



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Speaker Curley calls on Gallup church to take responsibility for culturally offensive performance**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — 25th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley issued a formal letter to The Door Gallup Christian Church in Gallup, N.M., expressing disappointment and calling on the church's leadership to take responsibility for a recent stage performance that has sparked public outrage. Videos circulating online show a play featuring violent acts directed at a character dressed as a Navajo medicine man during the portrayal of a ceremonial scene.

Members of the Navajo Nation Council have received numerous concerns and calls for action from constituents. Prior to issuing the letter, Speaker Curley consulted with both faith-based leaders and traditional practitioners to hear their perspectives. Several pastors and practitioners expressed disapproval of the church's performance, stating that it crosses the boundaries of respect among faiths.

Council members, speaking on behalf of concerned community members, described the performance as a misrepresentation and mockery of sacred aspects of Navajo spirituality. The play has drawn widespread criticism from Navajo community members and interfaith leaders who view the portrayal as deeply disrespectful and culturally insensitive.

"We respect all faiths and beliefs. As neighbors to the Navajo Nation, the city of Gallup and surrounding communities share more than just geographical proximity with our people we are tied by longstanding cultural and social relationships," said Speaker Curley. "Mutual respect and understanding must be the foundation of our society, which encompasses diverse beliefs."

While affirming the importance of religious freedom, Speaker Curley emphasized in her letter that such expression should never come at the expense of another people's sacred beliefs and traditions.

"Navajo traditional practices are considered sacred by many of our people. They are integral to Navajo identity, history, and our way of life. Navajo medicine men are spiritual leaders and should never be made a mockery in such a violent manner," she said.

The letter calls on the church to take the concerns of the community seriously and to engage in a process of respectful dialogue and reflection.

"We urge the church to consider the broader impacts of its actions and ensure that future engagement is grounded in mutual respect and cultural understanding," Speaker Curley added.

In closing, Speaker Curley reaffirmed the Council's openness to direct communication and the importance of fostering mutual respect through dialogue.

"We welcome the opportunity to meet, to listen, and to have meaningful conversations, but we will not tolerate disrespect toward Navajo traditions or any faith," she said.

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