



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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President Shelly vetoes amending fluency requirements for election code



President Shelly said the Navajo people must be involved in the decision making process whether or not to eliminate the Navajo language fluency requirements for candidates running for president. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—On New Year’s Eve, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly vetoed CD-79-14, a Navajo Nation Council resolution to amend the Navajo language fluency requirements for Office of the President and Vice President.

The council attempted to pass a similar legislation in Oct. 2013, which was also vetoed by President Shelly, who favored a referendum vote brought before the Navajo people for amending the language. He said a thoughtful and deliberative conversation needed to occur with the Navajo people before changing the qualifications for tribal leadership.

“This conversation has yet to occur and, as such, my feelings on the matter have not changed,” President Shelly said. “The

people are divided and we need their participation in this decision that will affect the generations to come.”

He said piecemeal changes to the Election Code in the form of council resolutions and Supreme Court opinions will not suffice. A major overhaul is need to ensure clear, concise and fair laws, he noted, adding that such important change can only be done through a referendum vote of the Navajo people.

“It’s the people’s right to determine this, not myself, the Council or the courts,” President Shelly said.

The same day, President Shelly also signed into law three bills.

Legislation no. CD-64-14 was for amendments to Title 11 of the Navajo Nation Code by authorizing the Navajo Board

of Elections Supervisors to eliminate filing fees for elective positions filled by appointment.

Currently, filing fees by

The amendments included change of legislative oversight to Resources and Development Committee, purpose of farm boards, duties and responsibilities of officers, meetings, powers, accountability and compensation.

Legislation No. CD-68-14 was also signed into law by President Shelly and established the Sihasin Fund for the \$554 million settlement.

Establishment, purpose, investment, definitions, expenditure, annual audit report and expenses of the Sihasin Fund were outlined in the legislation.

“The Navajo people can rest easy knowing that the \$554 million from the trust settlement is properly accounted for and audited through the Sihasin Fund,” President Shelly said. “This is the Navajo people’s money and they deserve to know what it’s spent on.

Such transparency in government has been a hallmark of this administration and we will continue to keep the Navajo

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candidates are submitted when they file their candidacy application. The filing fees are non-refundable.

“For an appointment to fill an unexpired term, the applicable filing fee shall not be required,” was the amendment to the code.

President Shelly also signed CD-76-14 into law and enacted the amendments to the Navajo Nation Farm Board plan of operation.

people informed,” he added.

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