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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee passes legislation allowing unexpended FY12 allocated veterans funds to remain with chapters for FY13

Committee also approves submission of FY15 federal budget requests by Navajo HR division

WINDOW ROCK – The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee today passed two pieces of legislation – one relating to the submission of Fiscal Year 2015 federal budget requests by a Navajo division to various federal entities, and the other relating to a fiscal action request by the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs.

Legislation No. 0406-12, sponsored by Council Delegate Danny Simpson, sought authorization approval for the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs to allow unexpended Fiscal Year 2012 Allocated Funds from the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Funds to remain in the accounts of respective chapters for their use in Fiscal Year 2013.

Funds are generally allocated to chapters by the DNVA using a specific formula. When chapters do not spend all of their monies, the leftover is pooled into one large sum, said Delegate Simpson who provided the following example scenario.

“If Oak Springs Chapter has \$10,000 that is not expended, and it is still administered by the Department of [Navajo] Veterans Affairs. What happens is that that \$10,000, we put into one pool,” said Delegate Simpson.

So if there are eighteen chapters, that \$10,000 that is leftover from Oak Springs will be distributed back to the eighteen chapters within the agency.”

Delegate Simpson iterated that approval of the legislation would allow Oak Springs, in this scenario, to keep the \$10,000 in unexpended funds and put it to use in the next fiscal year – instead of reverting it back to DNVA.

“The bottom line is that any unexpended funds by chapters, that money will stay with the chapters,” Delegate Simpson said.

Council Delegate Kenneth Maryboy (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teec Nos Pos, Tolikan, Red Mesa) said at some point in time officials from the Local Governance Support Center and DNVA need to start working together to alleviate the frustrations and difficulties that Navajo veterans experience when chapter monies designated for them are not made available, for whatever reason.

“Now the chapters have the money, but the LGSC is dictating to the chapter, and the chapters are enforcing [those expectations] onto the veterans,” said Delegate Maryboy, “The veterans are having a hard time getting the money.”

Representatives from the DNVA noted Maryboy's recommendation.

The committee approved the legislation with a vote of 3-0 in favor, and has final authority on the matter.

The committee also approved Legislation No. 0390-12, and thereby recommending the submission of the Navajo Nation Division of Human Resources Fiscal Year 2015 Federal Budget requests to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Interior, and the U.S. Department of Labor and Training Administration.

The final vote on the legislation, which was sponsored by Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (St. Michaels, Oak Springs) and Delegate Simpson, was 3-0 in favor.

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