



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Health, Education, and Human Services Committee collaborates with Navajo Nation Veterans Advisory Council to address veterans needs**



**Health, Education, and Human Services Chair Vince James recommends NNVAC create a comprehensive database to track veterans' needs and resource allocation.**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.**— On Monday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) met with the Navajo Nation Veterans Advisory Council (NNVAC) to discuss critical issues affecting Navajo veterans, including housing, resource allocation, and communication gaps.

HEHSC made recommendations and identified areas for improvement to better support veterans. Committee members highlighted ongoing communication issues between the Veterans Administration and the Advisory Council, which have caused confusion and delays. HEHSC Vice-Chair Germaine Simonson called for more effective use of chain-of-command principles.

“Grassroots concerns must flow through the appropriate channels,” Simonson said. “This ensures we address issues effectively without being overwhelmed by individual cases better handled at the administrative level.”

HEHSC Chair Vince James stressed the need for unified communication and accountability.

“We need clarity from all stakeholders—the Veterans Administration, the Executive Branch, and NNVAC—so we can move forward. The delays in housing construction are unacceptable. We must streamline our processes to get homes to veterans,” James said.

James also urged the Veterans Advisory Council to strengthen its engagement with the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration (NNVA). "Budget constraints and logistical challenges must be addressed collaboratively. Veterans deserve transparency and timely action, and it's our job to ensure resources are used effectively," he said.

The NNVAC emphasized the urgent need to finalize the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) housing policy, which has stalled veterans' home construction.

Delegate Andy Nez expressed the committee's readiness to act, stressing the importance of revisiting existing policies. "HEHSC is responsible for passing housing criteria for ARPA funds, and my goal is to get this done soon," Nez said.

Nez also proposed increasing the Veterans Trust Fund allocation to ensure long-term sustainability. "I am open to finding ways to boost funding without harming other trust funds, like those for elders and disabled Navajos," he said.

Simonson underscored the need to honor veteran leadership. "Veterans have waited decades for housing. We must honor their sacrifices by ensuring policies and funding meet their needs without further delays," she said.

Delegate Otto Tso warned of the need for equitable resource distribution.

"The proposal to increase the Veterans Trust Fund allocation is well-intentioned, but we must carefully consider its impact on other essential programs," Tso said. "Robbing Peter to pay Paul isn't a sustainable solution."

Delegate Helena Nez Begay called for regular updates and workshops to ensure transparency and informed support for veterans.

"This meeting was long overdue, but we need to work harder to align our goals. Coordination between the Council, Veterans Administration, and HEHSC is crucial," Begay said.

HEHSC issued strategic recommendations to address critical challenges and improve service delivery. These include finalizing housing policies and approving ARPA-funded housing initiatives to begin construction without delay.

The committee also called for enhanced collaboration between the Veterans Administration and the Veterans Advisory Council to streamline operations and improve coordination.

Additionally, HEHSC recommended creating a comprehensive database to track veterans' needs and resource allocation, improving transparency and accountability. They also urged increased outreach and consistent participation by delegates in veterans' meetings to bridge communication gaps.

The committee stressed the importance of sustainable resource management and urged careful evaluation of funding proposals to ensure fairness and stability across all Navajo Nation trust funds. These recommendations aim to establish a more efficient and accountable framework for addressing the needs of Navajo veterans and the broader community.

HEHSC reaffirmed its commitment to supporting veterans and making measurable progress on these issues.

"We will continue to collaborate and hold all stakeholders accountable," James said. "This is about honoring the sacrifices of our veterans with concrete action and results."

The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee voted unanimously, four in favor and none opposed. The committee will continue to review updates from the Navajo Veterans Administration and Southwest Indian Foundation (SWIF) in the coming weeks.

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