



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., sends congratulations to President-elect Obama on pending inauguration on Tuesday

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., has sent President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden the following congratulatory letter on their election and coming inauguration:

Dear President-elect Obama and Vice President-elect Biden,

Yá'át'ééh! On behalf of the Great Navajo Nation, I want to express how delighted the Navajo people are with your election as President and Vice President of the United States. It is my honor to inform you that Navajo voters overwhelmingly supported you at the polls, and look forward with immense enthusiasm and pride to your inauguration.

Not since President Clinton and President Kennedy occupied the Oval Office have Navajos had such a sense of renewed hope and joyful anticipation at the promise of a new President, and in the trust that their voices will at last be heard at the top level of government, for our needs are great.

Your recent appointments of South Dakota U.S. Senator Tom Daschle as Secretary of Health and Human Services and Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano as Secretary of Homeland Security signal the reestablishment of a true government-to-government, sovereign-to-sovereign, and friend-to-friend relationship. Native Americans consider them a brother and a sister for their compassion, understanding and hard work on our behalf.

The Navajo People believe in your call for change in our country. Your message resonates within our sacred culture and way of life. One of the most venerated of our Holy People is Changing Woman who created the Diné, as we call ourselves, and who is the mother of our Hero Twins. The twins kept the People from being entirely devoured by the monsters who once roamed the surface of the Earth, and some of whom dwell among us still as hunger, thirst, greed, jealousy, ignorance, poverty, and all manner of diseases.

Your inspiring statement of belief, “Yes We Can,” conveys the same thought taught to generations of Navajos that there are no impossibilities in life. Our grandparents have always told us “T’áá hó ájít’égó” – “It’s up to you” – and your election shows how true that teaching is and remains. It speaks to Native American nations in our determination to do for ourselves, to regain the

independence that was lost so long ago, and to hold on to our beloved homelands, languages, sacred songs, ceremonies, and ways of life.

Our mothers and our grandmothers are greatly revered among us. From earliest times, Navajo has been a matrilineal society.

Your message of hope resounds in hearts throughout our nation, across Native America, and within the fire-lit hogans of Navajoland.

– Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr.

The foundation of our culture is our clan system passed on through our mothers. This is why it was so gratifying to Navajo people, especially our elderly, to hear that your mother-in-law, Mrs. Marian Robinson, may live with you at the White House. That is as it should be. Grandparents hold and pass on the teachings so central to children’s lives. Like countless Navajos, I, like you, was raised by my grandmother, and all that I am today is because of her.

Mr. President, your message of hope resounds in hearts throughout our nation, across Native America, and within the fire-lit hogans of Navajoland. In our humble way, we congratulate you and support you in your pursuit to restore that which makes us proud to be Americans. We thank you for your commitment on our behalf. May your family’s bonds of love be strengthened by your service to our country, gratitude greet you in your endeavors, and your feet remain on the corn pollen path.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joe Shirley, Jr., President
THE NAVAJO NATION