



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Law and Order Committee issues final decision on Probationary Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne



The Law and Order Committee voted against the confirmation of JoAnn Jayne as Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Monday, the Law and Order Committee (LOC) voted 3 in favor, with one delegate abstaining and none opposed, not to confirm the permanent appointment of JoAnn Jayne to serve as the Navajo Nation Chief Justice.

The vote follows a series of public hearings in 13 Navajo communities, the LOC's visit to every judicial district, and extensive community input that helped to evaluate the performance of the Probationary Chief Justice.

Under Navajo Nation law at 2 N.N.C. §601(B)(10)(a) and 7 N.N.C. §355(E), this decision is final and binding. The President of the Navajo Nation cannot override this decision or appoint a Chief Justice whom the LOC has not recommended.

As the Supreme Court has consistently reaffirmed, any attempt to appoint a judge outside of the prescribed legislative process is unlawful and invalid under Navajo law (In re Certified Questions I and II, 6 Nav. R. 97, 105 [1989]).

The LOC's determination was based on an independent evaluation of Chief Justice Jayne's performance during her probationary period. After visiting all judicial districts and listening to public testimony, the committee concluded that her performance did not meet the standards required for permanent appointment. Legislation No. 0140-25, which outlined the grounds for denial, was passed by the committee after a thorough review and discussion.

“The public’s voice was central in this process,” said LOC Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton. “Community members were clear in their expectations for judicial leadership. We listened, and we acted accordingly. The integrity of our judiciary is not negotiable.”

The LOC decision reflects the principle that community interest comes first. The committee did not act in haste or from personal or political motivation but in firm adherence to the rule of law and the Diné people’s expectations.

The LOC reminds the Diné communities that a strong and independent judiciary is fundamental to Diné sovereignty. Only through rigorous evaluation and lawful appointments can that independence be maintained.

The LOC will continue to uphold its responsibility to ensure only qualified, ethical, and community-centered leaders serve in the Nation’s highest courts.

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