



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 introduces legislation calling for the removal of President Nygren and Vice President Montoya

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Friday, Speaker Crystalyne Curley introduced legislation to initiate the removal of Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and Vice President Richelle Montoya, citing extensive findings of malfeasance, misfeasance, and breaches of fiduciary trust duties under Navajo Nation law.

In accordance with 11 N.N.C. § 240(A), the bill outlines substantial just cause for removal, emphasizing that elected Navajo leaders must act with honesty, balance, and unwavering loyalty to the Diné people. This section of the law also provides the authority for the Council to remove the president and vice president for various violations.

Speaker Curley stated that the legislation reflects the Council's obligation to uphold the laws of the Navajo Nation, protect the Nation's public funds, and ensure accountability at the highest levels of government.

"Many of our Navajo people and a majority of chapters have adopted resolutions calling for the removal of President Nygren and Vice President Montoya for failing to uphold their oath of office and for numerous allegations, some of which are now filed in court," said Speaker Curley.

On Friday, Special Prosecutor Kyle T. Nayback also filed a formal ethics complaint in Navajo Nation District Court, alleging multiple violations of the Navajo Nation Ethics in Government Law by President Nygren, including the misuse of government purchase cards, including directing staff to falsify documents to cover personal and family expenses.

The proposed resolution also outlines multiple violations of Navajo Nation laws and fiduciary duties by President Nygren, including the following:

- Mismanagement of Executive Branch funds, including unlawful reallocations and the use of federal funds for inappropriate sponsorships or promotional items.
- Nepotism and falsification of documents, including the hiring of his father-in-law as security personnel and a babysitter, and permitting the hiring of unqualified relatives of senior staff in violation of Navajo Nation laws.
- Misuse of executive staff for personal benefit, including housekeeping, cooking, childcare, and personal assistance for the personal benefit of President Nygren.
- Unlawful attempt to terminate and appoint a Controller, violating 12 N.N.C. § 202(B), and placing the Nation's financial resources and systems at risk.

- Failure to uphold statutory reporting obligations by repeatedly missing, abandoning, or refusing to deliver the State of the Navajo Nation address as required by 2 N.N.C. §§ 161–162
- Failure to lawfully present division director appointments for Council confirmation, as required by 2 N.N.C. §§ 102(F) and 1005(C)(3).
- Appointment of an unqualified Acting Deputy Attorney General, jeopardizing the Navajo Nation's legal standing and ongoing litigations.
- Creation of a hostile work environment that resulted in unprecedented turnover within the Office of the President and Vice President.
- Improper use of line-item veto authority to pressure the Council regarding funding for the Office of the President and Vice President.
- Undue influence over Navajo Nation enterprises, including Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority (NECA), resulting in federal audit concerns.
- Approval of \$24.9 million in contracts to Indigenous Design Studio + Architects and its subcontractor ZenniHome without adequate due diligence, resulting in millions of dollars in unaccounted federal funds.
- Leveraging the Navajo Nation treasury for personal loans for himself, family members, and staff.

These findings represent repeated malfeasance, misfeasance, and breaches of fiduciary duty as set forth in 11 N.N.C. § 240(A)(1).

The grounds for the removal of Vice President Montoya includes the following:

- Failure to uphold her oath of office by failing to report alleged misconduct or violations of law within the Office of the President and Vice President, despite acknowledging issues publicly through social media and public statements.
- Her legal obligation, under her oath of office and Diné Fundamental Law, to report violations of Navajo, state, or federal laws through proper channels.
- Her public statement expressing willingness to step aside “to protect communities and restore accountability,” demonstrating recognition of the seriousness of the ongoing concerns.

Based on the fact that the President and Vice President are elected together on a single ballot, the resolution emphasizes that both elected leaders share responsibility for upholding the law and maintaining public trust.

In accordance with Diné Fundamental Law and Navajo Nation statutory requirements, the legislation affirms that both President Nygren and Vice President Montoya will receive full notice, opportunity to be heard, and the ability to speak before the Naabik'íyáti' Committee and the full Navajo Nation Council when the legislation is considered. The Office of Legislative Services will ensure all notice requirements are met in accordance with Navajo Nation law.

The proposed legislation will go through the mandatory five-day public comment period to allow the Navajo people, chapters, agency councils, and others to submit written comments.

Speaker Curley emphasized that the Council has a duty, affirmed by the Navajo Supreme Court, to guard the integrity of the Navajo Nation government and protect the Navajo people from corruption, abuse of power, and breaches of trust.

"This legislation reflects the voices of chapters, agency councils, and countless Diné community members who have called for accountability," Speaker Curley said. "Our laws are clear and mandate that leaders must uphold balance, truth, and the highest ethical standards. When they do not, it is the Council's responsibility to act on behalf of the Navajo people," said Speaker Curley.

The legislation is assigned to the Naabik'íyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council, which will require two-thirds approval to pass.

The public may submit written comments by email to comments@navajo-nsn.gov or by mail to Executive Director, Office of Legislative Services, PO Box 3390, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.

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