



P.O. Box 220, Window Rock, Arizona 86515 | PHONE: (928) 871-7214 | FAX: (928) 871-7162

IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 13, 2020

THE COMMISSION ON NAVAJO GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS LEGISLATION NO. 0153-20

Window Rock, Navajo Nation (ARIZ) – The Commission on Navajo Government Development unanimously passed Resolution No. CNGD-0701-20: AN ACTION TO SUPPORT NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL LEGISLATION 0153-20: AN ACTION RELATING TO BUDGET AND FINANCE, LAW AND ORDER AND NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE AND NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL; AMENDING 2 N.N.C. §164 (A)(17) TO INCLUDE THE BUDGET LINE-ITEM VETO AUTHORITY LANGUAGE APPROVED BY NAVAJO VOTERS THROUGH INITIATIVE ELECTION IN 2009

- The Commission on Navajo Government Development supports Hon. Delegate Daniel Tso's legislation to clarify the Navajo Nation President's line item veto authority.
- The Commission has found that the line-item veto authority of the Navajo Nation President is inconsistent with the original referendum initiative and needs to be clarified to prevent inappropriate exercises of the line-item veto authority.

The Commission on Navajo Government Development has determined that the line-item veto authority granted to the Navajo Nation President in 2009 through a referendum vote needs to be further clarified. The original language describing the line-item veto authority in 2009 was not what was ultimately codified in the Navajo Nation Code. Therefore, the Commission on Navajo Government Development fully Supports Hon. Delegate Daniel Tso's Legislation seeking to correct the line-item veto language in the Navajo Nation Code.

The original ballot language of 2009 stated that, "The President of the Navajo Nation will be authorized to exercise line item veto authority over budget items contained in the annual Navajo Nation Comprehensive Budget or supplemental appropriations approved by the Navajo Nation Council..." However, the language that was later codified reads, "All resolutions enacting new laws or amending existing laws are subject to veto by the President of the Navajo Nation pursuant to 2 N.N.C § 1005(C)(10) and (11) and override by the Navajo Nation Council, except financial line-item vetoes are not subject to override..." The language that was codified is not a true reflection of the original ballot language and creates ambiguity.

This ambiguity has resulted in the misuse of the line-item veto power by administrations since 2009. Past Navajo Nation presidents have mistakenly exercised the line item-veto authority in ways that went beyond the approval of amounts in the Navajo Nation Comprehensive Budget or supplemental appropriations approved by the Navajo Nation Council.

The Commission on Navajo Government Development is an entity that was created in 1989 to develop government reform and policy recommendations to the Navajo Nation Council and supports legislation No. 0153-20 on behalf of the Navajo People. The commission represent many aspects of life on the Navajo Nation including Chapter Officials, Navajo Students, Navajo Nation Government Branches, Women's Commission, and Traditional Practitioners.