



The 21st Navajo Nation Council
Contact: Alastair L. Bitsoi, Public Information Officer
Phone: (928) 871-7228
Cell: (928) 255-2943
navajocouncil_pio@yahoo.com
abitsoi@navajo.org
www.navajonationcouncil.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Navajo Council opens first day of 2010 Fall Session welcoming candidates running for office, accepts written reports by President Shirley and Speaker Morgan

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. -- The 21st Navajo Nation Council welcomed various candidates running for Nov. 2 general election positions, including Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ), Arizona Secretary of State Candidate Chris Deschene (D-AZ) and New Mexico Public Regulation Commissioner Candidate Theresa Becenti-Aguilar (D-NM) to opening day of its 2010 Fall Session. The Council also accepted written reports from President Joe Shirley Jr. and Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan.

After various amendments to the 2010 Fall Session Agenda, which was adopted by a vote of 73-1, Young Jeff Tom made a motion to accept President Joe Shirley's address on the state of the Navajo Nation as a written report. President Shirley said he was "okay with just presenting the written report like the last time" as the Council voted 31-30 on Tom's motion.

On Speaker Morgan's report, the Council voted favorably to accept the speaker's written report, 49-12. Leonard Chee was the motioning party; Evelyn Acothley seconded Chee's motion.

Following acceptance of the president's and speaker's report, the Council immediately went down to business and heard reports from Theresa Becenti-Aguilar and accepted written reports from the Council's standing committees, boards and commission, Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Director and Indian Health Services Area Director.

During one of the many presentations today at the Chamber, Rep. Kirkpatrick was given a Pendleton blanket as a token of appreciation by President Joe Shirley Jr. and Honorable Council delegate Leonard Teller for her efforts on veteran's affairs, including her support of the Navajo Nation Code Talkers and Navajo Code Talkers Association.

"Rep. Kirkpatrick has been an outstanding supporter of our Navajo Code Talkers and the Navajo Code Talkers Association," said Teller. "She has committed her time to helping make our Code Talker museum a reality and is passionate about veteran's issues. Very recently, she sponsored the Indian Veteran's Opportunity Act of 2010 at the request of the Navajo Housing Authority, which Congress passed on Sept. 27. This law expands housing opportunities for disabled Native Veterans and family members of deceased servicemen and women."

Earlier in the day, Teller, who is NHA's Board Chair, was presented an American Flag by Rep. Kirkpatrick at the Window Rock Veteran's Memorial Park for his efforts in bringing forth veterans housing issues in Indian Country, which Kirkpatrick addressed in her legislation. Teller's token flag was flown over the U.S. Capitol, following passage of the law.

"For over a decade, Native Americans who fought for this Nation watched as their Veterans' benefits actually created new burdens for them, and that's unacceptable," Congresswoman Kirkpatrick said. "This outrageous defect in the law demanded action, and I am grateful that the Navajo Housing Authority brought it to my attention."

"Some people complain about how hard it is to get things done in Washington, but complaints are no substitute for leadership," added Teller. "We are very lucky to have Ms. Kirkpatrick working for us in Congress and her ability to get others to rally around this cause was amazing."

Day two of the fall session will resume tomorrow with legislative action items. For more information regarding the adopted agenda and pieces of proposed legislation, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org.

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