



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IGR Committee votes against proposal to allow agency caucuses recommend Council delegates for standing committee membership

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Last Thursday, the Intergovernmental Relations Committee met for a special meeting and addressed two resolutions concerning the 22nd Navajo Nation Council – the Caucus Membership Act of 2010 and Committee Appointments Act of 2010. Honorable Orlanda Smith Hodge sponsored both resolutions in an effort to help transition the new Council from 88 members to 24 members through Title 2 amendments.

The Caucus Membership Act of 2010, which the committee voted against by a vote of 7-3, would amend Title 2 § 181 of the Navajo Nation Code. Specifically, the act would allow agency caucuses to recommend the appointment of Council delegates for standing committee membership and the confirmation of those appointments by the Navajo Nation Council. Under current provisions, the Speaker recommends the appointment of Council delegates to various standing committees.

Proponents of Smith-Hodge's proposal said the opportunity for agency caucuses to recommend legislative body members to standing committees would be in the best interest of the Navajo Nation. On the other hand, opponents consider the Caucus Membership Act an unnecessary move because with 24 Council delegates there could be no need for a caucus or a Speaker. Both sides of the spectrum, however, were in agreement that amendments were necessary to accommodate the new 24-member Council.

In the end, the committee voted against Smith-Hodge's attempt to eliminate the Speaker's responsibility and said the restructuring efforts of the legislative branch should be left to the Government Reform Taskforce and Office of Navajo Government Development who will help transition the new 24-member Council.

Unlike the Caucus Membership Act, the Committee Appointments Act of 2010 passed the committee by a vote of 8-3. The committee supported this resolution because amendments to Title 2 § 180 are necessary for members of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council to be appointed to no more than four positions on standing committees and no more than four positions on boards and commissions.

"Without this legislation, the 22nd Navajo Nation Council will have less order," said Honorable Smith Hodge. "If the law is not changed, resolutions during the 22nd Navajo Nation Council will be at a standstill because resolutions need to be approved by various standing committees, and then forwarded to the Council to become law and without the proper amount of members on the standing committees, resolutions will not be allowed to pass."

Both resolutions will go before the full Council during the Fall Session. For a complete copy of the Fall Session agenda, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org.

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