



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAVAJO NATION OPPOSES NAVAJO TECHNICAL COLLEGE FUNDING CUTS ON CAPITOL HILL

Washington, DC—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly today has urged Senate and House leaders to resume funding for Navajo Technical College (NTC) in both New Mexico and Arizona, by opposing Section 1883 of H.R. 1 and Section 219 of House Joint Resolution 44.



L to R: New Mexico Senator Jeff Bingaman and Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly meet in Washington, D.C. on Friday.

“Eliminating these funds would threaten our tribal college and force drastic cuts which may ultimately lead to closing our doors,” stated President Shelly in his letter to Senator Harry Reid, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate. “It is imperative that our Navajo students continue their technical training and education to compete for good jobs on and off Navajoland.”

The two tribally controlled colleges NTC and United Tribes College in North Dakota have been successfully funded by Section 117 of the Carl D. Perkins program. However, these institutions are not part of state higher education systems and do not benefit from state-appropriated college funds.

Today President Shelly met with Senator Jeff Bingaman, who authored an NTC support letter signed by Senator Tom Udall, and Senator Kent Conrad addressing his concerns.

The letter to Senator Reid and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, states the following, “The Section 117 Perkins program has been authorized (20 U.S.C. 2327) since 1990, and has received the support of both Democratic and Republican administrations in budget requests. The program is structured as a competitive grant, not a congressionally directed earmark. In FY 2010, the program received \$8.2 million, a small portion of the Department of Education budget.”

On Thursday, President Shelly also met with Charles Galbraith, deputy associate director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs at the White House, during the Tribal Nations Conference, which included a panel of President Obama’s department and agency directors. Mr. Galbraith agreed to inform the U.S. Department of Education directly about the Navajo Nation’s opposition letter.

President Shelly said, “I am here to make sure Washington lawmakers are aware of the Navajo Nation’s opposition to proposed cuts by H.R. 1. I want you to take our message back to the White House-- we need your support for our tribal college.”

He also took that same message to House Representative Ben Ray Lujan’s staff, they confirmed to send an NTC support letter to the House leadership.

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THE NAVAJO NATION



BEN SHELLY PRESIDENT
REX LEE JIM VICE PRESIDENT

March 2 2011

Senator Harry Reid, Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Daniel Inouye, Chairman
U. S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Tom Harkin, Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services and Education
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Navajo Technical College

Dear Majority Leader Reid, and Chairman Inouye and Chairman Harkin:

The Navajo Nation opposes Section 1883 of H.R. 1 and Section 219 of House Joint Resolution 44. These two provisions threaten the continued existence of Navajo Technical College. These provisions eliminate funds authorized under Section 117 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions). Two tribally controlled colleges – Navajo Technical College (NTC) in New Mexico, with a second campus in Arizona, and United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) in North Dakota have been the successful applicants for this program.

The Section 117 Perkins program has provided crucial core funding for the colleges – in fact, at Navajo Technical College, 50% of their funding comes from this source. NTC would lose 51 employees, and without predictable funding, lose its accreditation, compromising its ability to obtain other federal and tribal funds and compromise a stable environment for faculty and students.

These institutions are not part of state higher education systems and do not benefit from state-appropriated college funds. The consequences of eliminating these funds would threaten our vital tribal institutions and force dramatic scale back or even force closing their doors.

NTC and UTTC may seem small, but their missions – to train a workforce for communities that have faced devastating poverty for decades – is extremely important to our economy. Defunding these colleges takes away hope from tribal communities that education is a pathway out of poverty. Please support these schools which have increased their enrollment while federal support has not kept pace. We urge you to continue funding Section 117 program at FY 2010 levels to ensure that NTC and UTTC can continue to operate as vital educational institutions.

Sincerely,


Ben Shelly,
President
THE NAVAJO NATION