



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 7, 2022

President Nez welcomes U.S. House Veterans Affairs Chairman to the Navajo Nation



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Navajo Veterans Administration Director James Zwierlein, and Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Lashawna Tso meeting with U.S. House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (D-Calif.) at the Office of the President and Vice President in Window Rock, Ariz. on Sept. 7, 2022.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Navajo Veterans Administration Director James Zwierlein, and Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Lashawna Tso welcomed U.S. House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (D-Calif.) to the Office of the President and Vice President in Window Rock, Ariz. to discuss veterans' issues and initiatives. President Nez previously met with Chairman Takano in Washington D.C. in March.

President Nez highlighted the Navajo Nation's ongoing work to develop a veterans' clinic to provide health care services closer to home for over 10,000 Navajo veterans, who currently have to travel hours to the nearest veterans' clinic in cities located hundreds of miles off of the Navajo Nation. The Nez-Lizer Administration continues to work with Indian Health Service and other federal partners to secure land to construct a facility that can serve IHS patients and veterans.

During the visit, President Nez also provided a tour of a 1,300 square-foot hogan-style model home that the Navajo Veterans Administration is currently building for Navajo veterans through its housing program. In July, President Nez approved \$50 million in American Rescue Plan Act to construct many more houses for Navajo veterans in the years to come.



PHOTO: Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. addresses U.S. House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (D-Calif.) during a meeting with Navajo veterans in Tse Bonito, N.M. on Sept. 7, 2022.

“With the partnership of Chairman Takano and others at the federal level, we are making progress on establishing a veterans’ clinic on or near the Navajo Nation that will serve veterans from various tribal nations in the region. In addition, we will soon implement \$50 million in ARPA funds to build more quality homes for hundreds of Navajo veterans as quickly as possible. We appreciate Chairman Takano for coming to the Navajo Nation to hear firsthand about the challenges and progress we are making,” said President Nez.

Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr., who serves as a member of the 24th Navajo Nation Council and is a military veteran, joined President Nez and Chairman Takano as they met with Navajo veterans. He spoke about the military service and sacrifices of many Navajo men and women including the Navajo Code Talkers who played an instrumental role in winning World War II.

Chairman Tanako spoke in support of President Nez’s efforts to deliver more immediate health care services for Navajo veterans and also highlighted the recent passage of the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022, also known as the PACT Act. The Chairman was a driving force behind the passage of the new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. The law helps to provide generations of veterans, and their survivors, with the care and benefits that were earned by thousands of veterans.

The Office of the President and Vice President thanks Chairman Takano for his support and Navajo veterans and looks forward to continuing to improve health care, housing, and other direct benefits for Navajo veterans.

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