



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council approves legislation to reduce the required number of signatures for a recall petition to 25 percent



Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, sponsor of Legislation No. 0169-26.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On July 20th, the 25th Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0169-26, decreasing the recall petition signature requirement to 25%, and authorizing the collection of electronic signatures from registered voters in the previous election.

“This is a critical need for the Navajo Nation. Our current laws do not protect the Navajo people’s votes and their right to petition to remove leadership when they fail to serve the Nation,” said Delegate Crotty. “The Nation’s first attempt to recall a Navajo elected official showed us how hard it is to meet the 45% requirement without using online signatures. I hope this change will allow future generations to strengthen their voice and petition to remove an official who continues to fail to meet the Navajo people’s needs.”

This legislation was introduced following efforts by 70 chapter houses that submitted resolutions calling for the removal of the Nygren/Montoya administration. Its goal was to promote democracy within the Navajo Nation by reducing the signature threshold needed for petitions.

This would enable the Navajo people to more easily vote on and recall leaders who fail to fulfill their duties within the Navajo Nation Government. Furthermore, electronic signatures from voters in the last election would be accepted and included in petitions for removing elected officials.

The Navajo Nation's initial 45% signature requirement for recall elections is higher than in other areas. In Arizona, petition signatures must be at least 25% of the votes cast in the previous general election for the position in question before a recall can be initiated. Similarly, New Mexico permits recalls for some local officials, but its required threshold is lower. Under New Mexico's Recall Act, a recall petition needs verified signatures equal to at least 33.5% of the votes from the last election for that office.

"After reviewing the data from Arizona and New Mexico, Delegate Crotty and I made the decision that it was a critical need to change the percentage of signature requirements for a petition," said Council Delegate Cherylin Yazzie, co-sponsor of the legislation. "Our main priority is to ensure that the people who elected us also have the ability to elect us out without having to go through further barriers to complete this process."

The reduction in the required signature will give the Navajo people the accessibility to voice their concerns about their elected leaders and ensure each Navajo elected official is held accountable. These changes to the petition requirements make it easier for voting Navajo citizens to choose who will remain in office.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council voted on the legislation, with 16 in favor and two opposed. Once the resolution is certified, President Buu Nygren will have 10 days to act on the measure.

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