



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Council Delegate Vince James joins listening session with Arizona Congressman Tom O'Halleran on Veteran Issues, Senior Citizens, and Infrastructure Projects

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PHOTO: U.S. Representative Tom O'Halleran and Council Delegate Vince James discuss projects at the Ganado Chapter.

GANADO, Ariz. — Council Delegate Vince James of the 24th Navajo Nation Council and Apache County Supervisor Alton Joe Shepherd were joined by chapter officials from Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kinłichii', Steamboat, and Greasewood Springs for a listening session with United States Representative Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ) at the Ganado Chapter House.

Topics of discussion included the construction of the Ganado Senior Citizens Center, the Veterans Building turnoff project, American Rescue Plan Act allocation, road infrastructure projects, and passage of the PACT Act to assist over 3.5 million veterans exposed to toxic burn pits and airborne hazards.

"Congressman O'Halleran has a long record of being a champion for the Navajo people. Through his leadership, over \$2 billion was provided by the American Rescue Plan Act funding to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes \$7.5 million for Diné College, millions more for capital improvement projects, and investments to streamline veterans' services. The Navajo Nation looks forward to working with the congressman into the future," said Council Delegate Vince James (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kinłichii', and Steamboat).

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, some notable bills pushed forward by Representative O'Halleran include:

- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act - \$2.5 billion for the Indian Health Service water and sewer projects, \$2.5 billion for Indian Water Rights Settlement, \$2 billion for Tribal Broadband Initiatives, \$50 million for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) road maintenance program, and \$3.5 billion to cleanup abandoned or contaminated uranium mines.
- American Rescue Act Plan - \$20 billion for tribal governments in COVID-19 relief funding, \$850 million for the Bureau of Indian Education, \$100 million for BIA tribal housing, and more.
- The SURVIVE ACT - Providing legal, medical, and counseling resources to women and children in tribal communities who are survivors of domestic violence.
- Diné College Act of 2022 - Providing \$7.5 million in funding to Diné College for capital improvement projects and to improve access to higher education opportunities for Navajo students and families.

“Navajo Nation sovereignty is important to me, and it must be respected. Working at a government-to-government level is key to accomplishing the goals we have set for all our tribal communities in Arizona’s 1st Congressional District. This is why we need to address the climate change crisis, protect a woman’s right to make her own health care decisions, take care of our elderly and veterans, and pass the Inflation Reduction Act. Necessary investments in our children’s future must get done. I believe we are better off when our country comes together,” added Representative O’Halleran.

Since his time in office, funding for the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has increased from \$179 billion in 2017 to \$259 billion in 2021. The congressman is advancing the End Veteran Homelessness Act (H.R. 8313) and the VA MISSION ACT of 2018 to improve how veterans receive their health care outside of VA facilities.

“Representative O’Halleran worked with his Congressional colleagues and President Biden to pass the American Rescue Plan Act that clearly shows our Sovereign Nations are a top priority. Over \$11 billion in new infrastructure projects will be funded around Indian Country to begin construction on broadband internet lines, roads, bridges, and water pipelines. The Navajo Nation commends the congressman and his hard-working staff for advocating for us on the national level,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

Ganado Chapter President Marcarlo Roanhorse, Manager Willie Tracey Jr., and Farm Board Secretary Teresa Showa were in attendance to ask questions with other community leaders.

Congressman O’Halleran represents the largest congressional district in Arizona, located in the northern portion of the state since 2017. He is a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee for Agriculture.

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