



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **Navajo Nation urges Congress to fund a Navajo Code Talkers national monument in Washington, D.C.**

**WINDOW ROCK** – Last Thursday, the Naabik'íyáti' Committee unanimously approved legislation urging the U.S. Congress to appropriate funds to construct a Navajo Code Talkers national monument in Washington, D.C. to recognize their military service during World War II.

Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), who sponsored the legislation, stated that the Navajo Code Talkers should be honored and recognized in a significant manner at the national level.

“The Code Talkers have done a tremendous duty for the United States and they deserve to be honored and recognized at the national level. Their families and community members deserve to see a national monument dedicated to the Code Talkers when they visit the United States Capitol. Also, people from around the world need to know about our great Navajo warriors,” stated Delegate Yazzie.

In April 1942, the U.S. Marine Corps recruited 29 Navajo men between the ages of 17 to 32 as Radio Operators, who were later known as Navajo Code Talkers. The Code Talkers used the Navajo language to communicate military messages when they served in combat in the Pacific. During the war, the U.S. Marine Corps recruited a total of 350 Navajo Code Talkers.

Military commanders credited the Navajo code in saving the lives of countless American soldiers in the battles of Gaudalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. After World War II, the Navajo code remained a secret for 23 years until in 1968 when the U.S. Department of Defense declassified the Navajo code.

In April 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the Honoring the Navajo Code Talkers Act, which authorized the U.S. President to present gold medals on behalf of Congress to the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers in recognition of their contributions to the U.S.

During last Thursday's discussion, Naabik'íyáti' Committee approved an amendment to add all 350 Navajo Code Talkers' names to the proposed national monument.

“All Navajo Code Talkers will be honored and recognized. We have the freedom and privilege because of them. They have used our Navajo language to protect our land and families,” added Delegate Yazzie.

The Naabik'íyáti' Committee approved Legislation No. 0173-16 with a 10-0 vote. Naabik'íyáti' Committee serves as the final authority for the bill. The resolution will be sent to members of the U.S. Congress along with a supportive letter on behalf of the Navajo Nation.

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