



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Navajo Nation issues support for Arizona Proposition 123 to provide funds for Navajo schools**

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Navajo Nation has officially issued its support of Arizona Proposition 123, through a unanimous vote of the Navajo Nation Council’s Naabik’iyátí’ Committee on Thursday.

Prop 123 will be decided in May 2016 through a public referendum in which Arizona voters will decide whether to draw funds from the state’s land trust fund and its general fund over the next decade to increase funding for Arizona students by \$173 per student throughout the state.

In October 2015, the Arizona Senate and House of Representatives passed three legislative bills seeking to contribute approximately \$3.5 billion for K – 12 grade students in public and charter schools over the next decade. Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey then signed the bills into law.

The bills stemmed from a lawsuit filed in 2010, in which several schools and school districts filed a lawsuit against the state for cutting funding for education during the last economic recession. A settlement was later reached and required approval from the State Legislature and the Governor.

Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels), who chairs the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, sponsored the legislation and urged his Council colleagues to support the measure to provide much needed funding for Navajo students in Arizona.

“The dollars will help all Arizona students including our Navajo students and will provide a higher quality of education,” stated Delegate Hale.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) and HEHSC member Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) joined Gov. Ducey in October for the signing ceremony and expressed support for the additional funding for Navajo students.

Delegate Brown said that if the referendum passes in May, the Navajo Nation should invest in more Navajo language immersion programs and cultural classes for students.

“Let’s invest in programs that diversify our children’s learning experience and that will maximize their potential and ultimately improve their test scores,” said Delegate Brown.

Below are estimates that show how the funding would benefit school districts within and near the Navajo Nation based on information provided by the Office of the Governor. The estimates are based on current student population and may fluctuate based on several factors.

- Cedar Unified District - 26,803.71
- Chinle Unified District - 541,303.73
- Flagstaff Unified District - 1,526,461.68
- Ganado Unified School District - 227,763.48
- Heber-Overgaard Unified District - 86,659.36
- Holbrook Unified District - 321,509.75
- Joseph City Unified - 73,190.85
- Kayenta Unified District - 279,597.44
- Page Unified District - 413,853.76
- Pinon Unified District - 195,971.54
- Red Mesa Unified District - 133,885.05
- Sanders Unified District - 134,810.66
- Snowflake Unified District - 359,407.89
- Tuba City Unified School District - 256,161.19
- Window Rock Unified District - 300,937.58
- Winslow Unified District - 329,935.87

Legislation No. 0030-16 was also considered by the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee on Feb. 10, which issued a “do pass” recommendation by a vote of 5-0. On Thursday, the Naabik’iyátí’ Committee approved the legislation with a vote of 11-0. The Naabik’iyátí’ Committee serves as the final authority for the bill.

Arizona voters will determine the outcome of Prop 123 during the state’s primary election on May 17, 2016.

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