

THE NAVAJO NATION
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
INTERNET PUBLIC REVIEW PUBLICATION



LEGISLATION NO: _0170-26__

SPONSOR: Amber Kanazbah Crotty

TITLE: An Act Relating to the Law and Order and the Naabik'iyáti' Committees, and the Navajo Nation Council; Amending the Navajo Nation Election Code at 11 N.N.C. § 404 (B) (11) to Reduce the Signature Requirements for an Initiative Petition

Date posted: July 02, 2026 at 6:21PM

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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY SHEET

Tracking No. 0170-26

DATE: June 26, 2026

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: AN ACT RELATING TO THE LAW AND ORDER AND THE NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEES, AND THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL; AMENDING THE NAVAJO NATION ELECTION CODE AT 11 N.N.C. § 404(B)(11) TO REDUCE THE SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN INITIATIVE PETITION

PURPOSE: This legislation, if approved, will reduce the signature requirement for an initiative petition.

FINAL AUTHORITY: Navajo Nation Council

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: 7-20
Website Posting Time/Date: _____
Posting End Date: 07-07-26
Eligible for Action: 07-08-26

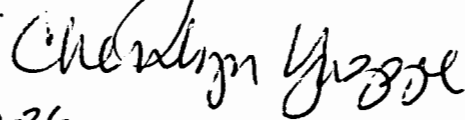
Law & Order Committee
Thence
Naabik'iyáti' Committee
Thence
Navajo Nation Council

PROPOSED NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL RESOLUTION
25th NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL—Fourth Year, 2026

Introduced By:



Primary Sponsor



Tracking No. 0170-26

AN ACT

RELATING TO THE LAW AND ORDER AND THE NAABIK'ÍYÁTI'
COMMITTEES, AND THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL; AMENDING
THE NAVAJO NATION ELECTION CODE AT 11 N.N.C. § 404(B)(11) TO
REDUCE THE SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN INITIATIVE
PETITION

BE IT ENACTED:

SECTION ONE. AUTHORITY

- A. The Law and Order Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council with the enumerated power to review and make recommendations to the Navajo Nation Council on proposed amendments to and enactments in the Navajo Nation Code. 2 N.N.C. §§ 600(A) and 601(B)(14).
- B. The Naabik'iyáti' Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council with the authority to hear proposed resolutions requiring final action by the Navajo Nation Council. 2. N.N.C. §§164 (A)(9), 700 (A) and 701 (A)(3).
- C. The Navajo Nation Council is the governing body of the Navajo Nation. 2 N.N.C. § 102 (A).

SECTION TWO. FINDINGS

- A. Under the Navajo Nation Election Code, the signatures of at least 15% of registered voters are required on an initiative petition for a measure to be placed on the ballot. 11 N.N.C. § 404(B)(11). For local chapter measures, the percentage is based on voters within the precinct. *Id.*
- B. Pursuant to the Navajo Nation Election Code, “General Elections” are defined as “Elections held for the purpose of electing the President of the Navajo Nation, Vice-President of the Navajo Nation, elected members of the Navajo Nation Board of Education, and Delegates of the Navajo Nation Council, and/or for voting on a referendum.” 11 N.N.C. § 2(V).
- C. The initiative process allows Navajo voters to propose measures for consideration by the electorate, but the current 15% signature requirement creates a substantial threshold before voters may place a measure on the ballot. Reducing the initiative petition requirement would not enact a proposed measure by petition alone but would allow a qualifying measure to be submitted to Navajo voters for approval or rejection through the election process.
- D. The Navajo Nation’s current 15% initiative petition requirement is higher than some initiative thresholds used in surrounding jurisdictions. In Arizona, statewide statutory initiatives require signatures equal to 10% of the votes cast for governor at the last gubernatorial election, while constitutional initiatives require 15%. Ariz. Const. art. IV, pt. 1, § 1; A.R.S. § 19-111.
- E. New Mexico does not provide a general statewide citizen initiative process allowing voters to propose new statutes or constitutional amendments by petition. Instead, the New Mexico Constitution reserves to the people the power to disapprove, suspend, and annul certain laws enacted by the New Mexico Legislature through the referendum process. N.M. Const. art. IV, § 1. This distinction is important because New Mexico provides voters with a limited power to reject certain legislative enactments but does not provide the same general initiative authority that exists under the Navajo Nation Election Code.

- 1 F. Utah requires a statewide direct initiative petition to contain signatures equal to at
2 least 8% of active voters statewide and to meet the applicable threshold in at least 26
3 of Utah's 29 state senate districts. Utah also provides an indirect initiative process
4 submitted first to the Legislature, which requires signatures equal to at least 4% of
5 active voters statewide and in the required number of senate districts. Utah Code Ann.
6 §§ 20A-7-201, 20A-7-201.1.
- 7 G. The Native American Rights Fund issued a report entitled "*Obstacles at Every Turn:
8 Barriers to Political Participation Faced by Native American Voters*" in 2020,
9 attached as **Exhibit A**. The report documented barriers faced by Native voters
10 throughout the political process, including voter registration barriers, distance to
11 election services, limited mail access, language access issues, and other obstacles that
12 affect political participation in Native communities. The report was based on field
13 hearings conducted by the Native American Voting Rights Coalition, which was
14 founded by the Native American Rights Fund, and included testimony from more
15 than 120 witnesses from dozens of Tribes across the country.
- 16 H. The Native American Voting Rights Coalition issued a 2018 survey report on voting
17 barriers encountered by Native American voters in Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada,
18 and South Dakota, attached as **Exhibit B**. The report states that the Navajo Nation
19 Human Rights Commission participated in the Arizona and New Mexico research and
20 that Native voters reported barriers including lack of information on how and where
21 to register and vote, lack of convenient voting options, long travel distances, low
22 internet access, and problems with local election officials and poll workers.
- 23 I. The Commission on Navajo Government Development (the "Commission") was
24 established to review and evaluate all aspects of the government structure of the
25 Navajo Nation, including laws, practices, goals and objectives of the central
26 government as it relates to chapters, etc. and to develop recommendations and
27 proposals for alternative forms of chapter government and empowerment for
28 consideration and possible adoption.
- 29 J. The Commission prepared statistics on the Navajo initiative process and has
30 recommended that the threshold for signatures be reduced from 15% of registered

1 Navajo Nation voters to 7% of all votes cast for candidates for the Navajo Nation
2 President at the last election. The statistics report with the recommendation are
3 attached as **Exhibit C**.

4 K. The Navajo Nation finds that documented barriers to Native voter participation
5 support review of Navajo Nation Election Code requirements to ensure that petition-
6 based voter participation mechanisms, including recall and initiative petitions, remain
7 practical and accessible to Navajo voters across the Navajo Nation.

8 L. Reducing the initiative petition signature requirement from 15% of registered voters
9 to 7%, would preserve meaningful signature requirements while making the initiative
10 processes more accessible to Navajo voters.

11 12 **SECTION THREE. AMENDING TITLE 11 OF THE NAVAJO NATION CODE**

13 The Navajo Nation Council hereby amends Title 11 of the Navajo Nation Code as
14 follows:

15 16 17 **TITLE 11. ELECTIONS**

18 **CHAPTER 2. REFERENDUM / INITIATIVE**

19 * * *

20 21 **§ 404. Initiatives by petition of registered voters**

22 B. Petition requirements are as follows:

23 11. ~~Fifteen-percent (15%)~~ Seven (7%) of all eligible registered voters who cast a
24 vote in the most recent General Election shall have signed the petition for an
25 initiative to be placed on a ballot. ~~For purposes of determining t~~The fifteen
26 seven percent (157%) petition signature requirement, shall be based on the
27 total number of eligible-registered voters who cast a vote in the most recent
28 General Elections~~shall be the official number of registered voters~~, Navajo
29 Nation-wide or for the particular Chapter if a Chapter initiative, as of the date
30 the petition is first submitted to the Navajo Election Administration.

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4 **SECTION FOUR. CODIFICATION**

5 The provision of these amendments of the Navajo Nation Code shall be codified by the

6 Office of Legislative Counsel. The Office of Legislative Counsel shall incorporate such

7 amended provisions in the next codification of the Navajo Nation Code.

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9 **SECTION FIVE. SAVING CLAUSE**

10 If any provision of this Act is determined invalid by the Supreme Court of the Navajo

11 Nation, or by a Navajo Nation District Court without appeal to the Navajo Nation

12 Supreme Court, the remainder of this Act shall remain the law of the Navajo Nation.

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14 **SECTION SIX. EFFECTIVE DATE**

15 This Action shall become effective in accordance with 2 N.N.C. § 221(A) and (B).

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