



NAVAJO NATION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

P.O. Box 1689
Window Rock, Navajo Nation (Arizona) 86515
Phone: (928)871-7436 Fax: (928)871-7437
www.nnhrc.navajo-nsn.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
July 29, 2011

Media Contact: Rachele Todea
rtodea@navajo-nsn.gov

Redistricting hearing for Arizona on Navajo Nation Today at 1 p.m. in St. Michaels

*Navajo human rights officials protecting Navajo citizens' rights to participate in
redistricting in a 'covered jurisdiction' state*

ST. MICHAELS, Ariz.—A public hearing for the Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission begins today at 1 p.m. (Mountain Daylight) at the Navajoland Inn & Suites conference room in St. Michaels, Navajo Nation. The redistricting commission has hosted more than 5 hearings to date and has over 15 more hearings to conduct.

To help protect Navajo citizens right to participate in redistricting, the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission proposed a hearing site on the Navajo Nation to the AIRC then collaborated with AIRC for the site arrangements in that endeavor. NNHRC staff members will attend the hearing after attending the Naabik'iyati' Committee meeting for the Navajo Nation Council this morning.

Said Leonard Gorman for NNHRC, “Navajo citizens have the right to participate in redistricting.” He continued and said, “Navajo—a large land-based indigenous peoples, is a major input factor during elections but also in daily surrounding areas for the retail economy. The population dynamics are changing and as a land-base people, we are being diluted.”

Redistricting is a decennial initiative beyond the ballot. It happens in every State in the Union after the census is released. Population shifts and people need to be represented accordingly with respect to the Voting Rights Act including Utah, New Mexico and Arizona—states that border the Navajo Nation.

Arizona is federally recognized as a “covered jurisdiction” under the Voting Rights Act in Section 5, which means that Congress determined that the State of Arizona had maintained a “test” restricting the opportunity of minorities to register and vote repeatedly. That act was discriminatory and Arizona must not disenfranchise racial minorities electorally.

Being part of the public hearings in the redistricting effort means to help restructure the voting district for legislative, congressional and county representation for improved Navajo representation.

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Gorman explained that improving Navajo voting power is necessary for energy projects, economic development, jobs, education, and protecting Navajo human rights.

Gorman said, “Navajo’s have the right to vote for the candidate of their choice and that choice has often been a Navajo person on the general election ballot.” He said, “We need to protect that opportunity.”

To learn more about redistricting, visit the NNHRC web site at www.nnhrc.navajonnsn.gov and open the redistricting link for more information about the terminology, the Navajo Nation’s redistricting goals, priorities, and links to Arizona, New Mexico and Utah redistricting information.

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