



25th Navajo Nation Council holds their first Special Session

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PHOTO: Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne administering the Oath of Office to Speaker Pro Tem Otto Tso in the Navajo Nation Council Chamber.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Yesterday, the 25th Navajo Nation Council took their Oath of Office during the Navajo Nation Inauguration Ceremony held at the Bee Hóldzil Fighting Scouts Event Center in Fort Defiance, Ariz. Shortly after being sworn in, the twenty-four-member council reconvened for a Special Session to select a Speaker Pro Tem at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber.

During the Inauguration Ceremony, members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council introduced themselves to the Navajo People while expressing their willingness to bring change to the Navajo Nation during their term. Additionally, the Navajo Nation President & Vice President, Navajo Board of Election Supervisors, Navajo Nation Board of Education, and the Kayenta Township and Naschitti Commissioners also took their Oath of Office during the Ceremony.

The first 25th Navajo Nation Council Special Session commenced at 2:30 p.m. (MDT) beginning with recognitions leading up to the discussion of Legislation No. 0001-23. Sponsored by Hon. Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock) and co-sponsored by Hon. Vince R. James (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kinłichii', Steamboat), Legislation 0001-23 is an emergency legislation to

select a Speaker Pro Tem to perform limited duties from January 10 to January 23, 2023, or when the Navajo Nation Council confirms a Speaker for the 25th Navajo Nation Council.

An amendment sponsored by Hon. Rickie Nez (T'iistsoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tsé Daa K'aan, Newcomb, San Juan) and co-sponsored by Hon. Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh) to nominate Hon. Otto Tso as the Speaker Pro Tem was made before conversations regarding the appointment system were made. After a lengthy discussion, members of the Council voted twenty (20) in favor of the amendment before the main motion on Legislation 0001-23 was voted on.

With twenty-two (22) in favor and one (1) opposed, the 25th Navajo Nation Council confirmed Hon. Tso to serve as the temporary Speaker. The first order of business at the 2023 Winter Session is to elect a permanent Speaker of the 25th Navajo Nation Council for a two-year term.

"I would like to thank my colleagues of the 25th Navajo Nation Council for having the confidence in me to temporarily lead the Legislative Branch," said Pro Tem Speaker Tso. "The 25th Navajo Nation Council would also like to congratulate President Nygren and Vice President Montoya for their historic commencement as we are ready to work in solidarity to improve the lives of our people across the Navajo Nation."

At 6:28p.m. (MDT), Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne administered the Oath of Office to Hon. Speaker Tso who is Naakai Dine'é and born for Naaneesht'ézhi Tábaahá. His maternal grandparents are Lók'aa' Dine'é and his paternal grandparents are Tsi'naajinii and proudly represents the community of Tónaneesdizí, Ariz.

In 1989, the Navajo Nation's three-branch government system was established through Title II Amendments of the Navajo Nation Code. Resulting in the creation of the Navajo Nation Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches and the power to appoint a Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council.

For the first time in modern Navajo history, nine (9) Navajo women will lead the Navajo people as lawmakers on the Navajo Nation Council. The 2023 Winter Session will be held in person at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber from January 23-27, 2023.

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