

Navajo President, delegates advocate for funding changes

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WASHINGTON D.C. — Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, along with Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, advocated for federal funding and changes in the federal budget process during the week of March 18 at the quarterly Tribal Interior Budget Council meeting held in Washington, D.C.

The TIBC serves as a critical platform for tribal leaders to engage with federal representatives on matters related to budgetary allocations and funding priorities within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, and other agencies.

Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Council Delegates Eugenia Charles-Newton, Cherilyn Yazzie, Otto Tso, and Nathan Notah participated in discussions focused on the unique needs and priorities of the Navajo people including public safety, transportation, and education.

Charles-Newton, who chairs TIBC's public safety and justice subcommittee, presented two initiatives including a proposal to lower the age of hiring police officers from 21 to 18 to expand recruitment of Navajo Police Officers. Delegate Yazzie also requested TIBC to support a proposal to eliminate federal funding cap limits for programs that benefit tribes.

Regarding school safety, Charles-Newton and Shawna Becenti, who serves as the Head of School for Navajo Preparatory School and a member of the TIBC Education Sub Committee, advocated for \$93 million for School Resource Officers to help protect students at BIE schools located on the Navajo Nation.

During the meeting, the council members underscored the significance of tribal sovereignty and self-governance in decision-making processes regarding resource allocation and policy implementation.

"The participation of the 25th Navajo Nation Council in the Tribal Interior Budget Council meeting reinforces our commitment to advocating for the well-being and advancement of our communities," Curley stated in a March 25 press release. "We remain steadfast in our efforts to ensure that the Navajo Nation receives the necessary support and resources to address the needs of our people."

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