



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Alray Nelson, Communications Director  
Kyrn Hardy, Public Information Officer  
E-mail: nnlb.communications@gmail.com  
Phone: (928) 565-0440

## Criminal Penalties for Vicious Dog and other Animal Attacks passed by the Navajo Nation Council

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** April 20, 2022



PHOTO: Honorable Eugene Tso advocates for the Navajo people in Washington, D.C.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. —** During the second day of the Spring Session, the 24th Navajo Nation Council passed Legislation No. 0002-22, amending Title 17 to specify a criminal nuisance offense and establish penalties for vicious dogs and other dangerous animals running at large that cause injury or death on the Navajo Nation.

According to the Navajo Nation Animal Control Program (NNACP), 85 percent of field officers utilized their time responding to injuries to people sustained by dog bites and incidents of animal attacks. It is estimated that around 3,000 individuals, primarily children and the elderly, are treated each year by local clinics or the Indian Health Service for animal bites.

“It is alarming the number of stray dogs running at large across the 27,000 square miles of the Navajo Nation. Never again should one of our young people or elders be mauled to death or severely injured. Passing this legislation strengthens Navajo law to provide criminal penalties to deter people from keeping vicious dogs or other dangerous animals that can attack our loved ones. We urge President Jonathan Nez to sign this legislation into law immediately,” said Council Delegate Eugene Tso (Chinle).

- MORE -

In a comprehensive NNACP study, over the last five years, there has been an increase in the severity of dog bite cases. The death of a teenage girl in Fort Defiance in 2010, a 56-year-old near Gallup, an eight-year boy in Pine Hill, a 3-year-old boy in Seb Dalkai, and a Kayenta woman was reported by the Navajo Nation Police Department.

“We commend the leadership of Honorable Eugene Tso for sponsoring this legislation to hold perpetrators accountable under Navajo law. One life lost is too much for our families to bear. Communities need to be more responsible for roaming dogs and spaying or neutering their pets. The Navajo Nation Council requests that President Nez sign this resolution into law so we may better protect our children and elders from unwanted animal attacks,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

The Navajo Nation Council passed legislation No. 0002-22 with 23 in favor and 0 opposed. President Jonathan Nez has ten days upon certification from the Legislative Branch to veto or sign the bill into law.

###