



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

### CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director  
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer  
(928) 274-2758

[nnopvp.communications@gmail.com](mailto:nnopvp.communications@gmail.com)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2020

## The Navajo people have the right to vote in the primary election

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Citing the need to protect the Navajo people's right to vote and to choose their leaders, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer vetoed Resolution CJN-49-20 on July 3, a resolution that was approved by the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council to cancel the Navajo Nation's 2020 chapter primary election due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council is scheduled to consider Legislation No. 0152-20, overriding the veto of Resolution CJN-49-20 during this week's Summer Council Session.

"We appreciate the concerns brought forth, but we must also remember that the Navajo people's right to vote is an issue that the Navajo Nation has fought long and hard to protect across multiple states and jurisdictions. The power to vote and participate in electing our leaders is the most basic right afforded by our democracy. For the Council to override the veto of Resolution CJN-49-20 would contradict and jeopardize everything that our Navajo people have fought and litigated for over many years. We understand the concerns for the health and well-being of our people and we commend the Council for their good intent, but this presents an opportunity to challenge the Navajo Election Administration, to step up and develop accommodations and safeguards to allow our people to vote during the primary election in August.

He added, "We cannot simply cancel the election without putting forth a concerted effort to consider alternatives such as drive-thru voting or other options that include social distancing, mask requirements, and other precautionary measures. If the states and counties can hold their primary elections with safeguards in place, then the Navajo Nation should be able to do it also."

Several members of the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council expressed legitimate concerns and their support of the Navajo peoples' right to vote during a recent Naabik'íyáti' Committee. There is also a strong possibility of the Navajo Nation facing lawsuits if the Council proceeds with canceling the primary election. In the veto message to the Council, President Nez and Vice President Lizer also stated that the Navajo Nation has made accommodations to have its elections coincide with state elections to have the Navajo People participate in all elections.

"This is one of those years it is important to get out the vote. Our Navajo People have influence on state elections and the national election, but we will lose that influence with the cancellation of our primary election this year. The rationale for cancelling the Navajo primary this year will have

repercussions not only for Chapter elections, but the state and national elections as well. The Navajo Nation has fought for decades to secure certain rights for our people and the right to vote is a fight we continue to this day,” stated Vice President Lizer.

“We owe much to our parents and grandparents who lead that fight for our rights, so we have an obligation as Navajo leaders to protect those rights for future generations. We are in a difficult time now where we need to be seriously concerned for our people’s health, safety, and welfare, but we must balance that concern without giving up our hard-earned right to vote. There are still many options available to the Navajo Election Administration for the primary election,” added President Nez.

The Nez-Lizer Administration strongly encourages the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council to vote “no” for Legislation No. 0152-20. The Nez-Lizer Administration encourages the Navajo people to e-mail the members of the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council at [24thNNC@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:24thNNC@navajo-nsn.gov) and respectfully request them to protect the Navajo people’s right to vote by voting “no” for Legislation No. 0152-20.

###

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.