

THE NAVAJO NATION
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
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LEGISLATION NO: _0119-21_

SPONSOR: Eugenia Charles-Newton

TITLE: An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee; Supporting United States Senator, Ben Ray Luján, Priorities and Initiatives that Impact the Navajo Nation

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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY SHEET

Tracking No. 0119-21

DATE: July 13, 2021

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: AN ACTION RELATING TO NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE; SUPPORTING UNITED STATES SENATOR, BEN RAY LUJÁN, PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES THAT IMPACT THE NAVAJO NATION

PURPOSE: An action related to the Naabik'iyati' Committee, supporting United States Senator, Ben Ray Lujan's, priorities and initiatives that impact the Navajo Nation.

This written summary does not address recommended amendments as may be provided by the standing committees. The Office of Legislative Counsel requests each Council Delegate to review each proposed resolution in detail.

5-DAY BILL HOLD PERIOD: Johnson
Website Posting Time/Date: _____
Posting End Date: 07-26-21
Eligible for Action: 07-27-21

PROPOSED STANDING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION
24th NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL – Third Year 2021

INTRODUCED BY



(Prime Sponsor)

TRACKING NO. 0119-21

AN ACTION
RELATING TO NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE; SUPPORTING UNITED
STATES SENATOR, BEN RAY LUJÁN, PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES
THAT IMPACT THE NAVAJO NATION

WHEREAS:

- A. The Naabik'iyáti' Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council with the enumerated authority to "review and continually monitor the programs and activities of federal and state departments and to assist development of such programs designed to serve the Navajo People and the Navajo Nation through intergovernmental relationships between the Navajo Nation and such departments." 2 N.N.C. §701 (A)(7).
- B. The Navajo Nation has a government-to-government relationship with the United States of America, Treaty of 1868, Aug. 12, 1868, 15 Stat. 667.
- C. On January 3, 2021, Ben Ray Luján (Senator Luján) was sworn into office as a United States (U.S.) Senator representing New Mexico. He previously served as U.S. Representative for New Mexico's Third Congressional District and House Assistant Speaker in the 116th Congress.
- D. Senator Luján has established several priorities under his administration that impact Indian Country and the Navajo Nation:

1 1. Protecting Native American (Native) Voting Rights in support of the *Native*
2 *American Voting Rights Act*. Today Native peoples, particularly those living on
3 Navajo Tribal lands, continue to face linguistic, geographic, and legal barriers to
4 voting. States are restricting Native voting rights by printing ballots only in English,
5 closing or moving polling places hundreds of miles off Tribal and Navajo Nation
6 lands, and requiring addresses from Native voters whose homes on the reservation
7 or in villages do not have physical addresses. This type of disenfranchisement is
8 unacceptable and a stain on the U.S. Government's federal trust responsibility and
9 democracy.

10 2. Expanding Funding for Native Voting Access in the Four Corners Area. The
11 nonpartisan Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access (PAVA) program allocates
12 funds to 55 legally-established Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems across the
13 country to improve access to the ballot (poll worker training and American
14 Disabilities Act compliance) for Natives and Americans with disabilities.

15 3. Protecting Native Youth and Tribal Officers. The Violence Against Women
16 Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) authorized tribes, to include the Navajo
17 Nation, to exercise special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction (SDVCJ) to
18 arrest and prosecute non-Indians for domestic violence (DV), dating violence, and
19 violations of protection orders if certain conditions are met:

20 (a) The victim must be Indian, (b) the non-Indian offender has sufficient ties to
21 the tribe, (c) and the tribe guarantees the non-Indian offender has constitutional
22 protections on a par to those provided in a federal or state forum.

23 4. The Navajo Nation has a high rate of domestic violence. VAWA does not
24 currently authorize Tribes to prosecute crimes against Tribal officers responding to
25 DV situations under SDVCJ to include police officers of the Navajo Nation.

26 5. Safeguarding Native Children's Welfare. There is an enormous need for family
27 violence prevention and treatment resources in Navajo Nation communities.
28 Statistics reflect that Native women, including Navajo women, are more likely than
29 any other population to experience domestic violence. In fact, more than one in
30 three Native women experience domestic violence at some point in their lives.

1 Further, Native children, including Navajo children experience child abuse and
2 neglect at an elevated rate.

3 6. Fully Funding Water Infrastructure Needs on Tribal Lands. The COVID-19
4 pandemic has made it clear that safe water, reliable sanitation, and hygienic
5 conditions are essential on Tribal lands and the Navajo Nation and are essential to
6 protecting human health. Due to lack of basic water and sanitation infrastructure,
7 many Navajo communities, particularly those in remote areas, have been unable to
8 adhere to the Centers for Disease Control's recommended sanitation and hygiene
9 practices, compounding the pandemic's impact.

10 E. Senator Luján has championed efforts to expand quality health care and protect
11 patients with pre-existing conditions, preserve our natural resources and sacred sites,
12 build a clean energy economy, and uplift the middle-class.

13 F. Throughout his time in Congress, Senator Luján has fought to increase New
14 Mexicans', including Navajo tribal members, access to quality health care no matter
15 where they live. He has had legislation signed into law to bolster the Children's
16 Health Insurance Program and strengthen Medicaid and Medicare.

17 G. Senator Luján has further championed for New Mexico families and he has been an
18 unwavering supporter of women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and continues to advance
19 causes important to New Mexico and Navajo families.

20 I. Senator Luján's legislative priorities and initiatives, as provided in **Exhibit A**, have
21 a significant impact to the Navajo Nation.

22
23 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

24 A. The Navajo Nation supports U.S. Senator, Ben Ray Luján's priorities and initiatives
25 as provided in **Exhibit A**.