Navajo President Shelly States Navajo Nation Needs to Recognize Navajo Act for Disabled

FARMINGTON, N.M. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, during a meeting on Tuesday, stated the need to recognize the Vocational Rehabilitation and Opportunities for the Handicap Act of 1984 on the Navajo Nation. The law was passed six years before the Americans with Disabilities Act and created similar standards as the ADA for the Navajo Nation.

President Shelly made his statement at a meeting held by the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disability on Tuesday at the Farmington Civic Center.

“This law further recognizes that our disabled Navajo community is a valued part of our society,” President Shelly said about the Vocational Rehabilitation and Opportunities for the Handicap Act. “All public and private entities within the Navajo Nation need to work with the Navajo Nation Council on the Handicapped in implementing the Vocational Rehabilitation and Opportunities for the Handicap Act.”

The law was passed in 1984 and requires that both public and private entities provide reasonable accommodations for the special needs of persons with a disability, including the need to site accessibility in regards to employment, housing, public accommodations, social services, transportation, recreation, educational and training opportunities, and ensure the availability of these services on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis.

“All Navajo People are entitled to make the life they want for themselves. Each of us has the basic right to an economic, social, cultural and political life in the Navajo Nation without regard to any handicapping condition,” President Shelly said.

The president also expressed his support for the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“I support the ADA and we need to recognize and implement that law on the Navajo Nation,” he said.

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