



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEHSC advances legislation to authorize \$30 million in recurring annual funding for tribal higher education and scholarships



Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez sponsored Legislation No. 0169-25 seeking long term funding for tribal colleges and scholarships.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Monday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee of the 25th Navajo Nation Council voted in favor of Legislation No. 0169-25, which proposes to amend the Diné Higher Education Grant Fund to authorize \$30 million annually in recurring appropriations to Diné College, Navajo Technical University, and the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance (ONNSFA).

Legislation sponsor Delegate Dr. Andy Nez stated that the goal of the legislation is to increase long-term funding support for tribal colleges and student scholarships without the need to renew multi-year grant agreements. The funding will be divided equally, \$10 million each to Diné College, Navajo Technical University, and ONNSFA, and is scheduled to begin in Fiscal Year 2027.

“This legislation needs to be forward funded and initiates a long-term investment into our tribal institutions and students,” said Delegate Nez. “We are moving beyond limited five- or ten-year grants to a consistent, annual allocation. This ensures funds go directly to the institutions and scholarship office without delay.”

The legislation amends Title 12 of the Navajo Nation Code to revise the annual allocation from \$12.4 million to \$30 million. Each entity is required to submit annual financial reports to the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee and the Naabik’iyáti’ Committee. At

least 1% of each institution's allocation must support Diné language teacher programming, contribute to their endowments, and assist K–12 education pipeline programs.

Council Delegate Helena Nez Begay supported the legislation but emphasized the importance of accountability and transparency.

Begay included during the discussion, "We need these institutions to report directly to us and attend budget hearings so that we can ensure the funding is being used properly."

Dr. Nez noted that the need for reliable and increased funding is a result of limitations in existing scholarship resources and the impact of federal-level changes to higher education support.

Nez added, "Less than 50% of Navajo students who apply for scholarships through ONNSFA are awarded. This legislation provides a stable source of funding that directly supports our students and institutions, while investing to the longevity of learners and Diné speakers."

If approved by the full Council, the measure will ensure permanent funding for higher education through an annual allocation that is set to continue in perpetuity, beginning in Fiscal Year 2027.

The committee approved the legislation with a tally of four in favor and none opposed. The legislation will now proceed to the Budget and Finance Committee for further consideration.

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