24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

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Tsos Rise to Leadership of Health, Education and Human Services Committee

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – In its first meeting of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, the six-member Health, Education and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) voted in Council Delegate Daniel E. Tso (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) as chair and Council Delegate Charlaine Tso (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tółikan, Red Mesa) as vice chair.

Council Delegates Charlaine Tso, left, and Daniel E. Tso, right, are the new vice chair and chair, respectively of the Health Education and Human Services Committee.

"We go forward to assist the divisions and the departments within our oversight, as well as the 638 entities. We look forward to working with the school board associations, post-secondary institutions of the Navajo Nation, as well as the American Indian Higher Education Consortium," Chair Tso stated.

Chair Tso was selected over Council Delegate Nelson BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaile/Wheatfields, Tsé Ch'izhí) in a 4-2 vote. Delegate BeGaye was later nominated for the vice chair position but declined.

After the committee meeting, Vice Chair Tso provided a statement on her selection. "I will be advocating for all: children, adults, and seniors. I will be working with my committee members to figure out the right approach to tackle education, scholarships, mineral health impacts, elder abuse and care, gender equality, LGBTQ community rights and equality, meth and other substance abuse, and most importantly, our veterans," said Vice Chair Tso. "We will proceed with transparency, diligence, efficiency and of course, the guidance of our constituents' voices."

Two legislations requesting direct services from the US Dept. of Veterans Affairs and the establishment of veterans' facilities on the reservation were considered. After reviewing the

legislations, which were sponsored by Council Delegate Key Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Blue Gap/Tachee, Tselani/Cottonwood), the committee took two actions.

For 0019-19, HEHSC passed the legislation to the Naabik'íyáti' Committee with a recommendation to refer the legislation back to HEHSC for further review.

Later, the committee requested that Delegate Begay Jr. withdraw 0021-19 in order for the committee to develop similar legislation with "more teeth," as Delegate BeGaye indicated.

Three confirmation appointments passed the committee unanimously, advancing them to the Naabik'íyáti' Committee for consideration:

> Legislation 0018-19, consenting to the appointment of Lomardo Aseret as executive director of the Division of General Services, sponsored by Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau).
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> Legislation 0025-19, consenting to the appointment of Dr. Jill Jim as the division director of the Dept. of Health, sponsored by Vice Chair Charlaine Tso.
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> Legislation 0026-19, consenting the appointment of Dr. Perphelia Fowler as the executive director of the Division of Human Resources, sponsored by Delegate BeGaye.

Legislation 0035-19, a measure sponsored by Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz'ť'l'í) supporting U.S. Senate Bill 229 entitled, "Indian Programs Advance Appropriations Act," passed the committee with a 5-0 vote.

The committee approved orientations with several divisions, departments, programs, colleges, PL 93-638 entities, and others it will provide oversight for during a four-day meeting spread from March 4-7.

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