



## The 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Navajo Nation Council pleased with Navajo Supreme Court's decision of limiting President Shirley to two consecutive terms**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council is pleased with the Navajo Nation Supreme Court's decision in limiting Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley Jr. to two terms as President of the Navajo Nation. The Supreme Court rendered their decision today and a written opinion should be available in a few days according to Associate Justice Eleanor Shirley.

Chief Justice Herb Yazzie ruled that the provisions of the law prohibit three consecutive terms, leaving open the possibility that the opinion of the court will interpret the law as allowing a Navajo Nation President to serve more than two terms, as long as those terms would not be consecutive. Yazzie also said the court disagreed with the argument made by election challenger, Jerry Jay Todacheene, that Dine Fundamental Law does not exist and is "hearsay."

The Navajo Nation Council is pleased the high court upheld the Office of Hearing and Appeal's decision, which ruled against Shirley, and subsequently ruled according to *Diné bi bóhoolnǫ́* or the "people's decision" during today's hearing.

According to the notion of *Diné bi bóhoolnǫ́*, the high court displayed good judgment by honoring tribal laws and respecting the Navajo people's voice as they are the only ones to make a determination of term limits.

Council Delegate Rex Lee Jim (Rock Point) said he was delighted by the high court's decision, which honored the Navajo people's right to liberty and democracy.

"We have Navajo Nation Code Law and Diné Fundamental Law that says people have the right to select their leaders but there should be term limits," Jim said. "Traditionally speaking, if people did not like a leader, they would choose a different leader or go to another band. The Supreme Court did a good job in its decision. In fact, the Office of Hearings and Appeal did a wonderful job of outlining reasons for term limits."

Jim also added that an issue such as term limits, whether for the President, Council delegates or any other elected positions, would need to go to the people for vote, which would exhibit democracy at its truest form.

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