



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee reviews child support updates and affordability concerns



The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a progress report for child support revisions to Legislation 0195-24

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Monday, Sept. 22, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) received a progress report from the Division of Human Resources on proposed amendments to Legislation 0195-24, the Navajo Nation Child Support Guidelines and Schedule. The update included amendments from the Law and Order Committee (LOC) and revisions reflecting a 10% and 20% scale for child support obligations.

Representatives from the Division of Human Resources (DHR) and the Department of Justice reported that the child support guideline amendments now recognize in-kind contributions such as pallets of wood pellets, coal, and ceremonial expenses for children. The revised draft also includes a 20% increase to the child support schedule.

DHR Program Manager Judy Platero demonstrated the financial impact of the revisions. Using minimum-wage income examples, she explained that the current schedule requires \$447 per month to support one child, with each parent contributing \$224. Under the 20% increase, the obligation rises to \$536 per month, with each parent responsible for \$268. The change represents a \$44 monthly increase per parent compared to the current schedule.

Committee members expressed concerns regarding affordability, implementation, and the timeline for action. They noted that the child support guidelines have not been updated in over two decades and emphasized that the rising cost of living makes an update long

overdue. Members also stressed the importance of ensuring that revisions move forward without unnecessary delays so that families can benefit from fairer and more realistic child support obligations.

Additional discussions addressed how child support payments are handled and whether administrative costs reduce the amount received by families. It was confirmed that 100 percent of child support payments collected go directly to children, while administrative costs are funded separately through the federal Office of Child Support Services.

Members also highlighted unique challenges that families face, including situations where a parent is incarcerated, when older parents are pursued for decades-old child support obligations, and when paternity is not established on birth certificates. The committee underscored that guidelines must account for such complex circumstances while maintaining the principle that both parents share responsibility for the welfare of their children.

HEHSC Chair Vince James concluded by directing presenters and legal counsel to determine whether the legislation should move forward with amendments or be reintroduced as a new bill in final form. The committee emphasized that the priority is to ensure clarity in the legislative process and timely action, so families are not left waiting any longer.

The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee voted five in favor with none opposed to accept the report with HEHSC Committee as final authority.

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