



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

Law and Order Committee supports efforts to allow the Division of Public Safety to conduct qualification assessments on police officer applicants

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee approved Legislation No. 0321-17, directing the Navajo Nation Department of Personnel Management to issue its approval to allow the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety to conduct qualification assessments on all applicants for police officers.

Pursuant to the Navajo Nation Personnel Policies Manual section IV, the Department of Personnel Management, or an approved department or division, shall conduct a qualification assessment on all applicants based on the information provided on the employment application and other appropriate documents.

The bill was first considered by the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, which issued a “do pass” recommendation by a vote of 4-0 on Aug. 28. The HEHSC serves as the oversight authority for the Department of Personnel Management.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), who co-sponsored the legislation, stated that the directive would expedite the process of hiring more police officers to serve Navajo communities.

“The Nation is 27,000 square-miles and we don’t have enough police officers to provide complete coverage. When a potential applicant is interested in a police officer position, the Department of Personnel Management’s process to assess, select, and hire presents many challenges,” stated Delegate Begay.

LOC vice chair Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins), said he strongly believes the legislation should also include applicants for other positions such as criminal investigators, internal affairs officers, and possibly other public safety personnel that tend to have vacancies for a long period of time.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), sponsor of the legislation, requested his LOC colleagues to approve the legislation as it was introduced without any amendments.

“Including other public safety personnel will set back the process of the intent. The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee already supported the legislation with no

amendments. Let's give the chief of police the opportunity to take this task and if it works, we can include other public safety personnel," said Delegate Yazzie.

The Law and Order Committee approved Legislation No. 0321-17 with a 3-0 vote and serves as the final authority for the bill.

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