



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 29, 2024

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



Council Delegate Otto Tso sponsored Legislation 0232-24.

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 (UUFB) 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 The NEA was tasked with researching and proposing a budget for the replacement of outdated voting systems, with findings to be presented to the Budget and Finance Committee within 180 days.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.

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