



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Speaker Morgan: Downsizing of the Navajo Nation Council is not the focus of comprehensive government reform**

*Recent newspaper articles have given false impressions Speaker Morgan is endorsing President Shirley's reform initiative to reduce the size of the Navajo Nation Council*

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — The Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan issued a second statement today to reaffirm his position on comprehensive government reform on behalf of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council — a statement that clarifies his position on the reduction of the Council.

On Aug. 12, Speaker Morgan and Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley Jr. announced a comprehensive government reform plan that will involve all three branches of the Navajo Nation government.

Speaker Morgan reaffirms that downsizing the Navajo Nation Council is **NOT** the focus of the comprehensive government reform which has been initiated.

Recent newspaper articles have given false impressions Speaker Morgan is endorsing President Shirley's reform initiative to reduce the size of the Navajo Nation Council. Speaker Morgan signed a Memorandum of Understanding with President Shirley agreeing to explore options for comprehensive government reform — it is not an agreement to reduce the Navajo Nation Council.

The Speaker has always made it clear that his goal is to reach a point where he can address general reform of the tribal government.

Speaker Morgan said that the size of the Council is not the central issue for comprehensive government reform. In the interest of compromise and moving the Nation forward, Speaker Morgan agreed to sign the MOU with the understanding that the subject of reform will be an ongoing discussion with approval from the Navajo Nation Council.

"The plan to restructure the entire Navajo Nation government must involve all three branches of our tribal government," Speaker Morgan said. "Any change to the structure of the Navajo Nation Council needs to come from the Navajo people."

Speaker Morgan explained "this is a grassroots effort that will lay the foundation for how the tribal government is structured for the future — for the future generations to come and for the future of all Navajo people."

The two tribal leaders have agreed to explore options for government reform and have agreed to include a plan to



**Lawrence T. Morgan**

Speaker of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council

organize a convention to amend sections of Title 2 of the Navajo Nation Code — a plan that will ultimately come before the Navajo Nation Council for its final approval.

Speaker Morgan says that he will continue to assert and maintain the interest of the Navajo people — a duty that remains paramount in his efforts to begin this reform initiative.

“This is the Navajo people’s government and they must be represented,” Speaker Morgan said. “I support the spirit of comprehensive government reform, which is an effort to address structural concerns and issues that hinder the work of our Nation.”

“Comprehensive government reform is possible,” Speaker Morgan added. “We all need to work together and listen to the Navajo people. I ask for your understanding and your patience as we begin to undertake this historic step toward true government reform for the Navajo people.”

According to the MOU, legislation will be drafted for the Council’s consideration, which refers to the Navajo Nation voters’ amendments to the section in question. The referred amendments would include language to address the votes required to amend sections of the Navajo Nation Code. Speaker Morgan said that the Navajo Nation Council will have the final authority in approving this plan — as the governing body of the Navajo Nation.

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