



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee raises concerns over proposed “Navajo Nation Presidents Day”

WINDOW ROCK – The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee considered Legislation No. 0091-16 on Wednesday, which seeks to establish a “Navajo Nation Presidents Day” as an annual paid holiday on the third Friday of March.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tóítikan, Red Mesa) said the proposed holiday would honor the past 18 Navajo chairmen and presidents, as well as Navajo leaders such as Narbona, Barboncito, Manuelito, and Ganado Mucho, who led the Navajo people prior to the formation of a centralized Navajo government.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi’i’áhi/To’Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz’t’í’í), said she appreciated the sentiment of honoring past leadership, however she said the legislation should recognize all leaders of the Navajo Nation ranging from elected officials to community members that help their respective communities.

“If we are going to honor leadership, we need to look at it in the Navajo sense. I think we do need to talk about leadership styles, the teachings, and how the Navajo language provides those opportunities,” said Delegate Crotty, who also questioned the costs associated with an additional paid holiday and requested an assessment from the Navajo Nation Department of Personnel Management and the Office of the Controller.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Nelson S. BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaille/Wheatfields, Tsé Ch’ izhí) said that the Navajo Nation already recognizes Sovereignty Day, which should be interpreted as honoring all Navajo leaders and Diné Citizens.

“From my perspective, Sovereignty Day is to honor our leadership – it recognizes all leadership on the Navajo Nation at all levels including grassroots, and it expresses who we are as a people,” said Delegate BeGaye.

According to the Department of Personnel Management human resources classification and pay manager Reycita Toddy, the Navajo Nation currently has 13 paid holidays. Toddy said DPM will provide the data and costs associated with the proposed additional paid holiday at a later date.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) suggested that rather than having the proposed Navajo Nation Presidents Day as a paid holiday, it could be a recognition day during a regular workday in the month of March.

“I think we already have a lot of paid holidays and I have been contacted by constituents who said we do not need anymore, so I think it’s best that we make this a recognition day,” said Delegate Brown.

With a vote of two in favor and three opposed, HEHSC members issued a “do not pass” recommendation for Legislation No. 0091-16. The bill will move forward to the Naabik’iyát’ Committee for consideration. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority for the bill.

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