



## Veterans Concerns Heard, Navajo Nation Council proposes changes to Veterans Administration

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**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. will introduce legislation that will modify the internal policies at the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration (NNVA) and end all future contracts that appoint an executive director for the NNVA.

Proposed legislation will address the NNVA Plan of Operation to ensure local veterans organizations are acknowledged in the decision making process. This includes a mandate in Title 12 that Veterans Trust Funds be allocated to 110 Chapter veterans organizations on an annual basis.

“We will consider a bill that represents the proposals of our local veterans groups,” said Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) “It is obvious that the Nez-Lizer Administration cannot communicate with our Navajo veterans. We are frustrated and need action to be taken now.”

A press conference by Navajo veterans will be held this Monday, Oct. 25, at 2:00 p.m. in front of the Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP) in Window Rock, Ariz. All media and the general public are invited for this outdoor event.

For areas of concern shared by local veterans groups to the Nez-Lizer Administration include the following:

1. No acknowledgement of the duly-elected Navajo veterans as official Northern Agency Commanders. An official meeting was held on Oct. 18 at Teec Nos Pos Chapter to reaffirm this decision.
2. No acknowledgement of a majority of veterans stating their position of no confidence in the NNVA and questioning the leadership of executive director James Zwierlein.
3. A Non-Navajo was appointed to represent all Navajo veterans nationally on the Committee for Tribal and Indian Affairs at the VA in June 2021. There was no notification or consultation provided to Navajo veterans by the Navajo Nation Washington Office or OPVP.
4. Multiple requests were ignored that all carry-over funds be provided for housing, food, and necessary veterans needs from the fiscal year budgets for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

“Our Navajo warriors and their Gold Star and Blue Star families matter so much to our great nation,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “There are major issues hurting our veterans and it is obvious our warriors should be a top priority. My hope is the Nez-Lizer Administration works with the Council to solve some major problems. Our veterans deserve the best service possible.”