



## Navajo Nation Council Amends Veteran's Trust Fund

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** July 23, 2021

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Today, the 24th Navajo Nation Council (NNC) reconvened on the fifth day of the Summer Session to discuss Legislation No. 0052-21 which would allow the Veterans Trust Fund to establish infrastructure budgets for the completion of homes for Navajo veterans.

“We’re not talking about ARPA money. It’s about the Veteran’s Trust Fund to build houses and implement it as soon as possible,” said Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Klagetoh, Wide Ruins, Houck, Lupton, Nahatá Dził). “Please accept the legislation as is with no amendments due to the high demands and needs of our people.”

Legislation No. 0052-21 previously passed through the Resources and Development, Health, Education, and Human Services, Law and Order, and Naabik’iyaati Committees before being heard by the Navajo Nation Council.

James Zweirlein, Executive Director of the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration (NNVA) joined in at the Navajo Nation Council Chambers to answer questions posed by the NNC and to voice his concerns with the current administration.

“It’s been difficult to work with the Federal Veterans Administration, and it does not benefit the Navajo Nation to ask for government funds for veterans since we are not successful in running the programs,” said Zweirlien. “When we ask as a nation, they do not respond the way we expect them to.”

Elizabeth Begay, Controller from the Navajo Nation’s Office of the Controller stated the balance of the Veteran’s Housing Trust Fund was in the amount of \$18.1 million.

Honorable Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) reminded the 24th NNC of the questions he and colleagues have raised all week. Delegate Begay remains concerned about local chapters receiving the most updated correct information, and having all the information available to them, in terms of veterans’ issues and providing them with adequate responses.

Currently, out of the 1400 applications, the NNVA has received an estimated 1350. Director Zweirlien will provide an accurate update to the NNC next week. The legislation passed with 18 in favor and 0 opposed, with no amendments.

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