



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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Navajo Nation disappointed in lack of Native Americans selected for New Mexico Citizen Redistricting Committee

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer expressed their disappointment in the lack of diversity on the newly-formed New Mexico Citizen Redistricting Committee. The seven-member Committee is predominantly composed of individuals from the Albuquerque area, and does not include any representatives from the state's 23 tribal nations, and has only one female member.

The state of New Mexico approved the creation of the committee during the most recent state legislative session, to issue recommendations to state leaders to redraw the electoral district boundaries for the state of New Mexico. Redistricting will have major impacts on future elections.

"The Citizen Redistricting Committee fails to reflect the geographic and cultural diversity of New Mexico. There is a distinct lack of rural representation and no Native American members despite the fact that there are 23 sovereign tribal nations located in the state of New Mexico. The voices of the first people of this country deserve representation on this committee," said President Nez.

On June 4, the State Ethics Commission appointed retired New Mexico Supreme Court Justice, Edward L. Chavez to serve as the committee chair, state demographer Robert Rhatigan, and public school teacher Joaquin Sanchez. Other members appointed by state legislators include attorney Lisa Curtis, former Senate majority leader Michael Sanchez of Belen, New Mexico State University Board of Regents chair Christopher Saucedo, and UNM Health Sciences Center Director of Economic and Community Development Ryan Cangioli.

"The Committee's actions will have a significant impact upon the representation of Navajo Nation voters in New Mexico," Vice-President Myron Lizer stated. "Fair, transparent redistricting is critical to preserving the voting power of Navajo citizens and the voting power of all tribal citizens across New Mexico. Considering the lack of geographic diversity on the committee, the Navajo Nation urges the committee to host several public meetings on the Navajo Nation."

The Committee will hold a total of twelve public meetings across the state. At least one public meeting must take place on tribal lands. The Commission must deliver three district plans to the state legislature by Oct. 30, 2021. Committee members are set to be sworn in on July 1st.

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