



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. meets with federal officials to seek support for Navajo veterans and public safety initiatives

WASHINGTON D.C. – Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) spent Wednesday in Washington D.C. meeting with officials with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the BIA – Office of Justice Services, to advocate for Navajo veterans and public safety initiatives.

In his meeting with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Delegate Begay continued his advocacy for increased direct services for Navajo veterans, which include health benefits, housing, and veterans benefits/compensations relating to service connected disability. He added that despite the Navajo Nation having its own Veterans Administration office, there remains a growing need for more direct services for Navajo veterans.

“I will continue to press that Arizona, other states, and the Federal VA need to appoint or designate a full-time employee on Navajo to help develop a system to process claim benefits and other benefits for our Navajo veterans. Veterans continue to lose a lot of dollars that they are entitle to from their service to our country,” stated Delegate Begay.

He further stated that there is great need for additional monthly income, new homes, and better health care facilities for veterans on the Navajo Nation. He also recommended that the Navajo Nation and U.S. VA hold a round table discussion to better understand how they can work together and provide better services.

On the same day, Delegate Begay also met with officials with the BIA – Office of Justice Services, which is tasked with providing funds to construct housing for public safety purposes. Federal officials indicated that the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety should first provide a detailed housing needs assessment to gain a better perspective of the amount of dollars the Nation would need to provide housing for police officers.

Delegate Begay is also a member of the Law and Order Committee, which serves as the oversight authority for the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety. He noted that the committee continues to explore every avenue of funding available for police officer housing, and is working with chapters to secure land for the housing projects.

He said he is hopeful that the BIA – Office of Justice Services, Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, Navajo Housing Authority, and others can soon meet to determine the next steps.

“We have many officers in need of housing and this is one important avenue that we need to work together on,” added Delegate Begay.

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