



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 21, 2023

25th Navajo Nation Council supports in-person attendance at all standing committee meetings and council sessions



Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty sponsored Legislation 0147-23 to codify virtual attendance by Council Delegates at standing committee meetings and Navajo Nation Council Sessions.

Window Rock, Ariz. – On Thursday, the 25th Navajo Nation Council voted to uphold in-person attendance for Council Delegates at all standing committee meetings and council sessions.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley Tse’al-naoxt’i’i, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gadiiahi/To’Koi) sponsored Legislation 0147-23 to codify virtual attendance by Council Delegates at standing committee meetings and Navajo Nation Council Sessions.

The legislation sponsor said the move to keep virtual attendance in place would help maintain quorum in situations where scheduling might cause delegates to be absent.

“We have to look at the reality of the situation. There is a need for some flexibility because of our duties, our safety, and our mental health, and how we conduct business at the committee level,” Delegate Crotty said. “If delegates are provided a virtual option, they can still participate.”

The implementation of virtual attendance at standing committee meetings and council sessions was an emergency measure put in effect during the COVID-19 pandemic to help the Navajo Nation’s governing body continue to operate without violating public health orders.

On June 15, 2023, Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren and the Commission on Emergency Management issued CEM-23-06-15, deactivating the March 11, 2020, Public Health State of Emergency, returning Navajo Nation government operations to pre-COVID-19-status.

The deactivation of the Public Health State of Emergency effectively ended the use of virtual and hybrid in-person meetings.

Delegate Nathan Notah (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a') proposed an amendment requiring in-person attendance only at the four regular Council sessions held each year, but keeping virtual attendance in place for standing committee meetings and special council meetings.

"We do have an obligation to be here for the people we serve," he said. "I think we should be here for the major council sessions."

The amendment didn't carry.

Delegate Carl Slater (Tsaile/Wheatfields, Lukachukai, Round Rock, Tséch'izhí, Rock Point) spoke about the importance of having delegates in the Council Chamber.

"We lose our humanity. We lose the ability to see eye-to-eye," Delegate Slater said. "We are going to lose accountability because there is a difference between being at home and being here. All our constituents can see us here and that's accountability. I strongly disagree with the virtual option."

When it came down to voting on the main motion, because the legislation made changes to Title 2, it required a two-thirds approval, 16 supporting votes, of the full council to pass.

Legislation No. 0147-23 had 7 votes in favor and 15 opposed. The main motion failed and the Council upheld their support for in-person attendance for all standing committee meetings and council sessions.

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