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**PLAINTIFF IN SUIT AGAINST STATE OVER ID REQUIREMENTS
DENIED BALLOT AT PRIMARY LAST WEEK**

Agnes Laughter, the individual Plaintiff in the Navajo Nation's lawsuit to enjoin the voter identification requirements, was denied the right to vote in the primary elections on September 12, 2006.

Ms. Laughter, an elder from Chilchinbeto, speaks only Navajo and requires official language assistance at the polls in order to complete her ballot. When Ms. Laughter arrived at the polls on Election Day, she was asked for identification by poll workers before she could enter the Chapter House. After a lengthy discussion amongst the poll workers, Ms. Laughter was finally granted permission to enter the Chapter House in order to vote. Ms. Laughter, however, was not able to fulfill her constitutional right to vote. When she failed to produce identification and said that she was not sure whether she could obtain identification and return within three days, the poll workers told Ms. Laughter to just wait outside. Poll officials never allowed Ms. Laughter the opportunity to vote as required by law; she was

denied even a conditional provisional ballot. It is unclear how many other Navajos were turned away from the polls.

Denial of the right to cast a ballot violates the federal Help America Vote Act and the State's own voting procedures. Under Arizona law, individuals lacking identification must be given a conditional provisional ballot. The individual then has three to five days to return to the polls with identification.

For many Navajos lacking identification, the voter identification requirements place an extreme hardship on their rights to vote. Ms. Laughter does not have a driver's license, a photo identification card, or utilities in her name. Poll officials suggested that she travel to Kayenta Hospital to obtain a copy of her medical records to serve as voter identification. Ms. Laughter told the poll workers that she lacks transportation.

“From just this one example, it is obvious that the I.D. requirement creates an undue burden on our citizens who are attempting to participate in the democratic process,” Speaker Morgan said. “We cannot stand by while our people are turned away at the polls.”

Speaker Morgan added that the Navajo Nation will appeal the decision to deny a preliminary injunction to enjoin the voter identification requirement. Navajos who witnessed or experienced problems on Election Day should contact the Speaker's Office at (928) 871-7160.

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