



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Navajo Nation participates in Utah Redistricting Commission Meeting to advocate for Voting Rights

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PHOTO: Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown with Malysa Egge and Davina Smith outside the Utah State Capitol Building.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — On Monday, members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council provided public testimony before the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission (UIRC) in Salt Lake City, Utah, on the importance of protecting access to voting and strengthening the voting rights of Native Americans.

The Independent Redistricting Commission was created through the 2018 passage of Utah's Proposition 4 and was later modified by lawmakers in 2020.

The result is an independent advisory commission tasked with developing and proposing district maps for congressional, state senate, state house, and state school board districts. The redistricting process happens once every ten years.

"The Council designated the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission to be our advocate during the redistricting process in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah," said Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Dennehotso, Kayenta, Chííłchínbii'tó). "Through the years it is evident that some lawmakers tried to redistrict our area and condense Navajo voters into one location, not adhering to federal voting laws. We must be vigilant and make sure our Native voters have equal and fair representation at all levels."

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For the past several months, the seven-member commission has held public hearings across Utah. In September, the UIRC hosted one of its sixteen listening sessions at the Mexican Water Chapter.

“The votes of our Navajo people in Utah must be protected to ensure our priorities are represented by the leaders we elect,” said Delegate Charlene Tso (Mexican Water, Tółıkan, Teec Nos Pos, Aneth, Red Mesa). “The Native American vote is powerful, so all redistricting maps must represent the voices of our Tribal Nations in Utah. The Navajo Nation has requested that the commission adhere to all applicable federal laws including the Voting Rights Act of 1965 so that our interests are respected on Election Day.”

The UIRC is scheduled to vote and provide their final map recommendations next Monday. The Utah Legislature is convening in special session to consider redistricting maps on Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021.

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