



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

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Law and Order Committee advocates for increased Public Safety and Justice budgets



Left to right: Law and Order Committee Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton, Vice Chair of the Fort Hall Business Council Donna Thompson, Director of Tribal Affairs and Senior Advisor to the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Rose Petoskey, White House Office of Management and Budget Tribal Advisor to the Director, Elizabeth Carr, and Council Delegate Nathan Notah.

WASHINGTON - Law and Order Committee (LOC) Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton and Council Delegate Nathan Notah engaged in critical advocacy at the White House last week.

The official's visit to the Nation's capital was a continuation of an advocacy push for increases to Navajo Nation and tribal Public Safety and Justice (PS&J) budgets.

"We're only getting 13 percent of our need. We get a drop in the bucket of funding that comes down," said Charles-Newton during a meeting with officials from the White House Domestic Policy Council, Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Office of Management and Budget.

Increased and mandatory tribal PS&J budgets would strengthen public safety responses to crime, which the Navajo Nation currently can't adequately respond to.

The Navajo Nation is a sprawling 27,000 square miles with over 400,000 enrolled citizens, of which 200,000 of those live on the Nation. The Navajo Nation employs an estimated 218 law enforcement officers that serve seven districts utilizing three public safety facilities.

The national average, according to the Tribal Law and Order Act, should be 2.8 officers for every 1,000 members. The Navajo Nation has one police officer per 917 members.

“PS&J budgets are critical to Indian Country and must be mandatorily established so that tribal public safety departments can build staff without having to cut programs to do so,” Council Delegate Notah said. “We need to see it in the green book.”

Director of Tribal Affairs and Senior Advisor to the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Rose Petoskey, said that she hears the tribe’s calls for needed funding and is working with the treasury to ensure that money is allocated to the best financial agencies.

When it comes to any proposed PS&J funds, tribal nations are asking that allocations be committed to writing.

“We want a rollout with timelines in place,” said Chair Charles-Newton, who called for assurance that tribal PS&J budgets will remain a priority for any new administration taking office.

Director Petoskey noted that the Biden Administration would make PS&J funding a priority for any administration.

“It will have staying power and any administration will recognize the benefit of this funding,” Petoskey said.

The 2025 President’s Budget Request for Indian Affairs Programs includes \$651.2 million for PS&J operations, which is an increase of \$95.7 million above the 2024 enacted level.

This budget includes a \$33.5 million program increase in Criminal Investigations and Police Services, specifically targeted to increase the number of officers on the ground in Indian Country.

“This funding sets into motion any improvements that can be made to PS&J programs in Indian Country,” Chair Charles-Newton said. “Proper funding needs to be appropriated to address these systemic issues.”

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