



The 21st Navajo Nation Council
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August 10, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Government Services Committee respects Navajo peoples' voice, votes against resolution to end veto authority of budgetary appropriations

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – In a vote of 1 in favor and 5 opposed, the Government Services Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council denied passage of a resolution (Tracking No. 0462-10) that would have clarified the authorities of the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council and Navajo Nation President, including the president's veto authority.

Honorable Orlanda Smith Hodge (Cornfields/Greasewood Springs/Klagetoh/Wide Ruins) sponsored the resolution, saying amendments to Title 2 and 12 of the Navajo Nation Code were necessary in clarifying the authorities of the two branch chiefs.

"This act would clarify the provisions of Title 2 of the Navajo Nation on the authority of the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council when certifying Navajo Nation Council resolutions and the veto authority of the Navajo President," she said, adding that the resolution is in the best interest of the Navajo Nation and Navajo people. "This act would also clarify the authority of the President of the Navajo Nation to represent the Navajo Nation to governmental and private agencies and entities, and clarify executive orders."

Smith-Hodge added that the resolution would provide "specific timelines for the development and approval of the annual revenue project and budget instructions and policy manual." She also said the development of the proposed annual Navajo comprehensive budget "through the recommendations of the Budget and Finance Committee, the branch chiefs, the standing committees and approval of the Navajo Nation Council" provides a sufficient process when adopting the comprehensive budget and supplemental appropriations.

Honorable Danny Simpson (Huerfano), a member of the committee, said he agreed to certain aspects of Smith-Hodge's resolution but disagreed with the amendment under Title 2 §165 that all resolutions "are not subject to veto by the Navajo Nation President," including budget resolutions and resolutions placing officials on administrative leave.

"The Navajo people voted in favor of giving line-item veto authority to the president," Simpson said. "By passing this resolution, we are getting to the point where we are not listening to the people. This legislation is good in certain areas but that is the problem I have – the people voted on budget line-item veto."

Honorable Amos Johnson (Forest Lake) agreed and said the amendments under Title 2 §1005 are problematic because the President would speak and act on matters of the Navajo-Hopi land dispute in accordance with position statements adopted by the Council or Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Committee.

"Anything related to Navajo-Hopi land dispute is discussed by the Navajo Hopi Land Commission," Johnson said. "This legislation adds more red tape. The Council and IGR Committee are not fully informed of issues out there regarding the land dispute."

"With all due respect, I will have to vote against this legislation for the benefit of the Navajo people," Simpson added.

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