



## The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Speaker Pro Tem Nez, President Shelly discuss statewide budget issues with Gov. Jan Brewer and legislative staff officials

PHOENIX, Ariz. – As a matter of critical concern, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council sent their Speaker Pro Tem Jonathan Nez to deliver the Navajo Nation's concerns regarding the severe state budget deficit to Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer and state legislative officials. The speaker pro tem, along with Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended meetings with the governor and state legislative officials held as part of the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Indian Nations and Tribes Legislative Day at the Arizona State Capitol.



Left to right: Navajo Nation First Lady Martha Shelly, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, Gov. Jan Brewer and Speaker Pro Tem Jonathan Nez at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Indian Nations and Tribes Legislative Day in Phoenix (Photo by Eric Descheenie).

The state budget deficit currently sits at approximately \$800 million, with limited areas of the state budget to cut in order to balance the deficit, and currently there are no readily available options to generate new revenue. At the meetings, the speaker pro tem and president shared the nation's grave concerns, including impending cuts to public education and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containmentment Systems. The AHCCCS serves as Arizona's Medicaid agency in delivering healthcare options to tens of thousands of Navajos throughout the state of Arizona.

Speaker Pro Tem Nez and President Shelly made it clear the Navajo Nation is moving forward as a cohesive, concerted nation for the betterment of the Navajo people.

"Going forward, the Navajo Nation must speak together to best communicate our concerns to other sovereign states, so work can get done for the health and welfare of our people," said Speaker Pro Tem Nez. "When our intergovernmental discussions are inconsistent or down right contradictory to one another, the people suffer even more. It is imperative our Navajo government work together to achieve results for our Navajo communities and that is precisely what we are doing."

"The 2011 Arizona State Legislative session just got underway and it is time to deliver upon our initiative to preserve resources that our people depend on and to dig up opportunity that currently lies just below the surface," added Speaker Pro Tem Nez.

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