



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## President Shelly urges Board of Election Supervisors to clarify ballot language



**A MAN OF THE PEOPLE.** Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly shook hands with children, elders and families during the 93rd Annual Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Parade. President Shelly is in support of the referendum measure that provides for recognition of the Navajo people as the governing body of the Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— On August 8, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed a resolution passed by the Navajo Nation Council that will be placed on the November ballot.

The resolution provides the Navajo people an opportunity to decide by a majority vote whether or not to change Navajo law to state that power originates from the Navajo people and that it is the Navajo people who delegate legislative authority to the Council.

The Shelly-Jim administration has worked on this issue as part of ongoing government reform efforts since taking office in Jan. 2011.

“I want to thank the Navajo Commission on Government Development and delegate

Jonathan Nez for their leadership and guidance,” President Shelly said. “I commend the Council for taking action on this important measure.”

Delegate Nez thanked the president for acknowledging the power of the people and said, “President Shelly’s signature to this referendum bill ensures Navajo people’s voice in how they feel about their place in government.”

The next step for the referendum measure is the Navajo Board of Election Supervisors, which has final approval authority over the descriptive summary and the brief statement of legal effect of the referendum.

President Shelly urged the NBOES to clarify the referendum ballot language.

His primary concern is the lack of agreement and accuracy between the brief statement of legal effect, referendum ballot question and the complete text in section three. This could lead to confusion over the intent and effect of the referendum.

“The legal language needs to reflect what’s on the referendum ballot,” President Shelly said.

The brief statement of legal effect states, “A ‘Yes’ vote is in favor [to] amend 2 N.N.C. 102 to state that all powers originate from the Navajo people,

and powers not delegated are reserved to the people.”

The complete text of the amended language states, “The Navajo people maintain the inherent power and authority to govern themselves. All authorities and all powers not delegated are reserved to the Navajo people.”

The concern is that section “A” of the complete text does not accurately reflect the brief statement of legal effect.

Additionally, section “B” is included as part of the complete text section and states, “The Navajo people hereby delegate the legislative authorities of the Navajo Nation to the Navajo Nation Council. All legislative powers not limited by laws of the Navajo Nation or by the vote of the Navajo people are delegated to the Navajo Nation Council, including the power to act as the governing body of the Navajo Nation and for purposes of external government relations.”

The whole section “B” is an entirely separate action of delegation that is not described in the brief statement of legal effect or in the referendum ballot question for the voters to read.

“The language goes beyond the legislative authority delegation described in the descriptive summary,” President Shelly said.

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