



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2016

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253

Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Council unanimously approves Navajo Veterans Act



Photo: Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Jonathan Hale and Delegate Davis Filfred with Navajo veterans involved with enabling the Veterans Act.

WINDOW ROCK – On the second day of the Winter Council Session, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved Legislation No. 0006-16, which amends Navajo Nation Code Title II establishing the Navajo Nation Veterans Act and creating the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration and Advisory Council.

According to the legislation, the Veterans Administration would provide enhanced outreach, services, and benefits to Navajo veterans. The Veterans Advisory Council would allow veteran participation in policy matters and data system development regarding Navajo veterans issues at the central government level.

Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) commended the Navajo veterans and veteran organizations for their many years of dedicated involvement in the development of the legislation, which took decades to finalize among veteran organizations.

“This is not something that the OPVP administration took on right away, I want to make that record known. This has been something that’s gone on for years and years. Finally, we have come to a compromise and the veterans came together for this and brought something on their behalf. I want to put Navajo veterans on the forefront to say that ‘it’s yours and you done your job.’ I want to make that known for the record,” said Delegate Shepherd.

The Veterans Administration would be placed under the Office of the President and Vice President, and Council’s Health, Education, and Human Services Committee serving as oversight. The Veterans Advisory Council would consist of eleven members – ten male and one female veteran – from each Navajo Agency and will be identified as Agency Veteran Commanders.

The Veterans Administration will develop its own plan of operation, with the goal of becoming officially recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of advocating for funding and further benefits for Navajo veterans.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) said the passing of the legislation acknowledges the hard work of the veterans and will aid in providing much needed services.

“This legislation honors Navajo veterans and will provide services and funding from agencies to the Navajo Nation on behalf of veterans,” said Delegate Hale. “Inclusive is the accountability measures that will be developed in the plan of operation to further clarify those measures.”

Council members passed Legislation No. 0006-16 with a vote of 20-0. President Russell Begaye will have ten calendar days to consider the legislation once it is sent to the Office of the President and Vice President.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council