



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Speaker Curley urges federal leaders to maximize benefits of the reconciliation bill for tribes



Speaker Crystalyne Curley (third from left) joins tribal leaders and Navajo Nation Washington Office summer interns at a Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hearing for Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs nominee Billy Kirkland (center).

WASHINGTON, D.C. — During a series of meetings on Capitol Hill, Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley called on congressional leaders and federal agencies to maximize tribal funding and benefits during the implementation of the reconciliation bill that became law on July 4.

“We recognize that there was great division over the passage of the reconciliation bill. Now that it is law, we have to work with federal leaders to maximize the benefits and opportunities for the Navajo Nation and other tribes,” said Speaker Curley.

She stated that the 25th Navajo Nation Council took a strong stance to protect Medicaid for Navajo recipients and third party funding for health care centers, which helped to secure 100% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for healthcare services received by or through the Indian Health Service and tribal healthcare providers under the new provisions of the law.

Through the advocacy of tribal leaders and coalitions, the reconciliation bill maintained exemptions of tribal members for new Medicaid work requirements, which also applies to SNAP benefits. The new reconciliation bill reduces eligibility and coverage for Medicaid over a ten year period. Most of the cuts will take effect after 2026.

On Wednesday, Speaker Curley and the Coalition of Large Tribes met with high-level officials from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to affirm that tribes must have a seat at the table as the new provisions are implemented and should benefit from the newly established Rural Health Transformation Fund, to help offset the impacts of Medicaid cuts on healthcare facilities in tribal communities.

In discussions with congressional members and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services officials, Speaker Curley pushed for continued support for a replacement facility for the Gallup Indian Medical Center, which serves members from several tribes including the Navajo Nation. Council members passed a resolution supporting the construction of the new facility on land located in Gamerco, located near Gallup, N.M.

Speaker Curley also welcomed summer interns from the Navajo Nation Washington Office (NNWO) at a U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hearing held Thursday, where William "Billy" Kirkland testified as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs under the U.S. Department of the Interior. If confirmed by the Senate, Kirkland would be the first Navajo person to serve in the role.

"Our interns are the future leaders of the Navajo Nation," said Speaker Curley. "It's a great experience for them to see how tribal advocacy happens at the federal level and it helps to give them the tools and knowledge they need to be strong future advocates for our people."

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