

THE NAVAJO NATION
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
INTERNET PUBLIC REVIEW PUBLICATION



LEGISLATION NO: 0108-26

SPONSOR: Otto Tso

TITLE: An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee; Designating the Navajo Nation as a "Purple Heart Navajo Nation"

Date posted: May 28, 2026 at 5:03 PM

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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY SHEET

Tracking No. 0108-26

DATE: May 28, 2026

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: AN ACTION RELATING TO NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE; DESIGNATING THE NAVAJO NATION AS A "PURPLE HEART NAVAJO NATION"

PURPOSE: This legislation, if approved, would formally designate the Navajo Nation as a "Purple Heart Navajo Nation" in recognition of the distinguished service and sacrifice of Navajo veterans who have been wounded or killed in action, including those awarded the Purple Heart posthumously, and to honor all Purple Heart recipients, both living and deceased, for their extraordinary courage, resilience, and unwavering commitment in defense of the United States and the Navajo Nation.

FINAL AUTHORITY: Naabik'iyáti' Committee

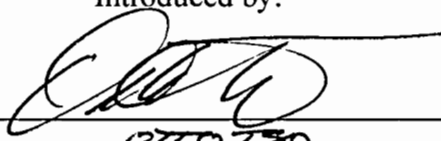

VOTE REQUIRED: Simple Majority

This written summary does not address recommended amendments as may be provided by the standing committees. The Office of Legislative Counsel requests each Council Delegate to review each proposed resolution in detail.

5-DAY BILL HOLD PERIOD:
Website Posting Time/Date:
Posting End Date: 06-02-26
Eligible for Action: 06-03-26

1 PROPOSED STANDING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION
2 25th NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL—Fourth Year, 2026

3 Introduced by:

4 
5 
6 070730
Primary Sponsor

7
8 Tracking No. 0108-26

9
10 AN ACTION
11 RELATING TO NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE; DESIGNATING THE
12 NAVAJO NATION AS A "PURPLE HEART NAVAJO NATION"
13

14 WHEREAS:

- 15 A. The Naabik'iyáti' Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation
16 Council empowered to coordinate all request for information, appearances, and
17 testimony related to proposed county, state, and federal legislation impacting the
18 Navajo Nation. 2. N.N.C. §§ 700 (A) and 701 (A)(6).
- 19 B. The Purple Heart is one of the oldest and most distinguished military decorations in
20 the United States, originating as the "Badge of Military Merit" established by
21 George Washington on August 7, 1782, and subsequently reestablished in 1932 by
22 the United States War Department to commemorate the bicentennial of
23 Washington's birth; the Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the
24 United States to members of the Armed Forces who have been wounded or killed
25 as a direct result of enemy action, and is uniquely distinguished among military
26 decorations in that it recognizes not only honorable service, but the physical and
27 enduring human cost of armed conflict, including those who have made the
28 ultimate sacrifice.
- 29 C. Native Americans, including the *Diné* people, have served in the United States
30 Armed Forces at the highest per capita rate of any ethnic group in the United

1 States, with national data and studies indicating that approximately nineteen (19)
2 percent of Native Americans have served in the military compared to
3 approximately fourteen (14) percent of the general population, as documented by
4 the U.S. Department of Defense and confirmed in the Department of Veterans
5 Affairs' National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics report, entitled
6 "*American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans: 2017*," published May 2020,
7 attached as **Exhibit A**. This legacy of service is made more profound by the
8 historical fact that thousands of Native Americans enlisted and served in World
9 War I before the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 Pub. L. No. 68-175, 43 Stat. 253
10 (1924) extended them the rights of American citizenship, demonstrating that
11 indigenous peoples commitment to the defense of this land preceded any legal
12 obligation to do so, and was rooted in something older and deeper than statute.

13 D. The *Diné* people have contributed significantly to this legacy of service, with
14 Navajo service members participating in every major conflict involving the United
15 States from the early twentieth century to the present, including World War I,
16 World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and ongoing
17 military operations. At the outset of World War II, the Navajo Nation had a total
18 population of approximately 50,000 people, yet an estimated 3,600 Navajo men
19 and women entered military service; a mobilization rate that speaks not merely to
20 patriotism, but to a sovereign people's deliberate and collective decision to defend
21 both their homeland and the broader nation in which it sits.

22 E. During World War II, Navajo service members, including the Navajo Code
23 Talkers, rendered extraordinary and strategically decisive contributions in the
24 Pacific Theater by developing and employing a secure communications code based
25 on the Navajo language; a code that was never broken by enemy forces. Major
26 Howard Connor, the 5th Marine Division Signal Officer at the Battle of Iwo Jima,
27 stated that without the Navajo Code Talkers, the Marines would not have taken Iwo
28 Jima. This achievement was formally recognized by the United States Congress
29 through the Navajo Code Talkers Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2000 and
30

1 stands as one of the most singular instances in recorded military history in which a
2 people's language became itself an instrument of liberation.

3 F. Numerous Navajo veterans have been awarded the Purple Heart for wounds
4 sustained in combat, including those who survived their injuries and those who
5 were killed in action and awarded the Purple Heart posthumously; the Navajo
6 Nation hereby recognizes and honors all such recipients, both living and deceased,
7 for their extraordinary sacrifice, courage, and service.

8 G. The *Diné* cultural framework places profound and enduring value on service, the
9 protection of the people, and the restoration of *hózhó* the state of harmony, balance,
10 and beauty that defines the *Diné* understanding of a life and a world in right order.
11 The warrior tradition among the *Diné* is not incidental to this framework but central
12 to it; those who have stood between their people and harm have always occupied a
13 place of sacred responsibility within *Diné* society, bound by the obligations of *k'é*
14 the web of kinship, care, and mutual belonging that connects each person to the
15 whole. The sacrifices endured by Purple Heart recipients, including those who gave
16 their lives and those who carry the marks of combat still, are fully consistent with
17 these ancient principles, and their formal recognition is therefore not merely a
18 matter of public policy but a sovereign responsibility and a sacred obligation of the
19 Navajo people to their own.

20 H. Governance bodies across the Navajo Nation have formally and consistently
21 expressed support for recognizing Purple Heart recipients and for designating the
22 Navajo Nation as a Purple Heart Nation, including To'Nanees'Dizí Chapter
23 Resolution No. TND-SP-09-01-2025, adopted September 11, 2025, attached as
24 **Exhibit B.**

25 I. Additional resolutions have been adopted by Navajo Nation chapters and regional
26 entities designating their respective communities as Purple Heart Communities,
27 including To'Nanees'Dizí Chapter Resolution No. TND-12-03-2024; Leupp
28 Chapter Resolution No. LP-11-004-2023; White Cone Chapter Resolution No.
29 WCC-08-19-25-002; Nazlini Chapter Resolution No. NAZL-MAR-25-028; and
30

1 Western Navajo Agency Council Resolution No. WNAC25-09-NB05, all attached
2 as **Exhibit C**.

3 J. On November 3, 2025, the Navajo Nation issued a formal proclamation declaring
4 November 2025 as "Purple Heart Nation Month," thereby recognizing the service
5 and sacrifice of Purple Heart recipients and demonstrating executive-level support
6 for broader institutional recognition, attached as **Exhibit D**.

7 K. The convergence of legislative actions at the chapter and regional levels, together
8 with executive recognition by the Office of the President, constitutes substantial
9 and persuasive evidence of a Nation-wide policy interest in formally recognizing
10 Purple Heart recipients through an official designation of the Navajo Nation.

11 L. Formal designation of the Navajo Nation as a "Purple Heart Navajo Nation" is
12 consistent with actions taken by other jurisdictions within the United States and
13 serves to institutionalize recognition of combat-wounded veterans, promote public
14 awareness of their sacrifices, and ensure that such recognition is sustained across
15 generations.

16 M. The Navajo Nation further recognizes that Purple Heart recipients who are living
17 members of Navajo communities bear ongoing and enduring needs including
18 access to healthcare, mental health resources, and the full benefits afforded to
19 combat-wounded veterans, and that the designation of the Navajo Nation as a
20 "Purple Heart Navajo Nation" carries with it not only a symbolic commitment to
21 honor but a practical and continuing obligation to ensure that living recipients are
22 known, supported, and never rendered invisible within the communities for which
23 they fought.

24 N. The Navajo Nation affirms that recognition without service is insufficient, and that
25 this designation is intended to be a living expression of gratitude, renewed in each
26 generation.

27
28 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

29 The Naabik'iyáti' Committee hereby formally and permanently designates the Navajo
30 Nation as a "Purple Heart Navajo Nation" in recognition of the distinguished service and

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sacrifice of Navajo veterans who were wounded or killed in action, including those awarded the Purple Heart posthumously.