



The 21st Navajo Nation Council

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Judiciary Committee amends hearing rules to recommend the removal of permanent justices or judges from office

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Judiciary Committee voted today to amend its hearing rules to recommend the removal of permanent Navajo Nation Justices or Judges from office on a vote of 4-2. The amendment to the committee's hearing rules also calls for the removal of permanent justices or judges to be effective immediately.

Honorable Raymond Joe, chair for the Public Safety Committee, sponsored the legislation in an effort to specify the roles of the Judiciary Committee and Navajo Nation Council in the hearing rules process for the removal of permanent justices or judges.

"This legislation does not target any specific judges or justices but rather it is an amendment to the Judiciary Committee hearing rules process to address any malfeasance or misfeasance of a permanent justice or judge," Joe said. "The Council would consider the evidence brought forth by the committee, who decides whether to recommend to the Council the removal of a permanent judge or justice."

"I do not think this is necessary," said Honorable Leonard Tsosie, who voted against the piece of legislation. "I take these types of actions to be vendetta-types."

Despite Tsosie's logic, the committee voted favorably on the legislation, 4-2.

"We currently do not have a clear policy in place for the removal of permanent justices and judges," added Honorable Ernest Yazzie. "This is an important piece of legislation because sitting judges or justices who may have corrupted minds or committed unprofessional actions while in office will need to be released of their duties for the best interest of the Navajo people."

According to the amended hearing rules, the new language requires a 2/3 vote of the full Council to remove a permanent justice or judge.

The legislation proceeds to President Joe Shirley, Jr. for review.

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