



## NAVAJO NATION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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### **NNHRC sends school redistricting recommendations for Navajo Nation's approval**

SAINT MICHAELS, Navajo Nation—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission sent school redistricting recommendations to Navajo Nation Council committees to weigh in on maps to protect Navajo voting rights.

NNHRC is the expert governmental agency for the Navajo Nation in redistricting efforts in states that surround the Navajo Nation like New Mexico, Utah and Arizona and respective states' school districts which have a significant Navajo population. In protecting the voting rights NNHRC uses a threshold of 62% of the Native American voting age population with a  $\pm 0.5\%$  deviation with respect to voter age population. NNHRC generated the maps using population dynamics, geospatial data, the Voting Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution standards and principles.

“The Navajo Nation must protect the voting strength of Navajo voters,” said NNHRC Executive Director Leonard Gorman. “Articulating the voting strength is done in a creative and logical manner.”

On October 9, 2012, relating legislation 0436-12 was posted on the Navajo Nation Speaker's website for public comment. To read legislation 0436-12, navigate to the legislation page for public comment at [www.navajonationcouncil.org/legislation.html](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org/legislation.html).

The legislation requires a five day public comment period. If approved, the legislation states a request to the Navajo Nation President to take necessary measures in consultation with the Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education.

“We look forward to sharing the *approved* maps from the Navajo Nation to further protect Navajo citizens who have dual citizenship,” said Gorman. “If more people beyond the Navajo Nation realize that Navajo citizens have dual citizenship with civil and human rights protections, less people would question the Navajo Nation's role in protecting civil and human rights of their citizens, but ultimately Navajo citizens need to uphold their rights first and foremost.”

*In a related matter, NNHRC welcomes N.M. Public Education Department Secretary-Designate Hanna Skandera's request for Gallup McKinley County Schools to engage in*

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*meaningful discussions with the Navajo Nation, according to a letter from Skandera dated on June 11, 2012 about the reorganization of GMCS.*

*The Navajo Nation Council and NNHRC took on the massive effort to protect voting rights of Navajo people as a protected society, according to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Council Delegates Jonathan Nez, Lorenzo Bates, Alton Joe Shepherd, Leonard Tsosie and Kenneth Maryboy have also led redistricting efforts on behalf of the Navajo Nation Council.*

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