23rd Navajo Nation Council
Office of the Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 7, 2018

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

Navajo elders successfully obtain Delayed Birth Certificates

SHIPROCK, N.M. – On Monday, Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) welcomed Navajo elders and citizens to the opening day of a two-day public event in Shiprock to help individuals obtain delayed birth certificates, driver's licenses, driver authorization cards, and other documents that comply with the federal Real ID Act.

In 2005, Congress passed the Real ID Act that established minimum-security standards for issuing driver's licenses and identification cards. The federal act, which is enforced by the Department of Homeland Security, requires states to become compliant by October 2020.

In coordination with the Office of the Speaker, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council, Navajo Nation Office of Vital Records and Identification, New Mexico Office of Vital Records, New Mexico Motor Vehicle Division, and New Mexico State Representative Sharon Clahchischilliage (R-4) planned the public events to help Navajo citizens, particularly Navajo elders, who continue to experience challenges in obtaining delayed birth certificates and Real ID/driving authorization cards.

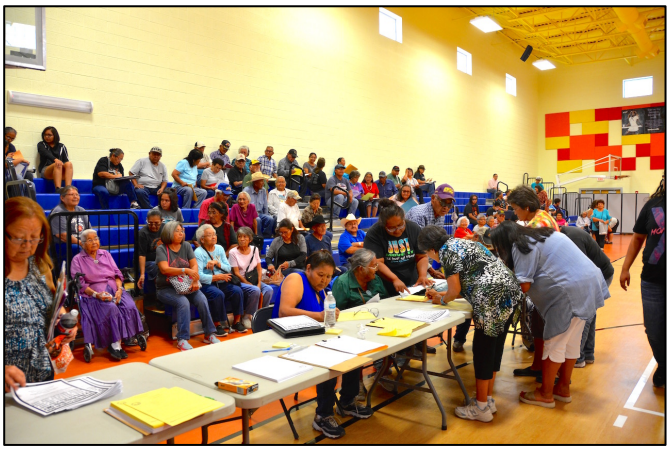

PHOTO: Public event held at the Office of Diné Youth in Shiprock, N.M. on August 6, 2018.

"Since the implementation of the Real ID Act, many constituents brought their concerns to the members of the Navajo Nation Council. Throughout the year, the Office of the Speaker and Council members have worked with New Mexico leadership to identify solutions. One of biggest barriers was transportation for Navajo citizens. Many elders did not have the luxury to travel long distances to obtain their documents or get their questions answered," said Speaker Bates. "The public events have allowed Navajo citizens to get the help they needed."

During the event, Junior Lewis, a Navajo elder expressed his appreciation to Speaker Bates and the Council for hosting the event, which allowed him to register and obtain his delayed birth certificate.

"I've been trying to get my birth certificate for many years and I was beginning to lose hope. The wait and frustration is over because I finally received my birth certificate today and I didn't need to travel far to get it," said Lewis in the Navajo language.

The two-day public event drew over 150 Navajo citizens and approximately 50 of delayed birth certificates were registered.

PHOTO: (left to right) Junior Lewis and Speaker LoRenzo Bates during the public event at the Shiprock Office of Diné Youth in Shiprock, N.M. on August 6, 2018.

The entities will continue to host additional public events in Shiprock at the Office of Diné Youth on August 22 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. and on August 23 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information contact Navajo Nation Office of Vital Records and Identification at (928) 871-6386 or the Office of the Speaker at (928) 871-7160.

# # #

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council