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President Shelly Signs Bill to Fund Chapter and Special Elections

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed legislation allocating nearly \$700,000 to the Navajo Election Administration from the Undesignated Unreserved Fund Balance.

President Shelly signed the legislation Thursday.

The legislation specifies \$416,552 would be used for special elections while \$281,476 would be used for chapter elections to fill some chapter offices were left vacant during the last election.

“I would like the Navajo People to have the opportunity to vote on several referendums this year,” President Shelly wrote in his letter to Navajo Council Speaker Johnny Naize.

The legislation appropriates money to the election office for special elections and chapter elections, more importantly for President Shelly, the legislation provides funding for a possible special election that could change Title 2 language.

Legislation 0369-11, which hasn’t passed through Council yet, would amend Title 2 language to recognize the Navajo people as the governing authority of the Navajo Nation.

“Any authority the Navajo Government has is delegated from the Navajo People and any powers not delegated remains with the Navajo People. The Peoples’ authority has been demonstrated already by the reduction of the Council from 88 to 24 and the Presidential line-item veto authority. It needs to be rightfully and properly codify within the Navajo Nation Codes,” President Shelly wrote about Legislation 0369-11.

President Shelly reiterated the importance of the Navajo peoples’ role in the Navajo government before he signed the legislation.

“I signed this legislation because we have pending legislation that could put the people as the governing body of this Nation. The time has come for our people to be recognized as

the group that oversees our government. We need to make the change in Title 2, so all our leaders understand and recognize that our roles as elected leaders is entrusted to us by the people of the Navajo Nation,” President Shelly said before he signed the legislation.

Other possible referendums could be allowing Utah Navajo voters to select a trustee for the Navajo Utah Trust Fund or lowering the numbers of signatures needed to start an initiative.

“We need to hear the voice of the Navajo people. They are the reason we are here. We work for them,” President Shelly said.

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