



The Navajo Nation  
Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:  
Jared Touchin, Communications Director  
(928) 274-4275  
Crystalayne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer  
(928) 274-2758  
Timothy Benally, Public Information Officer  
(928) 871-7000  
[nnopvp.communications@gmail.com](mailto:nnopvp.communications@gmail.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**President Nez advocates for veterans benefits  
outreach center and veterans clinic on Capitol Hill**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — On Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez were joined by Navajo Veterans Administration Director James D. Zwierlein, as they met with Congressional leaders to advocate for the establishment of a veterans benefits outreach center and a veterans clinic to provide services for Navajo veterans closer to home.

Prior to the meetings, President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued a proclamation in honor of National Vietnam War Veterans Day, recognizing the sacrifices of all who served, and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, during the Vietnam War. The proclamation called for all flags on the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff on Tuesday in honor and remembrance.



“Today, we had the honor of visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the nation’s capital to pay tribute to all of our Diné warriors who defended our country in the Vietnam War and

to honor their families. Just as our veterans fought and served our people, we are doing our best to fight for them at the federal level to make veterans benefits more accessible by establishing the locations closer to where our Navajo veterans reside. We are working with our federal partners to have a new hospital facility constructed to replace the old Gallup Indian Medical Center, and to incorporate a veterans clinic that can provide the specialized services needed for veterans,” said President Nez.

**PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, First Lady Phefelia Nez, and Navajo Veterans Administration Director James D. Zwierlein meeting with U.S. House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (D-Calif.) in Washington D.C. on March 29, 2022.**

On Tuesday, President Nez and Director Zwierlein met with members of Congress including House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (D-Calif.), U.S. Sens. Ben Ray Luján and Mark Kelly, and others to share their vision for the initiatives. Director Zwierlein, who serves on the VA Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs, is also working closely with other entities including Navajo Housing Authority to leverage additional funding resources

“It’s been a journey, but with the extremely positive conversations today and those anticipated for tomorrow, that journey is nearing a fruitful conclusion. The Navajo Nation has been advocating for years to have the VA place resources on the Navajo Nation to better provide access to benefits and services our Navajo veterans fought hard for and are entitled to. If we stay the course, that goal is close to becoming a reality. It is time that we hold the VA accountable for their failed promises, and they acknowledge their failing. Together we will be successful in getting our Navajo veterans the assistance they so greatly need and deserve. I’m excited about what’s in store for the future, and cannot wait until all of the different pieces are in place,” said Zwierlein.



**PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, First Lady Phefelia Nez, Navajo Veterans Administration Director James D. Zwierlein, and Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office Director Robert K. Black meeting with U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.) in Washington D.C. on March 29, 2022.**

With over a population of over 10,000 Navajo veterans, President Nez said the centers could also provide clinical and mental health services to help Native American veterans with PTSD and other health care issues.

“We have so many veterans who have served this country and we want them to know that we are fighting for them at the federal level. Some veterans gave the ultimate sacrifice and their loved ones deserve to receive benefits as well. Our vision is to see these critical services provided on or near the Navajo Nation,” added President Nez.

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