

# NAST'ÁJÍ NAHAT'Á HANE' LEGISLATIVE BRANCH NEWS

2024 FALL COUNCIL SESSION + + + +  
OCTOBER 21-24, 2024





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## 2024 Fall Session Speaker’s Report address key issues and initiatives

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Monday, Oct. 21, the Speaker’s Report was accepted with unanimous approval by the 25th Navajo Nation Council during the 2024 Fall Session, addressing key issues and initiatives.

Speaker Curley highlighted the Council’s unanimous passage of the six-month Fiscal Year 2025 Continuing Resolution, aimed at maintaining direct services and operations after the fiscal year ended on September 30. She expressed concern over line-item vetoes issued by President Buu Nygren, which cut critical funding for legislative staff, prompting discussions about potential overreach in veto authority.

Additionally, Speaker announced the appointment of Michelle Espino, ESQ., as the new Acting Chief Legislative Counsel, pending Council confirmation.

The Speaker’s report mentioned the Council’s advancing of Legislation No. 0135-24, which would allocate over \$148 million to senior centers across the Navajo Nation for renovations and essential upgrades, seeking the President’s support for this initiative.

Speaker Curley also reaffirmed the commitment to advancing the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement and the Rio San José Stream System Water Rights Settlement Agreement in Congress, aiming to secure water resources for Arizona and New Mexico communities.

In late September, Speaker Curley joined former uranium miners to urge U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson to expedite the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) extension, highlighting the urgency due to expired compensation for those affected by uranium mining.

“We are in an uphill battle with congress in getting RECA reauthorized. It hits close to home as uranium mining has dramatically impacted families across the Navajo Nation, including my grandfather,” Speaker Curley said.

Regarding uranium transportation on the Navajo Nation, the Council recently approved emergency legislation to strengthen the Radioactive Materials Transportation Act, enhancing regulatory authority over uranium transport to protect community health and sovereignty.

Lastly, Speaker Curley commended the Law and Order Committee for recommending the permanent appointments of Judges Victor Clyde, Malcolm Laughing, and Letitia Stover, following a thorough review of their performance.

In response to the Legislative Branch Department’s Fourth Quarterly Reports included in the Speaker’s Report, Budget and Finance Vice-Chair Carl R. Slater pushed for further enhancement of the responsibilities of the Navajo Nation Election Administration so that information shared with state entities remains consistent.

Resources and Development Chair Brenda Jesus questioned the process and timeframe of the Navajo Government Reform Project undertaken by the Office of Navajo Government Development (ONGD). In response, Speaker Curley called for a Naabik’iyáti’ Committee work session on the Government Reform Project with ONGD.

“On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, I extend our gratitude to the Diné people for their participation in the 2024 Fall Council Session,” said Speaker Curley. “We are dedicated to serving the Navajo Nation and enhancing the quality of life for our people. Your support and prayers are invaluable as we move forward together.”

The 25th Navajo Nation Council voted with 18 in favor and none opposed in accepting the Speaker’s Report.

Please visit the Navajo Nation Council’s Committee page to read the 2024 Fall Session Speaker’s Report in its entirety at: [www.navajonationcouncil.org/committees](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org/committees).



In her report, Speaker Crystalyne Curley highlighted the urgency for Congress to expedite a Radiation Exposure Compensation Act extension.



Before presenting the Speaker’s Report during the 2024 Fall Council Session, Speaker Crystalyne Curley joined the Disability Awareness Walk and advocated on behalf of disabled employee rights.



## In President Nygren's absence, Vice President Montoya provides the State of the Navajo Nation Address



On the first day of the 2024 Fall Session, Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya provided the State of the Navajo Nation Address.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Monday, Oct. 21, the 25th Navajo Nation Council convened for the 2024 Fall Council Session at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz., to begin receiving reports and considering legislations including the State of the Navajo Nation Address as mandated by Navajo law.

For the third time since being elected by the Navajo people, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren failed to appear before the Council to provide the State of the Navajo Nation Address.

Under the powers and authorities of the President outlined in the Navajo Nation Code, the President is required to report quarterly to the Council during each regular session.

President Nygren sent a letter notifying the Council of his previous commitment to attend a meeting on Monday, Oct. 21, at the White House in Washington, D.C., regarding the future of the Office of Navajo-Hopi Indian Relocation.

Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya was present in the Council Chamber on Monday and stepped in to provide the report.

Vice President Montoya discussed early childhood education and school safety, stressing the need for community and government collaboration.

Upon being briefed on a recent incident at

Tuba City Boarding School where students reported inappropriate conduct by a teacher, Vice President Montoya called for the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to act quickly to protect students.

Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives Task Force Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty supported her call, emphasizing the Task Force's action in holding the BIE accountable to incidents that take place within their school system and facilities.

"Additionally, we need more child advocacy centers due to rising child sex abuse cases on the Navajo Nation," Chair Crotty said. "The MMDR Task Force continues to advocate for our children's rights in these matters."

Vice President Montoya highlighted the importance of early childhood education in rural areas to promote family well-being. Delegate Helena Nez Begay mentioned that many families rely on Navajo Head Start centers and pushed for the reopening of centers that have been closed.

"We need a resolution to push for the reopening of Head Start centers and the renovation of existing buildings to provide this critical support for Navajo families," Delegate Nez Begay said.

Regarding the Yazzie/Martinez ruling in New

Mexico, Vice President Montoya noted the state's failure to provide equal education for low-income and Native American students and called for enhanced communication between the Navajo Nation and New Mexico lawmakers.

On Oct. 15, during a press conference held by Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren, the president announced his reassignment of the Vice President's specific projects and responsibilities, effectively terminating her travel and operational budget within the office.

Vice President Montoya said that she was never consulted and expressed frustration about the lack of access to the president, stating she hasn't received responses to her requests for meetings.

Despite these challenges, Vice President Montoya said she remains committed to working with the Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP).

"I continue to be respectful to the OPVP, those are the teachings and guidance I received from my father," said Vice President Montoya.

Resources and Development Committee Chair Brenda Jesus praised the vice president for her courage. "As females in this political arena, we are often challenged," Chair Jesus said. "I want to stand with you as a female political leader."

The Council unanimously voted to accept Vice President Montoya's report, with 17 votes in favor.



Vice President Montoya highlighted the importance of early childhood education and Navajo Head Start Centers.



**Council Delegates recognize achievements and contributions of community leaders and student athletes**

**WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ.** – The second day of the 2024 Fall Session began with meaningful recognitions that honored community leaders, athletes, educators, and dedicated public servants. The recognitions showcased the Council’s ongoing commitment to uplifting the achievements and resilience of the Diné people.

The session recognized Seba Dalkai Cross Country Team, led by Coach Charlene Chischillie. The team, representing Seba Dalkai Boarding School, has excelled in local competitions, earning a spot in the upcoming National Youth Championship in Lexington, Kentucky. These achievements underscore not only athletic skill but also a profound connection to Diné culture, where running is seen as a sacred act of resilience, spiritual growth, and honoring tradition.



Four-time PGA Champion Notah Begay III was honored with a Pendleton blanket on the second day of the 2024 Fall Session.

Coach Chischillie, a Special Education Technician at Seba Dalkai Boarding School, has been instrumental in guiding her team, which includes runners as young as eight years old. The team continues to fundraise to cover their travel and competition expenses throughout the school year.

The youth athletes recognized include K’Leta Martinez, Bailey Begay, Kai Martinez, Kalayla Begay, Kaileigha Nez, Petah Chezumpena, Kiana Lee, Chasity Begay, Landen Nez, Colby Jesus, Riley Dahozy, and Lymen Grey.

Council Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie praised the young athletes stating “Your journey reflects the spirit and strength of our heritage. May you carry this with you as you represent Navajo at the national championship.”

Budget and Finance Committee Chair Shaandiin Parrish and Controller Sean McCabe celebrated the career of John Kennedy, who retired after three decades of service as an auditor and advisor to the Navajo Nation. Honored for his dedication to financial integrity, Kennedy was presented with a Pendleton blanket as a symbol of gratitude from the 25th Navajo Nation Council.

Council Delegate Parrish highlighted Kennedy’s impact on Navajo financial transparency, stating, “John’s unwavering commitment to the Nation has set a high standard for accountability.” Council Delegate Parrish said, “Your service has been invaluable to our progress and community trust. Ahéhee”

Four-time PGA Champion Notah Begay III, a proud Diné, addressed the Council, emphasizing the importance of investing in youth development and community empowerment. “This Council is the epicenter of our community. Investing in our young people is critical to preserving Diné culture and advancing our global presence,” Begay said.

Delegate Dr. Andy Nez extended recognition to the Six Directions Indigenous School from Gallup, New Mexico, applauding the school’s dedication to educational excellence and cultural preservation. This acknowledgment was part of the Council’s broader commitment to supporting educational initiatives that inspire the next generation of leaders.

The 2024 Fall Session recognition ceremonies exemplify the spirit of resilience, unity, and cultural pride that define the Diné people.



On the second day of the 2024 Fall Session, Council Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie recognized the Seba Dalkai Cross Country team and their Coach Charlene Chischillie.



Auditor John Kennedy was recognized by Budget and Finance Committee Chair Shaandiin Parrish and Navajo Nation Controller Sean McCabe.



Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez recognized the Six Directions Indigenous School from Gallup, N.M. for their dedication to educational excellence.



## Navajo Nation Council unites to advocate for Domestic Violence and Disability Awareness

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The 25th Navajo Nation Council marked the start of the 2024 Fall Session with two significant awareness walks, emphasizing its commitment to addressing urgent issues affecting the Navajo community—domestic violence and disability employment. These back-to-back events not only highlighted the Council’s dedication to advocacy but also underscored its efforts to foster safety, dignity, and inclusivity across the Navajo Nation.

The Domestic Violence Awareness Walk, led by Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Chair of the Missing and Murdered Diné Relative (MMDR) Task Force, marked its ninth annual event, aiming to amplify awareness of domestic violence across the Nation. Chair Crotty was joined by Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya, Director of the Navajo Nation Division for Children and Family Services Thomas Cody, and other MMDR task force members. The march started at the Navajo Nation Museum and ending at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber’s, symbolizing a united front against domestic violence.

“Domestic violence continues to affect our communities, our families, and our children at alarming rates,” said Chair Crotty. “This walk is not just symbolic; it’s a promise to the people we serve—a promise to fight for their safety, dignity, and well-being. We walk not only to raise awareness but to demand action, support, and change.”

Simultaneously, the 25th Navajo Nation Council hosted an Awareness Walk for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), highlighting the importance of inclusive employment and access to services for individuals with disabilities. Navajo Nation Speaker Crystalayne Curley and

Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez joined representatives from the Native American Disability Law Center, the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disability, and the Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (NNOSERS).

Speaker Curley emphasized the importance of seeing beyond disabilities and ensuring dignity and equal opportunity for all individuals. “We must look beyond the disability and see the person,” Speaker Curley said. “Everyone deserves dignity and equal opportunity.” Delegate Dr. Andy Nez highlighted the need for accessible services that address the diverse needs of Diné citizens, noting that inclusive support strengthens the entire community.

The awareness events are part of the Council’s broader efforts to combat domestic violence and promote inclusivity for people with disabilities. The Navajo Nation leadership reaffirmed its commitment to improving safety, implementing prevention measures, and advancing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) across the reservation. Additional NDEAM events, including walks in Tuba City, Crownpoint, and Shiprock, will culminate in a disability conference on October 30, covering topics such as legal rights and employment resources.

These dual advocacy efforts underscore the Council’s dedication to eradicating domestic violence and fostering an inclusive environment where all Navajo citizens can thrive. Navajo Nation Crystalayne Curley, Chair of the Missing and Murder Diné Task Force Amber Kanazbah Crotty, and Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya emphasized that these efforts are not just symbolic gestures but meaningful steps toward a safer, stronger, and more equitable Navajo Nation.



Members of the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disabilities raised awareness by marching on the first day of the 2024 Fall Council Session.



Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty was joined by Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya and other advocates who raised awareness for domestic violence.



Hoskie Benally, Jr., President of the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disabilities advocated for Navajo Nation government facilities to be brought into ADA compliance.



### Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty honors Sally Pete for her dedication to Navajo healthcare



Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty honored Sally Pete for her 45-year career in nursing.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – In a recognition ceremony held on the first day of the 2024 Fall Session, Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty honored Sally Pete for her extraordinary 45-year career in nursing and healthcare leadership within the Navajo Nation.

The event underscored the Council’s commitment to recognizing healthcare professionals who have dedicated their lives to improving the well-being of the Diné people.

Pete, a recently retired nurse from Winslow Medical Center, received recognition not only for her extensive tenure as a healthcare provider but also for her impactful 20-year role as CEO of the Winslow Indian Health Care Center (WIHCC). During her career, Pete spearheaded critical initiatives to enhance healthcare access and quality for the Diné community, setting a benchmark for compassionate care and professional excellence.

Council Delegate Crotty delivered a heartfelt tribute to Pete.

“Sally Pete’s unwavering

dedication, wisdom, and encouragement have been instrumental in uplifting the Navajo Nation. Her 45 years of service, both as a nurse and as a strategic leader, demonstrate an exceptional commitment to advancing healthcare services for our people,” Delegate Crotty said. “We are deeply grateful for her vision, leadership, and advocacy, which have strengthened our community’s resilience and well-being.”

During her address, Council Delegate Crotty also highlighted the ongoing healthcare challenges within the Navajo Nation, particularly the urgent need for improved water infrastructure at the Dilkon Indian Medical Center.

Delegate Crotty, recognized for her tireless work in healthcare reform, social justice, and women’s issues, underscored the importance of honoring community leaders like Pete who exemplify dedication, perseverance, and advocacy.

The 2024 Fall Session recognition ceremonies stand as a testament to individuals who have devoted their careers to serving the community.

### 25th Navajo Nation Council passes legislation to amend tobacco tax to include nicotine and electronic smoking products

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.**– On Wednesday, Oct. 23, the 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously supported Legislation 0145-24, a resolution that aims to amend the existing tobacco products tax and enact a new tax on electronic smoking and nicotine products.

Sponsored by Delegate Carl Slater, the legislation is designed to deter tobacco use, support cessation, particularly among Diné youth, and is projected to result in long-term healthcare cost savings for the Navajo Nation.

“Every dollar that goes into the treatment of preventable diseases caused by nicotine addiction is a dollar that could be spent on other healthcare needs. With a very constrained fiscal situation in our healthcare system across the Navajo Nation, it’s incredibly important that we passed this legislation,” said Delegate Slater.

Experts project the resolution to increase the tax revenue, part of which will go to the Office of Traditional Cultural and Spiritual Healing (OTCSH) within the Navajo Department of Health (NDOH). The OTCSH will use these funds to improve the well-being of the Diné people and to preserve traditional

cultural teachings and practices. Although authorized by NDOH’s enabling legislation, the office has never received funding.

This legislation will raise the tobacco products tax and extend it to currently untaxed items like nicotine pouches and electronic smoking devices. The goal is to use taxation as a deterrent against nicotine addiction, addressing the high rates of tobacco use that impact public health in our communities.

The tobacco industry uses electronic cigarettes and vaping devices to attract youth and teens, introducing them to seemingly harmless products before transitioning them to traditional cigarettes.

The legislation also amends eligibility for NDOH grants funded by the tax, allowing for more flexible funding distribution and broader participation from various health organizations.

Additionally, a portion of the tax revenue will be allocated to the Navajo Nation’s Department of Health, which will direct these funds toward traditional healing

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Council Delegate Carl R. Slater is joined by the Air is Life Coalition who supported Legislation 0145-24.



## 25th Navajo Nation Council appropriates approximately \$148 Million for construction and renovation of senior centers across the Navajo Nation

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The 25th Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation 0135-24, committing approximately \$148 million from the Síhasin Fund to improve senior centers across the Navajo Nation. This historic legislation aims to enhance elder care by renovating existing facilities, ensuring ADA compliance, and constructing new centers to meet the needs of Navajo elders.

Sponsored by Delegate Danny Simpson and co-sponsored by Council Delegates Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Crystalne Curley, Norman M. Begay, Casey Allen Johnson, Carl R. Slater, and Lester C. Yazzie.

“This legislation is not just about renovating buildings; it’s about respecting our elders and ensuring they have safe, welcoming spaces to receive services and engage with their communities,” said Delegate Simpson. “It represents a comprehensive commitment to improve the quality of life for our elders, addressing both immediate needs and long-term infrastructure goals.”

During the Council session, two major amendments were introduced. The first amendment replaced the original project scope with a comprehensive breakdown of anticipated costs and upgrades at each senior center. This was designed to enhance transparency and ensure equitable distribution of funds. The second amendment allowed unspent funds to remain available until FY 2027, providing flexibility for project completion and addressing potential delays in construction and compliance.

Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty emphasized the importance of the amendments, stating, “This funding isn’t just a financial commitment; it’s an investment in honoring our elders’ contributions and ensuring their safety and dignity. Our centers must be more than functional; they should foster community, health, and wellness for our elders.”

The approved funding will target upgrades

at over 85 senior centers, focusing on ADA-compliant restrooms, improved kitchen facilities, enhanced HVAC systems, and safer, more accessible environments. Initial renovations will begin at the Crownpoint Senior Center, which will receive \$450,000 for ADA-compliant restroom upgrades.

The Division of Community Development (DCD), in collaboration with the Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support (DALTCS), will manage the implementation of the projects. The Council mandated regular progress reports to ensure accountability and effective use of funds, with plans to hire additional project managers and consultants to expedite construction and renovations.

“This legislation reaffirms our commitment to elder care, setting a precedent for long-term investment in community infrastructure,” said Delegate Carl Slater. “We will work diligently to ensure that these improvements are completed promptly and efficiently, meeting the needs of our elders.”

The allocated funds will be available immediately, allowing for the swift initiation of renovation plans. The Council has called for ongoing professional assessments to ensure precise implementation, adequate resource distribution, and timely completion of the projects.

“This initiative is a testament to our dedication to improving the well-being of Navajo elders,” said Delegate Simpson. “Our work now is to ensure that this funding is used effectively, bringing meaningful change to our communities.”

Legislation 0135-24 passed with majority support from the Council, receiving 16 votes in favor and 2 opposed. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will have up to ten calendar days to consider the resolution.



Legislation Sponsor Danny Simpson said funding from Legislation 0135-24 will provide safe spaces for Navajo Elders.



Legislation 0135-24 will provide approximately \$148 million from the Síhasin Fund to improve senior centers across the Navajo Nation.

### LEGISLATION 0145-24 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

practices and education initiatives that distinguish between commercial tobacco products and their sacred traditional use.

Projected long-term healthcare cost savings from this legislation are estimated at \$41.7 million.

Legislation 0145-24 passed unanimously, with a vote of 18 in favor and none opposed. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will have up to ten calendar days to consider it.



## 25th Navajo Nation Council approves legislation establishing Environmental Remediation Fund

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.**— On Thursday, Oct. 24, the 25th Navajo Nation Council passed Legislation 0149-24 establishing the Navajo Nation Environmental Remediation Fund to provide sustained financial support for cleaning up contaminated sites across the Navajo Nation. The legislation, sponsored by Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, prioritizes public health and environmental restoration.

The fund will receive an annual 2% set-aside from the General Fund beginning in fiscal year 2026, to ensure consistent remediation efforts.

Legislation 0149-24 addresses urgent contamination issues that have long affected Navajo communities. “This fund is a critical step toward restoring our land and safeguarding our people’s health,” said Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, “For too long, contamination has posed severe health risks to our communities. Establishing this fund ensures that we have the resources necessary to protect our lands and water sources for future generations.”

The Navajo Nation Environmental Remediation Fund was created in response to significant contamination at sites such as the Navajo Forest Products Industry (NFPI) in Sawmill, Ariz., and other areas impacted by legacy industrial activities. Cleanup costs across the Navajo Nation can

range to approximately \$500 million, making a consistent funding source essential. The fund is expected to generate more than \$4 million annually, based on actual General Fund revenues.

The fund will be managed by the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA), which will oversee site assessments, remediation planning, and project execution. The legislation also allows for supplementary funding through federal, state, and private grants.

Council Delegates strongly supported the legislation, emphasizing the need for proactive remediation to address health risks like cancer and other diseases linked to toxic exposure. Council Delegate Vince R. James said, “We can no longer wait for outside help. This legislation allows us to take direct action, demonstrating our commitment to protect our people and the land.”

Despite the broad support, some delegates raised concerns about the potential budgetary impact of the 2% set-aside, particularly on other vital services such as community programs and veterans’ services. An amendment was introduced to delay the implementation to FY 2026, providing time for budget adjustments and allowing for the pursuit of external funding to reduce pressure on the General Fund.



Left to right, Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency Executive Director Stephen Etsitty, and Navajo Nation Controller Sean McCabe.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty emphasized the urgency of the initiative. “This fund ensures we have a sustainable approach to cleaning up contamination, improving public health, and securing a healthier future for our communities,” Council Delegate Crotty said.

The NNEPA will develop a comprehensive management plan for the fund, prioritizing contaminated sites based on the severity of contamination and risks to public health. Annual reports will be submitted to the Navajo Nation Council to ensure transparency and accountability.

“The establishment of this fund is just the beginning,” Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez concluded. “We will continue to push for more resources and stronger partnerships to ensure the full remediation of all contaminated sites on Navajo lands.”

The 25th Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation 0149-24 with 10 in favor, and 3 opposed. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will have up to ten calendar days to consider the resolution.

## Students and veterans assist with 2024 Fall Session opening ceremony duties



Students from Tuba City Elementary School performed the National Anthem.



Acting OLS Director Julissa Johnson and Council Delegate Rickie Nez helped perform Color Guard Duties.



Students from Kaibeto Boarding School recited the Pledge of Allegiance.



# Council Delegates taking action during the 2024 Fall Session



Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez



Council Delegate Rickie Nez



Council Delegate Casey Allen Johnson



Council Delegate Germaine Simonson



Council Delegate Shawna Ann Claw



Council Delegate Steven R. Arviso



Council Delegate Otto Tso



## 25th Navajo Nation Council approves emergency funding for 2024 General Election

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Thursday, Oct. 24, the 25th Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation 0232-24, authorizing an emergency appropriation of \$961,602 from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance (UUF) to the Navajo Election Administration (NEA).

The legislation addresses urgent budget shortfalls, aiming to ensure operational readiness for the November 5, 2024, general election, along with related activities planned for early 2025. The funding will go towards staffing, voter registration updates, accessibility, and logistical support at polling sites across the Navajo Nation.

Council Delegate Otto Tso, who sponsored the legislation, highlighted the significance of the funding in maintaining the integrity of the election process. "This funding was crucial to ensuring that our elections would be accessible, fair, and transparent," said Council Delegate Otto Tso. "Every eligible voter deserved a seamless voting experience, free from barriers."

The approved funds were directed toward several critical areas. A significant portion allocated to hiring temporary staff, including poll officials and other essential election personnel. Additional funding was designated

for transportation and logistical support, facilitating the efficient delivery of election services.

To address equipment needs, funds were allocated for essential supplies, including ADA-compliant voting booths and ballot printing. Contractual services, covering voter registration updates, ballot programming, and technical support, were also addressed in the approved funds.

The legislation included amendments aimed at strengthening long-term election continuity. One key directive called for the modernization of voting machines. The NEA was tasked with researching and proposing a budget for the replacement of outdated voting systems, with findings to be presented to the Budget and Finance Committee within 180 days.

In addition, the Office of the Controller was instructed to establish a proprietary account, funded by candidate filing fees, to provide a sustainable source of election funding. The legislation also mandated timely payments to poll workers and other election staff. The NEA, in collaboration with the Office of the Controller and the Department of Personnel Management, ensured prompt compensation, with a report on payment status expected by early 2025.

Accessibility improvements remained a central focus of the emergency funding. Part of the funds were dedicated to enhancing compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at polling locations. While ADA-compliant voting booths were acquired, many sites still required infrastructure upgrades, such as ramps and widened entrances. Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty emphasized that ADA compliance was more than a legal requirement; it was a fundamental aspect of voter equity.

"Ensuring accessibility is not only about meeting standards but about providing a truly inclusive voting process," said Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty. "This funding represented a step in the right direction, but further efforts remained necessary to achieve full compliance."

The emergency funding aimed to ensure that the 2024 general election proceeded without disruption, as well as subsequent events like chapter inaugurations and voter registration updates in 2025.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously passed emergency Legislation 0232-24 with 14 votes in favor and none opposed. The Navajo Nation Council serves as final authority for this legislation.

### Photos from the 2024 Fall Session Recognitions



Seba Dalkai Boarding School Cross Country Coach Charlene Chischillie



Notah Begay III



Seba Dalkai Boarding School Cross Country team members introduce themselves.



## Navajo Nation Council confirms Michelle Espino as Chief Legislative Counsel

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Thursday, Oct. 24, the 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved Legislation 0231-24, appointing Michelle Espino as the Chief Legislative Counsel. Espino brings experienced legal guidance to support the Office of Legislative Counsel.

Espino is an accomplished attorney with a Juris Doctorate from the University of Iowa and over 25 years of legal experience in tribal, state, and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court. Espino has served as Assistant Attorney General for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, Senior Prosecutor for the Navajo Nation Office of the Prosecutor and as the Executive Director for the Navajo Nation Washington Office.

Having served as Chief Judge for the Mescalero Apache Tribe and the Pueblo of Isleta, Espino has demonstrated expertise in litigation, legislative drafting, and policy development.

“With Michelle Espino’s confirmation, we are taking a decisive step toward stabilizing our legislative framework,” said Speaker Crystalyne Curley, primary sponsor of the legislation. “Her dedication to the Navajo Nation, paired with her legal acumen, makes her the ideal leader to guide us through complex legal challenges.”

The decision underscores the urgency to fill this critical role, given the demands of legislative functions and the need for timely legal advice.



During the 2024 Fall Session, the 25th Navajo Nation Council approved the appointment of Michelle Espino (left). The legislation was sponsored by Speaker Crystalyne Curley.

Upon accepting her appointment, Espino emphasized her commitment to bolstering the legislative branch’s legal capacity, improving compliance, and fostering collaboration to advance the Nation’s policy priorities.

“I am honored to serve as Chief Legislative Counsel for the Navajo Nation,” Espino said. “My goal is to ensure that our legislative processes are efficient, effective, and aligned with Navajo values. I look forward to working closely with Council members to enhance our legal infrastructure and address the pressing issues impacting our people.”

Espino’s initial priorities include implementing

recruitment strategies to address the 40 percent vacancy rate in the legal department, enhancing compliance frameworks, and supporting ongoing legislative initiatives related to economic development, public safety, and governance.

The confirmation process highlighted broader challenges faced by the Office of Legislative Counsel, including financial limitations that affect staffing and operational efficiency. Council members acknowledged the need to secure additional funding and explore alternative strategies to retain legal expertise within the Nation.

“Filling this position is just the beginning,” said Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, co-sponsor of the legislation. “We must also prioritize funding and resources for the legal department to ensure its long-term success and the effectiveness of our legislative branch.”

Espino’s leadership will enhance legislative operations and support the Nation’s goals for policy development.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council approved Espino’s appointment by a vote of 14 in favor in none opposed. Because the Council serves as final authority in this legislation, Espino’s confirmation was effective immediately, allowing her to begin addressing the legal needs of the Council.

## Health, Education, and Human Services Chair Vince R. James recognizes Dr. Rudessa Bedonie



Dr. Rudessa Bedonie addresses the 25th Navajo Nation Council.



Council Delegate Vince R. James was joined by Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton in recognizing the academic excellence of Dr. Rudessa Bedonie.



Council Delegate James joins Dr. Rudessa Bedonie and her family for a group photo.



## The 25th Navajo Nation Council approves amendment to expand Fiscal Recovery Fund usage for bathroom renovations/upgrades

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The 25th Navajo Nation Council has unanimously passed Legislation 0014-24, amending Resolution CJN-29-22 to expand the eligible uses of Fiscal Recovery Funds (FRF) to include bathroom renovations, in addition to the previously authorized new bathroom additions. This move aims to enhance infrastructure in Navajo communities by making bathrooms safer, more sanitary, and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The amendment permits the reallocation of FRF funds under Section 11 to support bathroom renovation projects that may include repairs or improvements to existing bathrooms, addressing critical improvement repairs such as ADA accessibility upgrades, replacements of water heater(s), wall heater, toilet, bathroom sink, utility sink, and replacement of fixtures as necessary to make the renovation of the existing bathroom compliant with industry standards.

It also includes provisions for broader home infrastructure improvements, such as dry wall finishing work for water line connections, septic systems, and electrical system installation. The decision responds to remaining unspent FRF balances limiting the FRF dollars to “new bathroom additions,” however with community demand for renovations over new construction, this amendment maximized the impact of federal relief funds.

Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) Chair Shaandiin Parrish, who sponsored the legislation, emphasized the need to effectively utilize remaining FRF dollars to meet the needs of residents across the Navajo Nation. According to Parrish, “By expanding the scope of these funds to include renovations, we can ensure that all dollars are used to provide essential upgrades for Navajo households, preventing any unused funds from being returned.”

The legislation provides an equal distribution increase to the Delegate Regional Plans in the amount of \$4.1 million per delegate region by reallocating unused funds not being spent by departments to an identified need.

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) Chair Vince James expressed concerns about addressing unserved areas lacking running water. In response, the



Budget and Finance Committee Chair Shaandiin Parrish emphasized the need to effectively utilize remaining Fiscal Recovery Funds to meet the needs of residents across the Navajo Nation.

legislation includes provisions to direct funds toward broader infrastructure needs, including water and septic system connections.

Law and Order Committee (LOC) Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton and other delegates highlighted the importance of ADA compliance, particularly for elderly residents and those with disabilities, advocating for renovations that include critical safety upgrades like walk-in showers and higher toilet seats.

Ryan Begay, Planner/Estimator for Division of Community Development (DCD) noted that the legislation will enable case-by-case assessments to identify homes needing renovations, including upgrades like walk-in showers, widened doorways, and ADA compliance measures. The initiative aims to allocate the remaining funds before the December 31, 2024, U.S. Treasury federal deadline, with approximately \$50 million designated for bathroom-related projects, of which \$28.5 million has already been obligated.

The DCD will work with 110 local chapters to assess, prioritize, and implement bathroom renovation projects. The Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority (NECA), as the main contractor for DCD, will collaborate with subcontractors to manage project execution. The legislation sets a deadline of November



DCD Planner/Estimator Ryan Begay said DCD will make case-by-case assessments to identify homes needing renovations.

1, 2024, for modifying existing contracts to accommodate these expanded uses.

The FRF funds reallocated from the CJN-29-22; Section 7 Wastewater and Section 9 Electric Connections to homes; in total \$50 million dollars was reallocated to bathroom renovations, repairs, and improvements of existing facilities.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council voted 21 in favor with none opposed, approving Legislation 0014-24. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will have up to ten calendar days to consider it.



## Navajo Code Talker John Kinsel, Sr. passes away at 107 years old



The 25th Navajo Nation Council mourns the loss of Navajo Code Talker John Kinsel, Sr.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The 25th Navajo Nation Council mourns the loss of Navajo Code Talker John Kinsel Sr., who died on Saturday, Oct. 19, at the age of 107.

“On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, we are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of John Kinsel Sr., one of the last remaining Navajo Code Talkers. Beyond his legacy of a warrior, he was also a proud Navajo man who upheld the values of his heritage while serving his country with distinction. As we honor his life, we extend our deepest sympathies to his family, loved ones, and the entire Navajo Nation. May his spirit rest in peace, and may his memory continue to inspire generations to come,” said Speaker Crystalyne Curley.

Kinsel served as a Navajo Code Talker in World War II in the 9th Marine Regiment and the 3rd Marine Division during the Battle of Iwo Jima. He was among the brave Navajo men who used the Diné language to develop an unbreakable code during World War II, contributing to the United States’ victory.

Kinsel was born and resided in Lukachukai, Ariz., where he grew up immersed in Navajo traditions and culture. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1942, joining the elite group of Navajo Code Talkers who played a critical role in military communications.

The Navajo Code, based on the Navajo language, proved vital in securing U.S. military operations during World War II, particularly during major campaigns like Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, and Okinawa.

“Kinsel was a revered Navajo Code Talker and an American hero, whose legacy as a Code Talker is marked not only by his service but by his continued dedication to sharing the story of the Navajo Code Talkers with future generations,” said Council Delegate Carl R. Slater who represents the Lukachukai Chapter where Kinsel resided.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council extends prayers and condolences to Kinsel’s family and honors his service in protecting the freedom of the United States and the Navajo Nation.

## Governor Tim Walz encourages Navajo vote

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Saturday, Oct. 26, Democratic vice presidential candidate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, spoke to hundreds of Navajo voters at the Veterans’ Memorial Park in Window Rock, Ariz., to reaffirm the power of the Navajo vote.

Governor Walz started his speech by honoring the late John Kinsel, Sr., who was one of the last remaining Navajo Code Talkers who had passed away last Saturday. He thanked Kinsel for his fearless actions during World War II and thanked all the veterans and their families for their sacrifices.

Walz said that elections are calls to take action at the polls.

“Elections are not just about the next four years, they’re about shaping the next forty,” Governor Walz said. “It’s a decision that defines our democracy for generations to come.”

Council Delegate Helena Nez Begay attended the event and urged Navajo voters to check on their voter registrations and thanked everyone who has participated in early voting.

“Today’s event highlighted why our vote matters. Let’s make our voices heard this election. Get out to vote,” said Delegate Nez Begay.

Law and Order Vice Chair Cheryl Yazzie also attended the event, stating that many Navajo people still face infrastructure challenges like bad roads, lack of electricity, piped water and broadband services, which hinder access to polling locations.

“We show up because we must make sure that we’re protecting Mother Earth, our youth, education, our health, and clean water. We know the importance of getting out to vote,” Council Delegate Yazzie said.

Several federal, state, and tribal leaders attended the event including U.S. Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland, Senator Mark Kelly, Arizona Senator Theresa Hatathlie, Arizona Representative Mae Peshlakai, New Mexico Representative Anthony Allison, New Mexico Representative Doreen Wonda Johnson, and Council Delegate Shawna Ann Claw.



Left to right, Council Delegate Helena Nez Begay, Council Delegate Shawna Ann Claw, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, and Council Delegate Cheryl Yazzie.



## Photos from Gov. Walz voting rally



Vice presidential candidate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz addresses the crowd at a voting rally held at the Veterans' Memorial Park.



New Mexico State Senator Shannon Pinto and former Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez encouraged everyone to vote on Nov. 5.



Interior Secretary Deb Haaland supported the power of the Native vote.



Miss Navajo Nation 2024-2025 Ranisha C. Begay attended the voting rally and encouraged attendees to vote in the tribal, state, and federal elections.

## Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee Announces Historic Partnership with the Chilchinbeto Chapter

**PHOENIX, Ariz.** – On Friday, Oct. 25, Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee announced that the Chilchinbeto Chapter of the Navajo Nation has made a landmark decision with the Arizona Treasury to invest their local funds in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP). This historic partnership establishes the first-ever investment into the LGIP by a Chapter within the Navajo Nation, the largest tribe in the United States, since the LGIP's inception 44 years ago.

“This is a historic milestone for the Arizona Treasury and the Chilchinbeto Chapter of the Navajo Nation, as we establish this new partnership with Arizona's Local Government Investment Pool, and the first-ever Navajo financial investment contract with the State of Arizona. From the start of my administration, my goal has been to reach every corner of our great state to work with local leaders and expand the local government investment pool of participants, as local governments benefit from an increase in assets. When you grow the pool, you grow the funds,” said Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee.

“The growth of the LGIP has been extraordinary. Since taking office in January 2019, I have increased local government participation in the LGIP by over 112%, growing the investment funds of cities, towns, tribal governments and other local municipalities by record-setting numbers. This creates more funds for communities across Arizona based on investments alone and allows local taxpayers to avoid higher



Left to right, Chilchinbeto Chapter member Nancy Badonie, Chilchinbeto Chapter Manager Eugene Badonie, Chilchinbeto Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Virginia White, Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee, Chilchinbeto Chapter Vice President Thomas Bradley, Council Delegate Shaandiin Parrish.

taxes to meet government funding obligations. With today's announcement, I am confident this will be the beginning of a long-lasting partnership with the Navajo Nation and its local chapters,” said Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee.

Treasurer Kimberly Yee has increased LGIP investments by over \$3.6 billion since taking office, reaching record-high assets under management of over \$7 billion. When more local governments invest in the LGIP, each participant receives a greater return on their investments. In Fiscal Year 2024, Treasurer Yee distributed over \$335.9 million to LGIP participants across the state, allowing record-earnings to be distributed to local governments for the benefit of their communities.

“We welcome this new partnership with the Arizona State Treasurer's Office and trust that our funds will be prudently invested,” said Chilchinbeto Chapter Manager

Eugene Bedonie. “We look forward to increasing our local dollars to support the people within our community and support our greater economy.”

Navajo Nation Council Delegate Shaandiin Parrish commended the Chilchinbeto Chapter's initiative, stating, “This investment is a bold step toward true financial independence and long-term prosperity for the community. It sets a powerful example for other chapters within the Navajo Nation, demonstrating the strength of local governance and smart economic strategies. By investing wisely, the Chilchinbeto Chapter is actively shaping its own future.”

For more information about the Arizona Local Government Investment Pool, visit [aztreasury.gov/local-government-investment-pool](http://aztreasury.gov/local-government-investment-pool).



## President Biden offers formal apology for the treatment of Native American children during the boarding school era

**LAVEEN VILLAGE, Ariz.** —On Friday, Oct. 25, Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Council Delegate Eugenia Charles Newton were in attendance as U.S. President Joe Biden acknowledged the somber legacy of Native American boarding schools in the United States, during an event held in the Gila River Indian Community.

The event was marked by a formal apology from President Biden to survivors of boarding schools and their descendants, recognizing the lasting impacts of government policies that sought to strip Indigenous people of their languages, cultures, and identities through forced assimilation.

During his remarks, President Biden called for a moment of silence in remembrance of hundreds of thousands of Native American children who were impacted by the boarding school system that forcefully removed them from their homes, aiming to assimilate them into mainstream American culture. Generations of Indigenous children experienced loss of language, culture, and community. Many suffered physical and mental abuse, and many lost their lives.

"I formally apologize as President of the United States of America for what we did," said President Biden. "It's long overdue."

Speaker Curley said that while the apology does not undo the generations of harm and devastation inflicted on Indigenous people, she commends President Biden for taking an unprecedented step toward healing and reconciliation.

"President Biden's apology is a critical acknowledgment of past injustices and wrongdoings by the federal government, and it lays the groundwork for continued healing," said Speaker Curley. "This moment is both a recognition of what our children endured and a commitment to a better future where our voices, cultures, and traditions are protected and celebrated."

The event brought together tribal leaders, boarding school survivors, and federal officials from across the country to witness a significant moment that highlights the resilience of Indigenous communities and the adversities endured by survivors and their families.

In June 2021, Secretary Haaland launched a comprehensive effort known as the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, to recognize the troubled legacy of past federal Indian boarding school policies with the goal of addressing the intergenerational impact and shedding light on past and present trauma in Indigenous communities.

The Department of the Interior released the second and final volume of their investigative report called for as part of the Initiative, which expands on the number and details of institutions to include attendee deaths, the number of burial sites, and participation of religious institutions and organizations. It also includes policy recommendations for consideration by Congress and the Executive Branch to continue to chart a path to healing and redress for Indigenous communities.

The report showed that Navajo children experienced the greatest number of deaths than any other tribe during the boarding school era.

Delegate Charles-Newton emphasized that while an apology is significant, it must be accompanied by concrete actions to support Native communities.

"This apology is a first step, but real progress will come when we invest more in tribal sovereignty, language revitalization, education, mental health support, and public safety," stated Delegate Charles-Newton.

Moving forward, the 25th Navajo Nation Council, alongside tribal leaders and federal partners, will work to ensure the government fulfills its responsibility to Native communities.



President Joe Biden delivered a formal apology to survivors of boarding schools and their descendants.



Interior Secretary Deb Haaland launched a comprehensive effort known as the Federal Boarding School Initiative.



Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton attended the event and said that the president's apology was a step toward healing.





**LEGISLATION 0014-24**

An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee and Navajo Nation Council; Amending Navajo Nation Council Resolution No. CJN-29-22 to Include additional U.S. Department of Treasury Fiscal Recovery Funds Expenditure Categories; Waiving Navajo Nation Council Approval and Authorizing Administrative Approval of Amendments to the Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Fund Bathroom Additions Expenditure Plan to Include Additional Expenditure Categories

SPONSOR: Honorable Shaandiin Parrish  
CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Crystalyne Curley

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 21  
Steven R. Arviso  
Helena Nez Begay  
Norman M. Begay  
Shawna Ann Claw  
Eugenia Charles-Newton  
Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
Herman Daniels, Jr.  
Vince R. James  
Brenda Jesus  
Casey Allen Johnson  
Andy Nez  
Rickie Nez  
Nathan Notah  
Shaandiin Parrish  
Germaine Simonson  
Danny Simpson  
Carl Roessel Slater  
George Tolth  
Otto Tso  
Curtis Yanito  
Lester Yazzie

Nay: 0

Not Voting: 0

Excused: Cherilyn Yazzie

Presiding Speaker:  
Crystalyne Curley

**LEGISLATION 0138-24**

An Action Relating to the Resources and Development, Budget and Finance, and Naabik'iyáti' Committees, and the Navajo Nation Council; Approving \$4,897,200 from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance ("UUFb") to the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources for the Hogback Pumping Station Rebuild Project

SPONSOR: Honorable Rickie Nez

CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Nathan Notah  
CO-SPONSOR: Shawna Ann Claw  
CO-SPONSOR: Eugenia Charles-Newton

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 22  
Steven R. Arviso  
Helena Nez Begay  
Norman M. Begay  
Shawna Ann Claw  
Eugenia Charles-Newton  
Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
Herman Daniels, Jr.  
Vince R. James  
Brenda Jesus  
Casey Allen Johnson  
Andy Nez  
Rickie Nez  
Nathan Notah  
Shaandiin Parrish  
Germaine Simonson  
Danny Simpson  
Carl Roessel Slater  
George Tolth  
Otto Tso  
Curtis Yanito  
Cherilyn Yazzie  
Lester Yazzie

Nay: 0

Not Voting: 0

Presiding Speaker:  
Crystalyne Curley

**LEGISLATION 0135-24**

An Action Relating to the Resources and Development Committee, the Budget and Finance Committee, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee, and the Navajo Nation Council; Approving \$450,000 from the Síhasin Fund to the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development for the Crownpoint Senior Center; Approving the Related Expenditure Plan

SPONSOR: Honorable Danny Simpson

CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Norman M. Begay  
CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Crystalyne Curley  
CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Casey Allen Johnson  
CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Lester C. Yazzie

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 16  
Helena Nez Begay  
Norman M. Begay  
Shawna Ann Claw  
Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
Brenda Jesus  
Casey Allen Johnson  
Andy Nez  
Nathan Notah  
Shaandiin Parrish  
Germaine Simonson  
Danny Simpson  
Carl Roessel Slater  
George Tolth  
Otto Tso  
Curtis Yanito  
Cherilyn Yazzie  
Lester Yazzie

Nay: 2  
Steven R. Arviso  
Rickie Nez

Not Voting: 2  
Otto Tso  
Herman Daniels, Jr.

Excused: 2  
Eugenia Charles-Newton  
Vince R. James

Presiding Speaker:  
Crystalyne Curley

**LEGISLATION 0224-24**

An Action Relating to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Approving the Reinstatement of Colen Nicklis Atene as a Member of the Navajo Nation  
SPONSOR: Honorable Herman M. Daniels, Jr.  
CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Shaandiin Parrish

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 18  
Steven R. Arviso  
Helena Nez Begay  
Norman M. Begay  
Shawna Ann Claw  
Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
Brenda Jesus  
Casey Allen Johnson  
Andy Nez  
Rickie Nez  
Nathan Notah  
Shaandiin Parrish  
Germaine Simonson  
Danny Simpson  
Carl Roessel Slater  
George Tolth  
Curtis Yanito  
Cherilyn Yazzie  
Lester Yazzie

Nay: 0

Not Voting: 1  
Otto Tso

Excused: 3  
Herman M. Daniels, Jr.  
Vince R. James  
Eugenia Charles-Newton

Presiding Speaker:  
Crystalyne Curley

**LEGISLATION 0225-24**

An Action Relating to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Approving the Reinstatement of Cleve Eagleheart Atene as a Member of the Navajo Nation  
SPONSOR: Honorable Herman M. Daniels, Jr.  
CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Shaandiin Parrish

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 18  
Steven R. Arviso  
Helena Nez Begay  
Norman M. Begay  
Shawna Ann Claw  
Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
Brenda Jesus  
Casey Allen Johnson  
Andy Nez  
Rickie Nez  
Nathan Notah  
Shaandiin Parrish  
Germaine Simonson  
Danny Simpson  
Carl Roessel Slater  
George Tolth  
Curtis Yanito  
Cherilyn Yazzie  
Lester Yazzie

Nay: 0

Not Voting: 1  
Otto Tso

Excused: 3  
Herman M. Daniels, Jr.  
Vince R. James  
Eugenia Charles-Newton

Presiding Speaker:  
Crystalyne Curley



2024 FALL COUNCIL SESSION LEGISLATION RESULTS



**LEGISLATION 0226-24**

An Action Relating to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Approving the Reinstatement of Nicola L. Atene as a Member of the Navajo Nation  
 SPONSOR: Honorable Herman M. Daniels, Jr.  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Shaandiin Parrish

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 18  
 Steven R. Arviso  
 Helena Nez Begay  
 Norman M. Begay  
 Shawna Ann Claw  
 Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 Brenda Jesus  
 Casey Allen Johnson  
 Andy Nez  
 Rickie Nez  
 Nathan Notah  
 Shaandiin Parrish  
 Germaine Simonson  
 Danny Simpson  
 Carl Roessel Slater  
 George Tolth  
 Curtis Yanito  
 Cherilyn Yazzie  
 Lester Yazzie

Nay: 0

Not Voting: 1  
 Otto Tso

Excused: 3  
 Herman M. Daniels, Jr.  
 Vince R. James  
 Eugenia Charles-Newton

Presiding Speaker:  
 Crystalyne Curley

**LEGISLATION 0145-24**

An Act Relating to the Health, Education, and Human Services, Law and Order, Budget and Finance, and Naabik'iyáti' Committees, and the Navajo Nation Council; Amending the Tobacco Products Tax at 24 N.N.C. § 800 - § 810 and Enacting the Electronic Smoking Products Tax at 24 N.N.C. § 1001 - § 1016

SPONSOR: Honorable Carl R. Slater  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Helena Nez Begay  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Nathan Notah  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Shaandiin Parrish  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Curtis Yanito  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Lester C. Yazzie

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 18  
 Steven R. Arviso  
 Helena Nez Begay  
 Norman M. Begay  
 Shawna Ann Claw  
 Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 Brenda Jesus  
 Casey Allen Johnson  
 Andy Nez  
 Rickie Nez  
 Nathan Notah  
 Shaandiin Parrish  
 Germaine Simonson  
 Danny Simpson  
 Carl Roessel Slater  
 George Tolth  
 Curtis Yanito  
 Cherilyn Yazzie  
 Lester Yazzie

Nay: 0

Not Voting: 1  
 Otto Tso

Excused: 3  
 Herman M. Daniels, Jr.  
 Vince R. James  
 Eugenia Charles-Newton

Presiding Speaker:  
 Crystalyne Curley

**LEGISLATION 0230-24**

An Action Relating to an Emergency for the Navajo Nation Council; Approving and Authorizing the Intergovernmental Agreement Between the Navajo Nation and San Juan County, Utah  
 SPONSOR: Honorable Curtis Yanito

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 18  
 Steven R. Arviso  
 Helena Nez Begay  
 Norman M. Begay  
 Shawna Ann Claw  
 Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 Brenda Jesus  
 Casey Allen Johnson  
 Andy Nez  
 Rickie Nez  
 Nathan Notah  
 Shaandiin Parrish  
 Germaine Simonson  
 Danny Simpson  
 Carl Roessel Slater  
 George Tolth  
 Curtis Yanito  
 Cherilyn Yazzie  
 Lester Yazzie

Nay: 0

Not Voting: 1  
 Otto Tso

Excused: 3  
 Herman M. Daniels, Jr.  
 Vince R. James  
 Eugenia Charles-Newton

Presiding Speaker:  
 Crystalyne Curley

**LEGISLATION 0220-24**

An Act Relating to an Emergency for the Navajo Council; Rescinding CJA 08-24 which Amended Campaign Expense Provisions of the Navajo Election Code at §§ 201 through 209 and § 404

SPONSOR: Honorable Brenda Jesus

**Action: Failed**

Yea: 3  
 Brenda Jesus  
 Nathan Notah  
 Curtis Yanito

Nay: 14  
 Steven R. Arviso  
 Helena Nez Begay  
 Norman M. Begay  
 Shawna Ann Claw  
 Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 Casey Allen Johnson  
 Andy Nez  
 Rickie Nez  
 Shaandiin Parrish  
 Germaine Simonson  
 Danny Simpson  
 George Tolth  
 Cherilyn Yazzie  
 Lester Yazzie

Not Voting: 2  
 Otto Tso  
 Carl Roessel Slater

Excused: 3  
 Eugenia Charles-Newton  
 Herman Daniels, Jr.  
 Vince R. James

Presiding Speaker:  
 Crystalyne Curley

**LEGISLATION 0139-23**

An Act Relating to the Health, Education and Human Services, Law and Order, Budget and Finance, and Naabik'iyáti' Committees and the Navajo Nation Council; Repealing 9 N.N.C. § 2(C) of the Diné Marriage Act of 2005, to Uniformly Recognize All Marriages Within the Navajo Nation; and Amending Other Provisions in Title 9 of the Navajo Nation Code Related to Marriage Within the Navajo Nation

SPONSOR: Honorable Eugenia Charles-Newton  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Andy Nez

**Action: Referred to Naabik'iyáti' Committee**

Yea: 16  
 Steven R. Arviso  
 Norman M. Begay  
 Eugenia Charles-Newton  
 Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 Vince R. James  
 Casey Allen Johnson  
 Andy Nez  
 Rickie Nez  
 Nathan Notah  
 Danny Simpson  
 Carl Roessel Slater  
 George Tolth  
 Otto Tso  
 Curtis Yanito  
 Cherilyn Yazzie  
 Lester Yazzie

Nay: 0

Not Voting: 1  
 Shawna Ann Claw

Excused: 5  
 Shaandiin Parrish  
 Germaine Simonson  
 Brenda Jesus  
 Herman Daniels, Jr.  
 Helena Nez Begay

Presiding Speaker:  
 Crystalyne Curley





**LEGISLATION 0149-24**

An Act Relating to the Law and Order Committee, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, the Resources and Development Committee, the Budget and Finance Committee, and the Naabik'iyáti' Committee, and the Navajo Nation Council; Establishing the "Navajo Nation Environmental Remediation Fund" and Approving a 2% Annual Set-Aside from the General Fund to Pay for Remediation Activities at Contamination Sites Located on the Navajo Nation

SPONSOR: Honorable Andy Nez

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 10  
 Steven R. Arviso  
 Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 Vince R. James  
 Casey Allen Johnson  
 Andy Nez  
 Nathan Notah  
 Danny Simpson  
 George Tolth  
 Otto Tso  
 Lester Yazzie

Nay: 3  
 Carl Roessel Slater  
 Curtis Yanito  
 Cherilyn Yazzie

Not Voting: 3  
 Norman M. Begay  
 Shawna Ann Claw  
 Rickie Nez

Excused: 6  
 Shaandiin Parrish  
 Germaine Simonson  
 Brenda Jesus  
 Herman Daniels, Jr.  
 Helena Nez Begay  
 Eugenia Charles-Newton

Presiding Speaker:  
 Crystalayne Curley

**LEGISLATION 0228-24**

An Action Relating to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Julissa M. Johnson as Executive Director of the Office of Legislative Services  
 SPONSOR: Honorable Crystalayne Curley

CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Nathan Notah

**Action: Referred to Naabik'iyáti' Committee**

Yea: 10  
 Helena Nez Begay  
 Shawna Ann Claw  
 Crystalayne Curley  
 Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 Brenda Jesus  
 Casey Allen Johnson  
 Andy Nez  
 Curtis Yanito  
 Cherilyn Yazzie  
 Lester Yazzie

Nay: 3  
 Otto Tso  
 Nathan Notah  
 Vince R. James

Not Voting: 4  
 Steven R. Arviso  
 Norman M. Begay  
 Danny Simpson  
 George Tolth

Excused:5  
 Eugenia Charles-Newton  
 Rickie Nez  
 Germaine Simonson  
 Herman Daniels, Jr.  
 Shaandiin Parrish

Presiding Speaker:  
 Carl Roessel Slater

**LEGISLATION 0231-24**

An Action Relating to an Emergency for the Navajo Nation Council; Appointing Michelle Espino as Chief Legislative Counsel

SPONSOR: Honorable Crystalayne Curley

CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Steven R. Arviso  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Helena Nez Begay  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Norman M. Begay  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Eugenia Charles-Newton  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Herman M. Daniels, Jr.  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Vince R. James  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Brenda Jesus  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Casey Allen Johnson  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Nathan Notah  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Shaandiin Parrish  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Germaine Simonson  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Danny Simpson  
 CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Curtis Yanito

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 14  
 Helena Nez Begay  
 Shawna Ann Claw  
 Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 Crystalayne Curley  
 Vince R. James  
 Brenda Jesus  
 Casey Allen Johnson  
 Dr. Andy Nez  
 Nathan Notah  
 Germaine Simonson  
 Otto Tso  
 Curtis Yanito  
 Cherilyn Yazzie  
 Lester Yazzie

Nay: 0  
**(Continued)**

**LEGISLATION 0231-24 (Continued)**

Not Voting: 4  
 Norman M. Begay  
 George Tolth  
 Danny Simpson  
 Steven R. Arviso

Excused:  
 Eugenia Charles-Newton  
 Shaandiin Parrish  
 Rickie Nez  
 Herman Daniels, Jr.

Presiding Speaker:  
 Carl Roessel Slater

**LEGISLATION 0232-24**

An Action Relating to an Emergency for the Navajo Nation Council; Approving \$961,602 from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance ("UUFB") for the Navajo Election Administration for its Expenses in Preparation for the 2024 Navajo Nation Elections; Waiving 12 N.N.C. §820(E), §820(F), §820(J), and §820(L)

SPONSOR: Honorable Otto Tso

CO-SPONSOR: Honorable Herman M. Daniels, Jr.

**Action: Passed**

Yea: 14  
 Helena Nez Begay  
 Shawna Ann Claw  
 Amber Kanazbah Crotty  
 Vince R. James  
 Brenda Jesus  
 Casey Allen Johnson  
 Andy Nez  
 Nathan Notah  
 Germaine Simonson  
 Carl Roessel Slater  
 Otto Tso  
 Curtis Yanito  
 Cherilyn Yazzie  
 Lester Yazzie

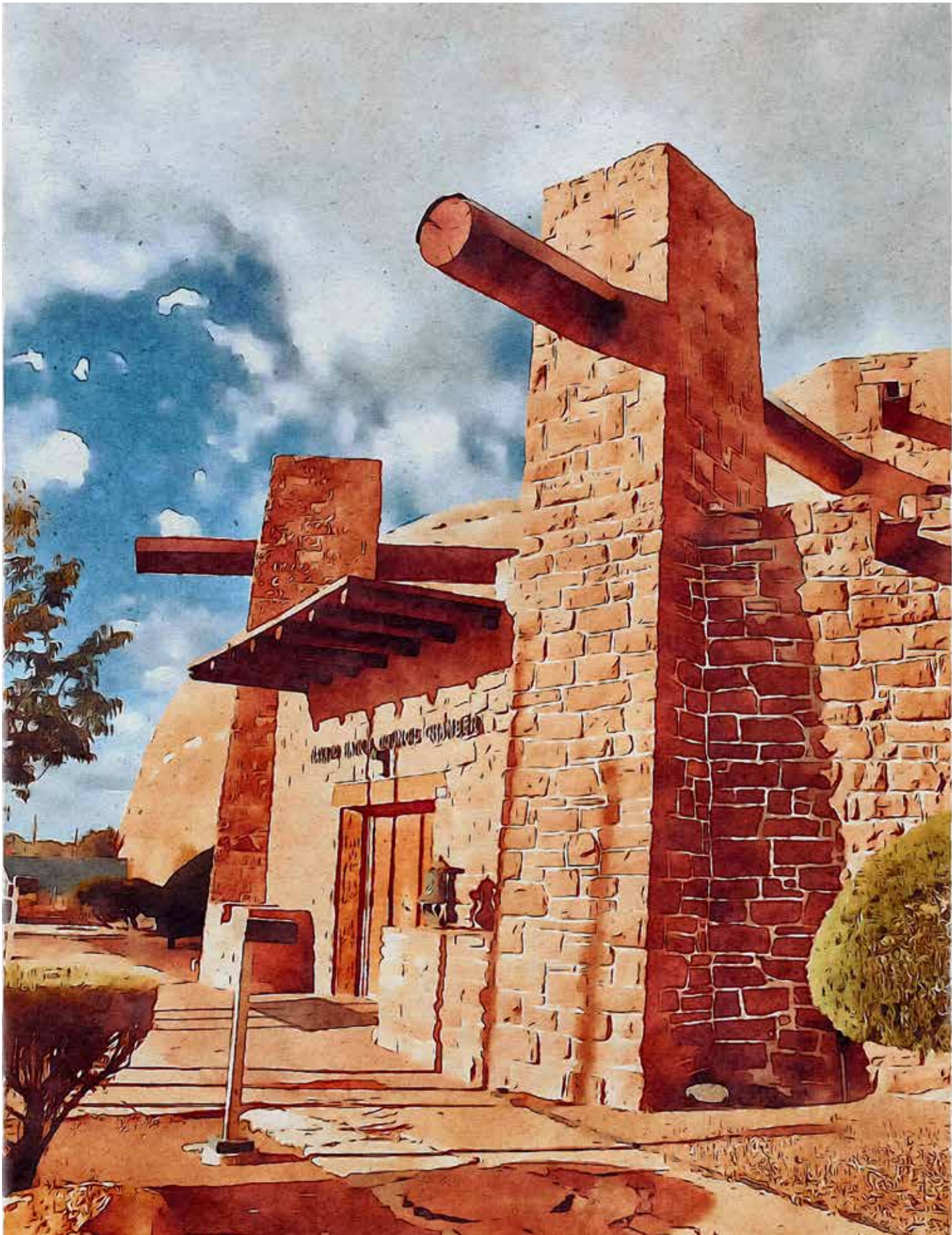
Nay: 0

Not Voting: 4  
 Norman M. Begay  
 George Tolth  
 Danny Simpson  
 Steven R. Arviso

Excused: 4  
 Eugenia Charles-Newton  
 Herman Daniels, Jr.  
 Rickie Nez  
 Shaandiin Parrish

Presiding Speaker:  
 Crystalayne Curley





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# THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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