



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council opposes school voucher executive order, citing threats to sovereignty and tribal education systems



Delegate Dr. Andy Nez introduced legislation that reaffirmed Navajo Nation's government-to-government relationship.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On April 21st, the 25th Navajo Nation Council has passed legislation opposing Executive Order 14191, a federal directive issued by U.S. President Trump promoting the use of federal education funds, especially BIE funds, for private, charter, and faith-based schools.

Legislation No. 0057-25, sponsored by Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, asserts that the order was enacted without proper tribal consultation and poses serious risks to the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation and the future of Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)-funded schools.

Executive Order 14191, titled "Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunity for Families," directs the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to review how federal funds could be used for non-BIE educational options and to submit a plan within 90 days. The Navajo Nation argues that such measures ignore the federal government's trust and treaty obligations under the Treaties of 1849 and 1868, which promise education for Navajo children within the framework of tribal sovereignty.

"This order undermines the trust responsibility guaranteed in our treaties and poses a threat to community schools that this administration fails to visit," said Delegate Dr. Andy Nez. "Our schools are already under-resourced, and many serve as the only educational institution for students; diverting funds will only widen those gaps."

The legislation outlines concerns about redirecting federal education funds away from BIE schools, most of which serve students in remote areas with no viable alternatives. It also notes that 31 of 66 BIE-funded schools are located in rural and broadband-limited areas of the Navajo Nation, making school choice policies impractical and harmful to Navajo students.

Delegate Vince James added, "Our students deserve stability, not policies that risk school closures or reduced services in rural and underserved areas."

The legislation reaffirms the Navajo Nation's government-to-government relationship with the United States and its treaty protections, formally opposes school choice systems that bypass tribal consultation or diminish BIE funding, and requests additional tribal consultation with the U.S. Department of Education and the Bureau of Indian Education. It also authorizes the Navajo Nation President, Vice President, and Speaker to take all necessary steps to advocate for the Nation's position at the federal level.

Serving as final authority, the 25th Navajo Nation Council passed Legislation 0057-25 under consent agenda with a vote of 18 in favor and none opposed.

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