the state legislative process.

The Navajo delegation also spoke with Arizona House of Representatives Speaker Russell Bowers (R-25) and Rep. Steve Pierce (R-1) on current and future legislation impacting the Navajo Nation.

"The voices of our Diné people should be heard beyond the boundaries of the great Navajo Nation, and today they were. It is important we communicate with leaders on all levels to address issues that affect the lives of our Diné citizens. Talking with Arizona Rep. Pierce, Rep. Tsosie, Rep. Teller, and Speaker of the House Bowers, allowed Navajo leadership to bring Diné issues to the forefront, and past party lines," said LOC Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton.

Earlier, on Jan. 21, Speaker Damon, Chair Charles-Newton, and members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council met with Arizona House and Senate leadership to discuss state support for the Navajo Nation's public safety needs. The Navajo Nation's official 2020 legislative priorities for the State of Arizona emphasize the need for increased public safety funding for the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety and Judicial Branch at the state level.

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