



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

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director  
Crystalayne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer

(928) 871-7000

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

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2021

## Navajo Nation leaders urge Arizona Governor to veto voter suppression bill

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer are urging Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey to veto S.B. 1003, which would drastically reduce the timeframe to cure missing signatures on mail-in ballots, allowing only up to 7:00 p.m. on an election day to do so. If the missing signature is not received by the deadline, the ballot will not be counted. The measure was approved by the Arizona State Legislature despite opposition from Arizona tribes, voting rights groups, and others.

The bill directly undermines the settlement the Navajo Nation reached in 2019 with the Arizona Secretary of State Office and Arizona Counties, in which the state agreed to allow Navajo voters with mismatched or missing signatures on mail-in ballots five business days after election day to correct their ballot. Under SB 1003 Navajo voters with mismatched signatures will continue to have 5 business days to correct their ballot but Navajo voters with missing signatures will only have until 7pm on Election Day.

“The Navajo Nation is extremely disappointed in the actions of the state legislators who voted in support of S.B. 1003, to undermine the Nation’s settlement with the state. The teachings of our elders tell us that the words we speak are sacred and have power. The actions of the Legislature undermine the words the state agreed to in its settlement with the Navajo Nation. This goes not only against Navajo teachings, but against the values of all Arizona citizens who should be able to trust the words of their government. We strongly urge Gov. Ducey to stand with Navajo voters by vetoing S.B. 1003,” said President Nez.

Since none of the Arizona counties seats are located on the Navajo Nation, a Navajo voter may have to travel hundreds of miles to add their missing signature to a mail-in ballot. For example, a voter from Teec Nos Pos, Arizona has to travel 213 miles one way to the County seat in St. John, Arizona. Shortening the time frame that a voter has to add their missing signature on a ballot places an extreme burden on Navajo voters on the Nation.

“We should be working together to pass laws that provide all voters an equal opportunity to cast their ballots, not working to obscure the voting process to the point of absurdity. We welcome the opportunity to meet with Gov. Ducey on this issue,” said Vice President Lizer.

The Navajo Nation has also spoken out against Arizona Senate Bill 1713 and Senate Bill 1485, which would disenfranchise eligible Navajo voters in the state of Arizona in future elections.

“All Arizona tribes deserve a seat at the table and an opportunity to voice our opposition and support on these measures. I call on Gov. Ducey to listen to Arizona tribes who are speaking out against these bills that would have disproportionate impacts on Native Americans throughout the state. We are demanding that he veto S.B. 1003 and any other bills that disenfranchise voters,” added President Nez.

The Navajo Nation continues to lobby Legislatures and the Governor to make decisions regarding election administration based on fairness and equality, rather than on politics. The Navajo Nation will continue to monitor the outcome of all election laws being considered by the Arizona Legislature to make sure the rights of Navajo voters are protected.

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