



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Speaker Morgan disappointed with delays of meetings with President Shirley**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — The Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan expressed disappointment today with the further delays of meetings with Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley Jr. Meetings between the two leaders of the Navajo Nation came to a halt July 21.

Since July 23, President Shirley and Speaker Morgan conducted four face-to-face meetings in an effort to talk things out regarding disagreements of the president's initiatives to reduce the size of the Navajo Nation Council and to give the president line-item veto power.

Speaker Morgan explained that his meetings with President Shirley have been held nearly every week and they have been cordial and productive. "The focus of these meetings has been for the development of a draft settlement document that will establish procedures for a complete re-examination and overhaul of the Navajo Nation government — comprehensive reform that Speaker Morgan has always advocated for, not just for reducing the Council.

Speaker Morgan is concerned and disappointed that the pace of these meetings has slowed down and he said that it is critical that he and President Shirley continue their dialogue.

"We were really close to wrapping up a settlement that would have been good for all Navajo people. It would have given us a real opportunity to address all of the problems of the Navajo Nation government; not just how many people sit in the Council chambers," Speaker Morgan said. "I'm worried that the continued delay will put all of that in jeopardy. I know how tough it is for the president to schedule his time, but I wish our meetings could have been given a much higher priority for the sake of the Navajo people and their government."

Speaker Morgan explained that it appears that President Shirley's schedule will prevent him from attending the discussions for the time being.

An inquiry sent to Albert Hale, an attorney representing President Shirley, was met with the response that the president will not be ready to meet with the Speaker until the first week of August — that is until Aug. 4.

Speaker Morgan feels that it is critical that he and president meet and push forward with a settlement, following this week's decision by the Navajo Supreme Court regarding the president's initiative petition filed by President Shirley.

On July 21, President Shirley and Speaker Morgan reached a tentative settlement. The settlement was based on the president's position that the Council, in addition to the Navajo people, could amend Section 102(A) of Title II of the Navajo Nation Code.

Speaker Morgan says that the Navajo Supreme Court told both parties that the Council does not have that authority, nor does the president — the settlement was out the window.

"I thought it was important that we immediately move to find another basis for settlement and I offered to be available any evening this week after the conclusion of the Council summer session," Speaker Morgan said.