



STATEMENT ON REMOVAL OF APACHE COUNTY SHERIFF BRIAN HOUNSHELL

DR. JOE SHIRLEY, JR., PRESIDENT
THE NAVAJO NATION

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Thursday was a sad day in Apache County and in Navajo Country because two people unilaterally unseated a friend to the Navajo people, Apache County Sheriff Brian Hounshell.

The voting populace, the electorate, selected Sheriff Hounshell to serve them. He served them admirably, promptly and honorably, earning the support and respect throughout the northern portion of the country. Only two individuals had him removed.

In this country of ours where the voice of the people matters, it would appear that it doesn't in Apache County. Sheriff Hounshell put forward a good offer to cover what Apache County was concerned about, which was liability. The Sheriff had gone out of his way to the point of committing his own home to cover the liability the county would not. It is my belief that this good faith offer was not listened to, and that two members of the Apache County Board of Supervisors chose not to work with Sheriff Hounshell.

Given these unfortunate circumstances, it is now my hope that on behalf of the people, the Navajo people in Apache County, that our voices will continue to be heard. There has been nothing proven against the Sheriff. There been nothing proven to say he has violated any law. At this point, there are only allegations to substantiate his removal by only two people over the voice of many voters, and this I find very sad.

It's an unfortunate day in Apache County, in the state of Arizona, and in the United States that this has occurred. At this point, no one can say where these events will lead. But if indeed our Sheriff is to be Sheriff no longer, I would like to be the first to call for an election to take place rather than to have another person appointed as Apache County Sheriff. I call upon the residents of Apache County not to settle for an appointment under these circumstances but to allow their voices to be heard at the polls.

With this happening, it would appear we're going backwards in Apache County instead of going forward on behalf of the people.