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**NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OVERRIDES VETO OF FUNDS FOR
CHAPTERS, PASSES LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH NAVAJO CODE
TALKERS DAY**

The Navajo Nation Council overrode President Joe Shirley's veto of Resolution CO-50-06, which appropriated over \$24 million for needed programs serving the Navajo Nation, during a special session on December 21, 2006.

The veto, sponsored by Omer Begay (Cornfields/Greasewood Springs/Klagetoh/Wide Ruins), passed with a vote of 63 in favor and 10 opposed. Overrides require 2/3 vote or more of Council to pass.

With the override, Early Childhood Development was appropriated \$1,247,450; Fort Defiance Indian Hospital, Inc. was appropriated \$1 million; Tohajiilee Chapter was funded \$500,000 for its effort to open a clinic in its area; the initiative to build a Navajo Nation Supreme Court was funded \$1,520,606,10; and the 110 Navajo Nation Chapters were funded at \$180,000 each.

The funding for the Chapters allows for Chapters to exercise local control by determining how the funds would best be used by the communities.

Consideration of an override does not allow for debate or discussion as the delegates go directly to vote once the reading of the legislation and remarks by presenter take place. However, during the past four years Council delegates have continually expressed that the local people have the ability to make decisions on how the funds could benefit their communities, saying that each Chapter has different needs and the local people need the freedom to address those needs with the resources available.

In a show of fiscal responsibility, the Navajo Nation Council left the remaining balance of more than \$28 million in the undesignated, unreserved fund balance (UUFB) untouched. The UUFB, which includes monies that have not been appropriated by Council, must have a minimum fund balance not less than 10 percent of the nations' operating budget for the prior fiscal year. The current minimum balance, according to the Office of the Controller, should be \$11,939,200.

OTHER NEWS

The Council overwhelmingly passed legislation sponsored by Larry Anderson (Fort Defiance) to establish August 14th of each year as the Navajo Nation Navajo Code Talkers Day and a Navajo Nation holiday with a vote of 56 in favor and none opposed.

Code Talkers Keith Little, Samuel Tso, Jimmy Begay and Thomas Begay joined Anderson in presenting the legislation. Anderson and Little spoke about the distinguished record of the Code Talkers during World War II, while Tso spoke about recent laws on Native American languages that the Code Talkers have advocated for at the national level.

It took two attempts for legislation sponsored by Council delegate Ervin Keeswood (Tse'daa'kaan) to approve the Tse'daa'kaan Gaming Enterprise to pass. The legislation required 2/3 vote of Council (59 votes or more) because it approves a limited waiver of sovereign immunity. The first attempt to pass the legislation failed by a vote of 58 in favor and 2 opposed. Harry Hubbard (Becenti/Lake Valley/Standing Rock/White Rock) made the motion to recall the vote on the legislation and it passed the second time with a vote of 64 in favor and 3 opposed.

The Judicial Branch Appropriations Act of 2006, sponsored by Ernest Yazzie, Jr. (Breadsprings/Churchrock), passed with a vote of 36-35.

Lorenzo Curley (Houck/Lupton/Nahata Dzil) reminded the Council that the Judiciary Committee and the Judicial Branch have continuously sought ways to obtain funding to improve the Navajo Nation court system during the past four years.

Technical amendments to the Uniform Tax Administration Statute, sponsored by Orlanda Smith Hodge (Cornfields/Greasewood Springs/Klagetoh/Wide Ruins), passed with a vote of 53 in favor and none opposed. The amendments do not affect current tax rates but only clarify provisions of the statute.

The Council also took time to honor three individuals for contributions to the Navajo Nation and its people. First, the Council honored the late Albert Ross, former Council delegate from St. Michaels, and expressed sincere condolences to his family, relatives and friends.

The Council next recognized the accomplishments of the Vice President of the Navajo Nation Frank Dayish, Jr. Dayish was presented with a plaque of appreciation on behalf of the Council.

Delegates commended Dayish for his work regarding economic development and his advocacy for veterans. Many also thanked him for "crossing the street" and working with the 20th Council

"The people appreciated that you worked with Council," Hope MacDonald LoneTree (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi) said.

Council then congratulated Ms. Michelle Begay, M.S.W., with the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, for winning the 2005 Luana Reyes Leadership Award. Ms. Begay, who also received a plaque expressing congratulations, dedicated the award to her late parents, late uncle and late grandmother saying that they gave her the values that helped her to receive the national award.

During the Council's recess for lunch, delegate Leonard Teller presented Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan with a chief blanket in appreciation for serving as the Speaker of the Council.

"You are now part of an elite few who have had the honor of serving as speaker," Teller said.

Teller commended Speaker Morgan for his accomplishments while in office and thanked him and his staff for their work on behalf of the 20th Navajo Nation Council.

The Council also expressed its appreciation to the delegates who will not be returning with certificates recognizing their distinguished service to the Navajo Nation. Receiving wall plaques were Eddie Arthur (Hardrock/Pinon), Arthur D. Yazzie (Tachee-Blue Gap/Whippoorwill), Leo R. Begay (Chinle), Leroy L. Thomas (Dilkon/Teesto), Edison Jones (Nashcitti/Tohatchi), Tom M. White, Jr. (Fort Defiance), Ernest Hubbell (Houck/Lupton/Nahata Dzil), Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway-Gap/Cameron/Coppermine), Philbert Tso (Kaibeto), Willie Grayeyes (Inscription House/Navajo Mountain), Harry D. Brown, Sr. (Shonto), Alice M. White (Chilchinbeto/Kayenta), Harry Goldtooth (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi), Mark Maryboy (Mexican Water/Aneth/Red Mesa), Willie Johnson (Red Valley/Cove), Richard T. Begaye (Shiprock), Wallace Charley (Shiprock), LaVern A. Wagner (Pueblo Pintado/Torreon/Whitehorse Lake), Ben Shelly (Thoreau) and Edward Padilla (Alamo).