



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Law and Order Committee refers the proposed Navajo Nation Firearms Act to the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety for analysis

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday the Law and Order Committee considered Legislation No. 0114-17, which would amend the Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code and enact the Navajo Nation Firearms Act. During the discussion, the LOC members raised many concerns and questions regarding the proposed act.

Legislative sponsor Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tólikan, Red Mesa) stated that the proposed act is the first of its kind for the Nation and is highly needed to benefit the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety.

“The initiative to establish a firearm act for the Nation has been ongoing for two years. The Nation doesn’t have these laws and it should be highly considered. Safety is the main intent of the legislation,” stated Delegate Filfred.

According to the legislation, the Navajo Nation Firearms Act states that the Navajo Nation Police Department shall maintain a central registry of all firearms that exist on the Navajo Nation, except firearms in possession or under the control of the Nation. The registry would contain the identification of the firearm, date of registry, and identification and address of person(s) entitled to possession of the firearm.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) did not favor the proposed act due to the possible infringement of the rights of individuals.

“I don’t support the legislation because it will affect the U.S. Constitution’s second amendment, which states that the people have the right to bear arms and it shall not be infringed. This act would limit the ownership of firearms. Firearm registry is also already regulated by the federal government,” stated Delegate Yazzie.

LOC vice chair Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins) asked if the NNDPS would have the resources and funds to implement the act.

NNPD chief of police Phillip B. Francisco stated that the proposed act would be a helpful tool for the department, however the departments lacks manpower and funding.

“I am aware that the state regulates the registry of firearms when you purchase a firearm. They also do a background check. Will the proposed act create duplication of services?” stated LOC member Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi).

Delegate Filfred stated that as a sovereign government, the Nation has the capability to implement the act and it should not depend on how the state regulates firearms.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) recommended that the legislation be referred to the NNDPS to provide an analysis on how much the proposed law would cost to implement and how many staff members will be needed to implement the program.

The Law and Order Committed voted 3-0 in support of the directive to have NNDPS provide an analysis report regarding the legislation within six months. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority for the bill.

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