



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council questions President Nygren's use of the line item veto authority



25th Navajo Nation Council members question whether President Nygren abused and overstepped the presidential line item veto authority.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council are voicing their disapproval of Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren's recent line item vetoes, which eliminated critical funding for the Legislative Branch.

The funds were included in a six-month Continuing Resolution adopted unanimously by the Council on Sept. 16, in order to avoid employee layoffs and continue critical government operations beyond the end of the current fiscal year which concluded on Sept. 30.

"President Nygren campaigned on working together with the Navajo Nation Council, but his recent line item veto actions contradict his promises. Taking away critical funding for legislative attorneys, Legislative District Assistants, and support for legislative staff does not reflect the concept of working together and it ultimately affects services that benefit the Navajo people. Despite these setbacks, the Council and the Legislative Branch employees will continue serving the Navajo people by addressing the lack of support being provided by the Office of the President," said Speaker Crystalyne Curley.

Among the line item vetoes, President Nygren zoned in on funding for the Legislative Branch by eliminating nearly \$1 million that is used to fund attorney positions, support staff, and other

resources that support the drafting and delivery of critical legislations requested by constituents, chapters, and many others along with other critical legal support to the Legislative Branch.

He also vetoed nearly \$200,000 for Legislative District Assistants who work directly with communities and constituents to provide services and to close communication gaps.

Although President Nygren vetoed \$2.7 million in funding for the Legislative Branch, he approved all funding for the Office of the President and the Executive Branch that was included in the Continuing Resolution.

During the budget process, Council members were alarmed by the budget proposal put forth by the Office of the President, which reduced funding for Executive Branch programs and departments that provide direct services to the Navajo people in order to increase the overall budget for the Office of the President.

Many local leaders and community members also voiced their disappointment and disapproval of President Nygren's line item vetoes during a Central Agency Council held on Sept. 28 — a meeting that President Nygren did not attend.

Speaker Curley was joined by Council Delegates Carl Slater, Shaandiin Parrish, and Brenda Jesus at the Central Agency Council meeting to provide updates regarding the line item vetoes and to answer questions from the public.

Council members also question whether President Nygren abused and overstepped the presidential line item veto authority, which was granted by Navajo voters through a referendum passed in 2009.

Based on the law, line item veto actions are not subject to override by the Council. However, Council members question the legality of President Nygren's latest line item vetoes — many of which were portrayed as corrections to the Continuing Resolution, including the editing and deletion of exhibits.

"The Council stands with our communities and the many grandparents, veterans, and other constituents who continue to voice their disappointment with President Nygren's line item vetoes. The Council will continue to communicate and meet with the Executive and Judicial Branches to develop a Comprehensive Budget that restores the funding that was taken away by the President's actions. We will take the lead as a Council," stated Speaker Curley.

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