



The Navajo Nation  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**President Nez applauds the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer applaud U.S. President Joe Biden and Congress for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was included in the Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations omnibus package. On March 11, President Joe Biden signed the \$1.5 trillion spending bill that funds the federal government through September.

In 1994, VAWA was enacted to support domestic and sexual violence survivors. The law provides federal resources and technical support for programs that help victims, including children, youth, elders, persons with disabilities, and American Indians, of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

“One of the biggest victories for Indian Country included in the appropriations omnibus package is the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act with specific provisions to strengthen tribal governments. The reauthorization combats crimes by assisting domestic violence prevention, protecting survivors, and promoting safer tribal communities for women, children, and families. The reauthorization ensures that survivors in the Navajo Nation receive the resources they deserve. We thank the Biden-Harris Administration for taking this step towards a shared goal to make our communities safer,” said President Nez.

The VAWA reauthorization includes the extension of tribal jurisdiction over non-Native perpetrators of sexual violence, sex trafficking, stalking, child violence, and obstruction of justice. The law also gives tribes the authority to prosecute non-Natives who assault tribal law enforcement personnel and requires non-Native defendants to exhaust all tribal court remedies before appealing to federal court. The funding also assists with information sharing and the cost of implementation of the greater jurisdiction. President and First Lady Phefelia Nez and long advocated for the reauthorization of the Act, in meetings and testimonies on Capitol Hill and congressional visits.

“We express our deepest gratitude to the Biden-Harris Administration for reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act and recognizing that all persons, including Navajo women and children, have the right to live violence-free lives. The law allows survivors from all tribal

communities to have more access to healing, justice, and restoration. The reauthorization is a major victory for all of Indian Country, especially those who have long advocated and supported the Act,” said First Lady Nez.

“Throughout our administration, we heard countless stories of the pain of victims, survivors, and their families due to violent acts. Every victim and survivor needs to know that there can be a path to justice and healing with collaborative efforts. We need to ensure every survivor in tribal communities has help and resources in a moment of crisis,” said Second Lady Dottie Lizer.

The VAWA reauthorization also reestablishes the Tribal Prisoner Program, which allows some offenders convicted in tribal courts to be held in Federal prisons. Most notable is the extension of tribal jurisdiction to Alaska Native communities, a victory for Alaska Natives.

“The reauthorization’s goal is to ensure that tribal women are safe and that every victim has a path to justice. We also thank the countless advocates, grassroots organizations, and survivors who work tirelessly to improve lives and increase safety for women across the Navajo Nation. Together, we can create safer and healthier communities for our women and vulnerable populations,” said Vice President Lizer.

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