



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEHSC supports legislative oversight for Navajo Youth Council



The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee unanimously approved amendments to the Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council's plan of operation.

WINDIOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Wednesday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) approved Legislation No. 0066-25, a resolution that amends the plan of operation for the Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council (NNYAC) placing it under the oversight of the Legislative Branch. The proposed amendments to Title 2 of the Navajo Nation Code are designed to improve youth representation in governance and increase direct oversight by standing legislative committees.

"This action reflects our commitment to youth leadership and civic development," said HEHSC Vice Chair Germaine Simonson. "By moving the Youth Advisory Council under the Legislative Branch, we're strengthening its purpose as a platform for policy input and public service."

The NNYAC was established in 2017 under the Office of President and Vice President, and serves as an advisor on issues affecting Navajo youth, including education, mental health, cultural preservation, and leadership development. Under the revised plan of operation, the NNYAC will retain its 12-member structure while adding new legislative responsibilities such as submitting quarterly reports to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee and participating in hearings related to youth policy.

“Within the legislative branch, the goals of governance and policy are critical and participants in this council would obtain many valuable skills,” added co-sponsor Delegate Dr. Andy Nez. “Our students have voices and interests, and this is an opportunity to advance them within all three branches, as this legislation allows them more ways to advocate on youth issues.”

The amendment establishes new provisions for the staffing and structure of the Youth Advisory Council, including the creation of an Executive Director position and reaffirmed requirements for public meetings, leadership elections, and membership diversity. All members must be enrolled Navajo citizens between the ages of 14 and 24, with representation from each of the five Navajo agencies.

“This move ensures continuity, transparency, and better coordination across branches of government,” Delegate Simonson noted. “It empowers youth not only to speak—but to shape the policies that affect their future.”

The measure will require a two-thirds vote from the full Navajo Nation Council to be enacted. Once adopted, the changes will repeal outdated Executive Branch provisions and incorporate the NNYAC into Chapter 3 of Title 2, under Boards and Commissions of the Legislative Branch.

The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approved Legislation No. 0066-25 with a vote of five in favor and none opposed moving it forward to the Law and Order Committee for further consideration.

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