



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Speaker Naize thanks veterans and military members for service and protection at Lori Piestewa sunrise memorial event**

PHOENIX – Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) and Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) rose before dawn on Saturday morning along with about 75 other people to honor the late Lori Piestewa at a sunrise memorial service held at the base of namesake Piestewa Peak.

“It is an honor to participate in this event this morning,” said Speaker Naize, who extended special recognition to the Piestewa family and friends present at the memorial service who served alongside Piestewa in the military.

In their capacity as tribal leaders, Speaker Naize affirmed that he and the Navajo Nation Council would continue to give their full support to veterans, military service members, and those who were serving in the military overseas.

“We have so many of our Native people fighting and courageously defending this nation,” said Speaker Naize, expressing gratitude for the protection that Native military warriors were providing, while sacrificing time away from home and family.

Speaker Naize then focused the audience’s attention on the current struggles for water, land, resources, and treaty recognition that many Indigenous nations are engaged in domestically.

“We have to remind the federal government that we are also fighting for our water and our resources, too,” Speaker Naize said.

Wrapping up his short address, Speaker Naize turned to the Piestewa family who were seated in the front row before the presentation stage – among them were Piestewa’s father, mother, and her two children, who were now 13 and 14 years old.

“May the Holy People, and Father Sun shine light on your families and warm their hearts with comfort,” Speaker Naize said, addressing both the Piestewa family and military families in attendance that had lost loved ones in foreign combat.

Speaker Naize and Delegate Hale paid tribute, alongside President Ben Shelly and Miss Navajo Nation Leandra Thomas, to all veterans – living and fallen – for their military services.

The event marked ten years since Piestewa was killed in combat at the age of 23 during a roadside military ambush in Iraq on March 23, 2003.

Piestewa grew up in Tuba City, Ariz., and was a member of the Hopi Tribe.

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