



PRESIDENT SHIRLEY'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT REFORM AGREEMENT

AUG. 13, 2008

As Navajo people, it is always good to come together with *k'e* to talk about the challenges which come our way each day. Certainly government reform is a big challenge. My prayer and hope is that, using *k'e*, we are setting a good example of working together to take on the challenges which befall us and our people daily.

I hope that the agreement we have put in place will be acted upon in an affirmative manner and brought to fruition by the Navajo Nation Council. There is a real dire need to address government reform at this time, and I'm glad that we have actually begun to do something about it. What we are talking about today should have been addressed within three years after the 1990 Title 2 amendments had been put in place. It did not happen, and is the reason why we are still talking about government reform today.

What I like about coming to a settlement agreement, using *k'e*, is that it proposes to do a comprehensive government reform, and certainly our Navajo Nation government needs the complete reformation and overhaul. A comprehensive government reform has been a long time coming. And, again, I hope we can put it in place. Yes, there is very serious interest by the majority of our people in reducing the Navajo Nation Council to 24 members judging by the garnering of over 10,000 signatures thus far. The drive for signatures for the two initiatives will continue, and we have until November 6, 2008, to get 16,800 signatures. Certainly, the two initiatives we had started and are continuing to work on – reducing the size of the Navajo Nation Council and the line-item-veto authority for the President – many of us feel and believe in is a good start toward government reform, albeit it's only two issues.

The initiatives can be stopped by the Navajo Nation Council taking affirmative action on the proposed settlement agreement legislation. As Navajo people, we cannot forget our way of life, especially *k'e*. It does not matter the differences of opinion we have. We are a sacred people and our ways are also sacred. The use of our way of life saves us as a people. When we leave it, it is when we put our way of life to the side. I believe that Delegate and Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, Lawrence Morgan, and delegates Leonard Tsosie and Raymond Maxx are to be commended for stepping forward to suggest using *k'e* to see if we can come to a settlement agreement about how to proceed with government reform.

As it were, we have come to an agreement, and all that is lacking now is for the whole of the Navajo Nation Council to acquiesce in the agreement. If and when they do, I believe we are well on our way to reforming our Navajo Nation government in a more comprehensive and wholesome way.

Mr. Albert Hale, Mr. Steve Boos, and those who have worked on the agreement document, and proposed legislation that goes with it, are also to be thanked for their tireless effort in getting an agreement in place.