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Office of the Speaker

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MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Delegate Brown advances initiative to combat sex trafficking on the Navajo Nation

Photo: Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown speaking at the 2017 UNITY Conference in Denver, CO on July 9, 2017.

DENVER, CO – Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta), who serves on the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee and the Naabik'íyáti' Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee, met with representatives from the Casey Family Programs and University of Colorado Boulder to discuss a proposed plan to evaluate sex trafficking on the Navajo Nation and ultimately develop a plan to combat the problem.

For nearly two years, the CFP and CU Boulder have been assisting the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation in developing a comprehensive strategic plan to address sex trafficking on their

land, and have developed a policy paper that contributes to a comprehensive approach to sex trafficking, data management, and policy recommendations.

Delegate Brown conveyed that the SAP Subcommittee recently added human trafficking to its list of priorities and said the meeting with CFP and CU Boulder aimed to garner information that would aid in possibly replicating a similar approach to addressing sex trafficking on the Navajo Nation.

"The issue of sex trafficking on the Navajo Nation is not relatively new, however, shedding light on this matter has begun to pick up steam and as lawmakers, it is our responsibility to begin analyzing and developing policy to begin work in combatting sex trafficking," said Delegate Brown.

Delegate Brown said that a multifaceted approach must be initiated in order to understand sex trafficking and would involve several Navajo Nation entities such a health, social services, public safety, judicial, and partnering with school districts.

The MHA Nation has nearly completed its examination of sex trafficking on their tribal lands and will publish its findings in the near future.

In conjunction with the meeting, Delegate Brown was invited to speak at the 2017 UNITY Conference with Lynette Grey Bull from "Not Our Native Daughters," regarding sex trafficking prevention education for Native American youth. The theme of the conference was entitled "Finding Wellness and Healing Within Our Cultures."

Delegate Brown spoke out against sex trafficking and provided information to the native youth stating that one of the main tools traffickers use to lure young people is through social media.

"I know pretty much everyone here [at the conference] has a mobile phone, and I am willing to bet that most of you have social media like Facebook, Instagram, and Snap Chat. These are the portals that sex traffickers use to manipulate young people and I want to stress to you to be very cautious of strangers reaching out to you. Protect yourself because you are sacred," said Delegate Brown.

He added that native women and children who are sex trafficked are also forced to pose as other ethnicities such as Hispanic, Asian, East Indian, etc. Delegate Brown, who also serves on the Arizona Human Trafficking Council, said that partnering with state entities and neighboring governments is important to create a strong foundation in developing strong alliances to combat sex trafficking.

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