



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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The 25th Navajo Nation Council passes emergency legislation to address chapter leadership vacancies



Council Delegate Brenda Jesus sponsor of the legislation.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — During a special session held on Monday, the 25th Navajo Nation Council approved emergency Legislation No. 0263-24 to address anticipated leadership vacancies in several chapters following the January 2025 inauguration. This measure temporarily suspends provisions of the Navajo Nation Code to allow the appointment of temporary chapter officials to ensure continuity in governance until special elections are held.

The legislation was introduced in response to candidate disqualifications that stemmed from campaign expense reporting violations during the 2024 elections. These disqualifications created gaps in leadership for positions such as chapter presidents, vice presidents, and secretary-treasurers across eight chapters, including Many Farms, Round Rock, and Fort Defiance.

“This legislation provides a necessary solution to ensure uninterrupted chapter services during this transitional period,” said Delegate Brenda Jesus, sponsor of the legislation. “By appointing temporary leaders, we are addressing immediate operational needs while respecting the community’s right to elect permanent officials in the upcoming special elections.”

According to the Navajo Election Administration, Legislation 0263-24 allows chapters to appoint temporary (pro tempore) presidents and secretary-treasurers per the Navajo Board of Election Supervisors Establishing Rules and Regulations on Appointments to Elective Positions to serve until newly elected officials are sworn into office.



Veronica Curley, Interim Executive Director for Navajo Election Administration.

These appointees are granted extended authority to carry out critical duties, including signing contracts, authorizing expenditures, and managing chapter finances, ensuring essential operations continue without disruption. To maintain accountability and integrity, the legislation explicitly bars individuals disqualified for campaign expense reporting violations from serving in these temporary roles.

The Navajo Nation Election Administration confirmed that special elections to fill the remaining vacancies will occur in March 2025, with the candidate filing period beginning in January.

Without this legislation, many chapters risked operational disruptions, including the inability to authorize financial transactions or maintain essential services. According to Roger Begay, legal counsel for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, the temporary appointments address a critical gap in governance.

While addressing immediate concerns, the Council emphasized the importance of long-term reforms to election processes and governance. Delegate Helena Nez Begay called for better community education to avoid similar disqualifications in the future.

“This is a lesson for our Nation,” Delegate Nez Begay said. “We must strengthen our election systems to ensure transparency and consistency for future terms.”

The 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously voted 18 in favor and none opposed in approving Legislation 0263-24. Once certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will have up to ten calendar days to consider the resolution.

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