



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Navajo Council vote on President Shirley's veto overrides

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — The 21st Navajo Nation Council convened for a special session to consider overrides for three pieces of legislation vetoed by President Joe Shirley Jr. today, Sept. 11, at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber.

The first piece of legislation was presented by Thomas Walker Jr., council delegate for the chapters of Bird Springs, Tolani Lake, and Leupp. Walker and Tom Lapahé (Tachée/Blue Gap/Whippoorwill) utilized 15 minutes to present to the Council testimony to support an override of the president's veto of the Navajo Nation Commercial Tobacco-Free Act of 2008.

The Council voted 41 to 29 to approve the override; however, a minimum of 59 votes was required and the override did not pass. The override, essentially, would have banned tobacco usage in public places on the Navajo Nation.

The second piece of legislation was presented by George Arthur, council delegate for the chapters of T'iistoh Sikaad, San Juan and Nenanezad. Arthur used 10 minutes to present to the Council testimony to override the veto and convince the council to override the president's veto to purchase the Inn of Gallup.

The Council voted 44 to 23 to approve the override; however, a minimum of 59 votes was also required and the override did not pass. The override would have authorized the purchase of the Inn of Gallup, formally known as the Holiday Inn of Gallup, using \$6.6 million from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, including an additional \$2.6 from the fund for hotel renovations.

The third piece of legislation presented was to override the president's veto to amend three titles of the Navajo Nation Code which relate to the Board of Education Amendments Act of 2008. Willie Tracey Jr., council delegate for the chapters of Ganado and Kinlichee, and Elmer Milford, council delegate for Fort Defiance, presented to the Council reasons to support the legislation. The Council voted 40 to 20 to approve the override; however a minimum of 59 votes were required and the override did not pass.

An override would have given authority of the Navajo Nation Board of Education to the Education Committee of the Navajo Nation Council. It will have also reduced the number of board members from 11 to seven.

Orlanda Smith-Hodge, council delegate for Cornfields, Greasewood Springs, Klagetoh, and Wide Ruins, proposed to add a piece of emergency legislation to the session; however, the council voted 27 to 36 to not add it to the agenda. The legislation proposed to appropriate \$175,000 for repairs of the Cornfields Chapter. There were 25 delegates who abstained from voting.

Raymond Maxx, council delegate for Coalmine Canyon and Toh Nanees Dizi (Tuba City) proposed to add a piece of emergency legislation to the session as well; however, the council voted 11 to 59 to not add it to the agenda. The legislation proposed to approve \$2 million to conduct a referendum election related to Title 2 of the Navajo Nation Code. There were 18 delegates who abstained from voting.

Legislation proposed to repeal a resolution adopted on July 8, 1930 by the Navajo Tribal Council and adopt new legislation to transfer oversight of Canyon de Chelly National Monument to the Navajo Nation was voted to be taken off the agenda.

Harry Claw, council delegate for Chinle, proposed that the item be deleted until public hearings regarding the legislation were conducted. The Council voted 53-17 in agreement. Primary sponsors of the legislation are George Arthur and Norman John II, council delegate for Twin Lakes.

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