



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 2018

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Speaker Bates addresses veterans concerns at inaugural Chinle Navajo Veterans Convention

CHINLE, Ariz. – On Friday, Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) honored the invitation of the Chinle Veterans Planning Committee to address Navajo veterans at the inaugural Chinle Navajo Veterans Convention.

Speaker Bates was among several officials to address nearly 100 attendees at the Chinle Community Center regarding the Veterans Trust Fund, veterans housing program, and supplemental funding that was approved for Navajo veterans services.

“The 23rd Navajo Nation Council has been very diligent and active in supporting veterans within Navajo,” said Speaker Bates, who also outlined a number of resolutions passed by the 23rd Navajo Nation Council that benefit Navajo veterans including the following:

- Resolution CMY-50-18, which approved \$1,094,784 for the five veterans agency organizations to assist veterans with direct services.
- Resolution CJY-60-18, which approved \$1.2 million for the Navajo Veterans Administration to assist veterans with emergency assistance requests, energy assistance, burial assistance, and weatherization assistance.
- Resolution CJA-02-18, which approved an increase in funding available for direct services each year for Navajo veterans through the Veterans Trust Fund.
- Resolution CJY-55-18, which approved the establishment of the Veterans Housing Program within the Navajo Veterans Administration

Many veterans have questioned why they are not receiving more funds from the Veterans Trust Fund following the approval of legislation last year, which was intended to increase the annual disbursement of funds from the trust fund.

In response, Speaker Bates said the situation is very complex and depends on the annual revenue projection for the entire Navajo Nation, but the actual revenue income is not known until later on in the fiscal year which has led to a delay in the disbursement of funds by the Office of the Controller.

“Nonetheless, the Council legislated it and it is law, so they have to make it work,” added Speaker Bates, referring to the Executive Branch and the Office of the Controller.

The event also offered outreach services from several entities including Navajo Housing Authority, which had staff on site to provide information and answer questions regarding their housing options for veterans. The Office of Environmental Health also presented information on home renovations and additions.

The Chinle Veterans Planning Committee thanked Speaker Bates for addressing the veterans in attendance and said they intend to host the veteran's convention on an annual basis and hope to grow and expand their initiatives.

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