



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission commemorates 10-year partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division focused on addressing civil rights violations of Navajo citizens



PHOTO: Speaker Curley joined U.S. DOJ's Civil Rights Division Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke (center), the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission, and the U.S. DOJ's Civil Rights Division's Indian Working Group to commemorate the 10-year partnership between the agencies.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Wednesday, 25th Navajo Nation Speaker Crystalyne Curley (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) and Office of the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission Executive Director Leonard Gorman met with U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke to commemorate a 10-year partnership with the Civil Rights Division's Indian Working Group in Washington, D.C.

In 2013, the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Civil Rights Division's Indian Working Group to foster communication and coordination to encourage the effective enforcement of the federal civil rights laws regarding citizens of the Navajo Nation.

"The MOU created a communication process that ensured that violations of civil rights of a Navajo Nation citizen are brought to the Civil Rights Division's Indian Working Group, which assisted in identifying issues, referring, coordinating, supporting and monitoring enforcement and outreach. For far too long, Native Americans have experienced discrimination and injustice, and the MOU helped to close the communication gap between tribal and federal agencies," said Speaker Curley.

“For years, Navajo families were confronted with a maze of bureaucracy and injustices that staminate any opportunity to address their issues, let alone closures for them. Through the MOU with the Indian Working Group, collectively, we have demonstrated that problems can be resolved and progress can be made on behalf of Navajo families and communities. We worked closely with the working group concerning race discrimination in voting rights, education, consumerism, and others. We look forward to many more years of working with the Indian Working Group,” said Director Gorman.

The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission was established to operate as a clearinghouse to address discriminatory actions against citizens of the Navajo Nation. The Commission also receives reports of discriminatory and racially motivated acts perpetrated against Navajo citizens and refers incidents to proper authorities.

During the meeting, Speaker Curley and the Commission highlighted several areas of interest, including public school employment issues, employment referrals, voting rights, fraudulent sober living homes, missing and murdered Indigenous relatives, postal services, and others.

Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke stated in a letter, “The simple principle behind the arrangement was that a continuing dialogue between the staff of both organizations would better enable the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission to highlight issues impacting Native Americans in the Four Corners area. Almost immediately, the agreement and the Navajo Nation’s efforts helped the Civil Rights Division focus more attention and resources on protecting the rights of Native Americans.”

The Commission and Indian Working Group will continue regularly scheduled conference calls and meetings to further assist in sharing relevant information and resources. To learn more about the Office of the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission, visit, <https://nnhrc.navajonnsn.gov>.

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