



## The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Navajo President's Office issues inaccurate information, attempt to further discredit the Navajo Nation Council and Speaker**

*Misinformation provided by OPVP is directed to gain momentum for petition initiative to reduce Council, Investigations into wrongdoings of OnSat and BCDS are based on facts*

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The Office of the President's spokesman issued several press releases in different forms correcting his statements in the last couple of days in an effort to further discredit actions of the Navajo Nation Council and the Speaker of the Navajo Nation, even going so far as to fabricate statements made by staff from the Office of the Speaker.

George Hardeen, spokesman for the President's Office, is attempting to confuse the Navajo public by providing misinformation in a desperate attempt to sway public opinion regarding the Council's actions Monday, Oct. 19, when they heard three reports involving investigations related to OnSat and BCDS—two failed business deals managed by the Joe Shirley Jr. Administration.

On Monday, Oct. 19, the Navajo Nation Council received three reports regarding OnSat E-Rate, OnSat and BCDS, the Biochemical Decontamination Systems Company. The same day, rumors began spreading that Council would suspend the Navajo President, the vice president and members of their staff for their involvement in these three investigations.

The fact is these three investigations have absolutely nothing to do with the two petition initiatives—one to reduce the size of the Navajo Nation Council and to give the Navajo President line item veto authority. Hardeen attempts to use Council's actions on Monday as a way to confuse the Navajo people and sway public opinion in their favor.

"These three investigations did not come about overnight, it began years ago," said Joshua Lavar Butler, communications director for the Office of the Speaker. "The Office of the President is simply reacting to the allegations and it's probably a natural human instinct to retaliate, but the investigations are all based on facts and that is something you cannot refute."

The President's spokesman said the Council discussed the three investigations in a "secret discussion from which the Navajo public was excluded," this is what you call "executive session" and it is common practice for any legislature to call executive session to deal with personnel matters or of matters still being investigated.

Second, the President's spokesman says Joshua Lavar Butler "violated the council's own executive session rules by revealing what reportedly was discussed in closed session." The fact is the Council concluded their executive session, at which time the public was invited back in and that is when Council discussed--in an open forum--the contents of a press release being criticized by the President's spokesman. Staff from the President's Office, including George Hardeen, were also present to hear the same exact information.

Third, Hardeen claims "neither the President nor his staff were allowed any opportunity to respond to the allegations or permitted to answer questions from Council members." The fact of the matter is the three reports

were just that, reports to the Navajo Nation Council. In due time, the President may have the opportunity to address the allegations against him and members of his staff.

Fourth, Hardeen attempts to refocus attention on the Council by way of criticizing Attorneys Judith M. Dworkin and Daniel B. Mestaz of Sacks Tierney P.A. He attempts to use the project for the proposed legislative branch building as criticism.

The fact of the matter is the legislative branch building was still in its early stages of planning when it was presented to Council, it was merely options for the Council to consider based on a directive by the Council. Hardeen's attempt to flip this project back on the media is just another one of his attempts to shift attention away from the wrongdoings of OnSat and the BCDS affairs.

Fifth, Hardeen says "The Public should remember that Speaker Morgan's concept of government reform is to abolish the Office of the President and Vice President and to replace the President's position with a committee chaired by the Speaker."

His dramatized version is inaccurate and conveys this message for the simple reason of shifting the attention away from the Office of the President. The fact is the option to establish this type of government is based on an in depth independent study done by the Diné Policy Institute, which provided four models to use as options in initiating comprehensive government reform and the idea did not come for the Office of the Speaker or from Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan. The full report can be accessed at <http://www.navajonationcouncil.org/Downloads/DPIupdated.pdf>

"I suggest George Hardeen read the reports by Diné Policy Institute and he will clearly see it is not a report compiled by Speaker Morgan or his office," said Butler. "Like I have said before, desperate times call for desperate measures and clearly this is yet another example of that displayed by the President's spokesman. If anything, Hardeen's assertions provide humor and entertainment for the media and the Navajo public."

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