



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2025

Navajo Nation Council leadership engages with Utah officials to advance tribal recognition on state-issued identification



Utah State Caucus Chair Shaandiin Parrish met with Utah Attorney General Derek Brown to consider options for including tribal affiliation on state identification.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — On June 24, Utah State Caucus Chair Shaandiin Parrish met with state officials in Salt Lake City to strengthen government-to-government collaboration focused on improving the recognition of tribal citizenship on Utah-issued driver's licenses and identification cards.

Chair Parrish met with Utah Attorney General Derek Brown, along with representatives from the Utah Division of Indian Affairs and the Utah Department of Public Safety (DPS), to evaluate policy options for including tribal affiliation and voter eligibility on state IDs. This effort aligns with the goals of House Bill 300 (HB 300), which outlines enhanced voter identification standards in the state of Utah.

"This is about ensuring our Navajo citizens are not only recognized but protected under both state and federal systems," said Chair Shaandiin Parrish. "We appreciate the open dialogue with Utah's leadership and their willingness to explore immediate and long-term solutions that recognize tribal affiliation as a matter of identity, sovereignty, and justice."

The meetings also addressed growing concerns from the Navajo Nation regarding potential impersonation of federal immigration agents (ICE) in Utah and recent reports of attempted detainment of Native citizens. State officials acknowledged the seriousness of these concerns and confirmed that the Utah Department of Public Safety is working closely with Navajo

Nation Police Chief Ronald Silversmith to strengthen cross-jurisdictional communication and build trust between agencies to better protect Indigenous residents.

The inclusion of tribal affiliation on official identification would support tribal citizens during interactions with law enforcement, at the polls, and in circumstances where state or federal identification validation is required. Utah officials expressed a commitment to reviewing the feasibility of implementing these changes through interagency coordination and future legislative action.

In a separate meeting, Chair Parrish also met with Representative Tyler Clancy, who affirmed his support to present a policy proposal that would recognize tribal affiliation on Utah driver's licenses and identification before the Utah Judiciary Interim Committee in August 2025. Representative Clancy, who serves as the Vice Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, also offered assistance to Navajo constituents encountering federal enforcement issues. The discussions further underscored the importance of intergovernmental collaboration to ensure Native citizens in Utah are protected and recognized.

In addition to ID-related reforms, tribal and state leaders discussed the future of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Task Force, which is scheduled to end this year. Stakeholders are exploring options to reestablish the task force through the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) or the Attorney General's Office, to ensure continued coordination and investigation of MMIP-related cases.

"The Navajo Nation Council remains committed to protecting our people across state lines," said Speaker Crystalayne Curley. "Through Delegate Parrish's leadership, we are strengthening our partnership with Utah to ensure that tribal citizens are treated with dignity and their identity is respected in every system they engage with."

The Budget and Finance Committee is proposing a \$5 million allocation in the FY2026 Comprehensive Budget to establish a Missing Persons Unit within the Navajo Nation Police Department. If passed by the Navajo Nation Council and signed by the President, this investment will support the Nation's growing public safety infrastructure at the tribal level.

Chair Parrish and Speaker Crystalayne Curley will continue engaging with tribal partners, state agencies, and legislative representatives to advance intergovernmental solutions that affirm and protect Navajo identity, voter status, and public safety across state and tribal boundaries.

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