



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Speaker Morgan presents *Navajo Power – Navajo Vote***

*Kick-off event scheduled in Tuba City, Ariz. on March 19*

*“Voting is the power that we have and we can decide who we want to send to our state legislature and to Congress to represent us – that is the power we have as voters.”- Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan*

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — The 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council and the Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan (Iyanbito/Pinedale) are pleased to present the *2008 Navajo Power – Navajo Vote* town hall meetings.

The town hall meetings will give local candidates in county, state, and federal elections an opportunity to present their political platforms and the opportunity to answer questions from their constituents.

A kick-off event is scheduled on Wednesday, March 19 at the Tuba City High School Warrior Pavilion in Tuba City, Ariz. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Speaker Morgan has been a strong advocate for voting and said that “voting is our key to being heard.” He added that “it was a mere 60 years ago that Native Americans were given the right to vote in the state of Arizona.”

“Voting was not a privilege to Navajo people,” Speaker Morgan said. “In 1948, Navajos went to the polls and if they could speak English, they could vote.”

“Voting is the power that we have and we can decide who we want to send to our state legislature and to Congress to represent us – that is the power we have as voters,” Speaker Morgan explained.

The Navajo people are becoming more educated in the voting process and part of that means that they want to meet the candidates and they want to learn about their political agendas.

Leila Help-Tulley, Legislative Staff Assistant with the Office of the Speaker explained that “the Navajo people want to have the opportunity to meet the political candidates that will be advocating for our Navajo interests and have our Navajo interests known.”

Help-Tulley added that “we have to make it our interest to be a part of this discussion since Navajo people are a vital and powerful component to the democratic voting process.”

“The fact that Navajos and other tribes in Arizona were not allowed to vote is ironic,” Help-Tulley said. “Ironic, in the sense that our Navajo Code Talkers helped win the war for America against the Japanese soldiers with the use of the Navajo language in 1948 – this was during a time when English speakers were not allowed to vote.”

In 1948, Help-Tulley said there were Navajo Code Talkers who wanted to vote, but could not. “They gave their life to fight in a war, but were denied the right to vote,”

“Voting is a powerful tool that we should all take advantage of, it was not always a privilege for our Navajo people,” Speaker Morgan said. “Our Native people fought long and hard to finally gain this right for us – a right that we should definitely utilize.”

“Change will not come to us, we as Native Americans need to take a firm stand and exercise our right to vote,” Speaker Morgan explained. “Our Native people need to realize that they are very influential as voters.”

Voting numbers help influence and determine federal funding appropriations, as well as other resources. Speaker Morgan added that the “Navajo people and Native Americans need to realize that these formulas are calculated and influenced by you as a voter.”

The Office of the Speaker will coordinate five town hall meetings across the Navajo Nation, beginning with the kick-off event in Tuba City. The additional town hall meetings are scheduled at Many Farms Public School in Many Farms, Ariz. on March 27, Window Rock High School in Window Rock, Ariz. on April 3, Navajo Technical College in Crownpoint, N.M. on April 18, and in Shiprock, N.M. at the Walter Collins Center on April 30.

The general public is invited to this exciting event to actively participate in the discussions, while getting to know their political candidates.

You can download a copy of the schedule by accessing [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org), click on downloads.

Political candidates are encouraged to contact Leila Help-Tulley with the Office of the Speaker at 928-871-7160 or email by at [leila\\_helptulley@yahoo.com](mailto:leila_helptulley@yahoo.com). You may also contact Joshua Lavar Butler at 928-871-7160.

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