



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Law and Order Committee advocates to federal leaders to support addressing budget cuts, tribal safety, and health services



Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT) met with Intergovernmental Affairs Deputy Director Christine Serrano Glassner.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On June 24 and 25, the Law and Order Committee (LOC), in coordination with the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT), engaged in strategic advocacy meetings with federal leaders to address the impacts of the Fiscal Year 2026 “Skinny Budget” and the H.R.1 - One Big Beautiful Bill Act, that threatens to significantly reduce critical funding to Indian Country’s public safety systems.

Members of the LOC met with U.S. Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) and staff from Senator Chuck Grassley’s office to discuss alternative funding resources for the Navajo Nation.

During meetings with Senator Daines and Senator Grassley’s staff, LOC members advocated for expanding tribal jurisdiction to prosecute non-Native offenders, enhancing border security along high-risk corridors such as Highways 191, 77, and 264, and targeting law enforcement funding to address long-standing enforcement gaps.

The discussions focused on law enforcement, healthcare, and border security, as well as the urgent need for sustainable federal support to ensure that essential services continue for the Diné people.

Chairwoman Eugenia Charles-Newton addressed vulnerabilities facing the Nation. “We are the largest tribal reservation in the United States, and our communities are being targeted,” said Charles-Newton. “Tribal people are the first line of victims; we need to find alternative funding and resources to address these challenges, especially in our law enforcement.”

Chair Charles-Newton informed federal leaders that the budget cuts would severely reduce funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Indian Health Service (IHS), and tribal public safety contracts. These reductions can hinder law enforcement operations and possibly increase criminal activities.

LOC Vice Chair Nathan Notah reiterated that these cuts undermine tribal sovereignty and public safety operations. He noted that the current 638 contracts under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act are no longer adequate to meet the growing demands on tribal law enforcement.

"The current 638 contracts aren't enough to protect our communities," said Notah. "We are seeking more alternative options, including potential support from Secretary of Defense Kristi Noem to fund tribal public safety initiatives and help address the Nation's border crisis."

Chairwoman Charles-Newton emphasized the importance of including tribal nations in rural poverty assessments, as this directly impacts eligibility for federal assistance and grant programs.

Council Delegate Arbin Mitchell highlighted the urgency of these efforts. "A lot of our rural towns are being hit hard by poverty, and that's where organized crime steps in," said Mitchell. "This is not just about drugs—it's about human lives, sovereignty, and security. We can't fix 21st-century problems with a 20th-century system. We need federal leaders to support our efforts to address these ongoing challenges, not make it a challenge."

The Committee also met with Christine Serrano Glassner, Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, to raise additional concerns about the impact of the Skinny Budget. Committee members advocated for securing emergency funding for tribal police departments and healthcare facilities, as well as for deploying pro bono legal teams to assist with probate cases that stall progress in tribal court systems.

The LOC also met with Mark Cruz, Senior Counselor to Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., to address longstanding gaps in access to healthcare. Cruz expressed support for reforms to the IHS and solutions to reduce the burden for patients who travel long distances for basic healthcare.

During a meeting with U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach, Chairwoman Charles-Newton highlighted the challenges caused by federal audits and the delays in distributing previously allocated funds for the Nation. She noted that these delays hinder the delivery of crucial services to Diné communities.

The Law and Order Committee is committed to collaborating with congressional leaders, federal agencies, and tribal partners to secure funding, enhance tribal justice systems, and ensure ongoing health and safety services throughout the Navajo Nation.

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