



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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Arizona Governor signs two voter suppression bills that disproportionately impact Navajo voters**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer express their disappointment with Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey’s recent actions of signing S.B. 1003 and S.B. 1485 into law. These bills work to suppress voters from the state’s 22 tribes, including the Navajo Nation.

Last Friday, Gov. Ducey signed S.B. 1003 into law, which drastically reduces 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 actions of certain state lawmakers and Gov. Ducey is belittling to all 22 Arizona tribes. Their failure to listen to tribes and understand the unique challenges we face when it comes to voter registration and access to voting sites will have disproportionate impacts on Native American people. As the executive head of the state, Gov. Ducey has a duty to protect the voting rights of all Arizona citizens, including Native Americans. There are many Native American voters who drive hours and hundreds of miles on election day to cast their ballots and many face language barriers once they get there – these are just a few of the challenges. Gov. Ducey is either unaware of these issues or chooses to ignore them in the face of national political pressure. As leaders, we have to do better and stand up for the voting rights of all people,” said President Nez.

S.B. 1003 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 S.B. 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 7:00 p.m. on Election Day.

On Tuesday, Gov. Ducey signed S.B. 1485 into law, removing approximately 150,000 current registered voters from the permanent early voter list if they have not voted in two consecutive primary and general elections.

“The voting power of the Navajo people changed the outcome of the 2020 election in the state of Arizona and certain groups did not like it. It’s voter suppression, it’s voter disenfranchisement, and it’s an unprecedented attack on our right to vote. We have to stand together and push back on these voting measures that are clearly designed to favor certain groups,” added President Nez.

The Navajo Nation continues to oppose another bill, Senate Bill 1713, which would require individuals to provide a date of birth and driver’s license number or voter registration number in order to vote by mail. Many Navajo citizens, especially the elderly, have challenges obtaining a driver’s license. The law does not make any provision for Tribal Census or Tribal IDs, which are considered valid forms of identification for voting purposes in the state of Arizona. In addition, finding a person’s voter registration number is very difficult for most people. The proposed law would also require that ballots be thrown out if a number is not legible or written incorrectly.

“S.B. 1713 will work to deny Navajo voters the ability to vote by mail-in ballot. In contrast to a majority of Arizona citizens, Navajo people live in extremely rural conditions. For Navajo voters, the physical vastness and rural settings of the Nation create unique challenges for Navajo citizens in casting their ballots in state and federal elections. These circumstances coupled with lower income levels and language barriers makes voting a challenging task for many Navajo citizens. The requirement of adding additional identification that Navajo voters may not readily have on hand, adds a measure of difficulty to mail-in ballots,” said Vice President Lizer.

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