

Navajo Law and Order Committee discusses pressing safety issues

Written by gallupsun
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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. —The Law and Order Committee convened in Window Rock, Ariz., to discuss pressing matters concerning the Navajo Nation's judicial system and public safety initiatives on March 25.

Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne provided a detailed update on the status of the Navajo Nation Courts. She emphasized the challenges faced in managing caseloads and ensuring accurate data management. Highlighting efforts to review case management policies and implement Justware, Jayne underscored the importance of consistency and accuracy within the judicial system.

LOC Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton emphasized the need for collaboration between the Judicial Branch, Division of Public Safety, and the Navajo Nation Police Department to work toward a Warrant Blitz across the Navajo Nation to help alleviate the number of backlogged cases that involve minor offenses.

"Our Nation can no longer be a safe haven for criminals. We have people who are trying to avoid warrants from off the Navajo Nation, and they come back to Navajo because they know there's a process to expedite their warrants. They can challenge those pickups," Charles-Newton said.

Michael Anderson, Director of the Division of Public Safety, presented insights into the FY2025 Budget, outlining allocation strategies and operational plans. Alongside Navajo Police Commander Leonard Redhorse III, updates were provided on crucial projects concerning E911 and Rural Addressing. Efforts focused on enhancing emergency response capabilities across Navajo Nation territories, despite challenges related to contract reviews and sovereignty rights.

DPS is actively engaged in significant projects concerning E911 and Rural Addressing. These initiatives aim to improve emergency response systems across the Navajo Nation. However, progress has been hindered by challenges in contract reviews, particularly regarding sovereignty rights and adherence to Navajo law.

Contract bidders are also repeatedly told that the Navajo Nation's sovereignty rights are

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non-negotiable. Any proposal that does not align with those expectations is discouraged from submission. Efforts are underway, in collaboration with the Department of Justice to expedite the contract process while ensuring full respect for sovereign rights.

During the March 25 meeting, the LOC also voted in support of Legislation No. 0059-24, confirming the appointment of Anderson as Division Director for the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety. The legislation now moves forward to the Naabik'íyati' Committee and Navajo Nation Council for consideration.

