
From: Navajo Nation Washington Office <btomhave@nnwo.org>
Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 3:37 PM
To:
Subject: Introducing Navajo's Newest U.S. Representatives!

Friday, November 6, 2020



Wáshindoon Weekly

Yá'át'ééh! In this issue, meet the newest members of the Navajo Congressional Delegation and learn the latest about the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, a bipartisan effort that demonstrates the Navajo Nation has friends on both sides of the aisle. We would love to hear from you. Please contact our editor, Brandy Tomhave, at btomhave@nnwo.org. Ahéhee'!

Executive Director Santee Lewis' Column



Happy Native American Heritage Month! Congratulations to all Diné and indigenous voters who exercised their right to vote on November 3, 2020 and shattered record-breaking numbers! Like many other Americans, my staff and I at the Navajo Nation Washington Office have been following and are eager to see the final results of the U.S. and local elections. Changes are in store for Navajo's congressional district, including the possibility of Arizona turning blue for the first time since 1948. And, for the first time, Navajo's entire New Mexico congressional delegation in the House will be comprised of women, two of whom are of members of a federally recognized tribe. Regardless of the final composition of political affiliation for Navajo's congressional delegation, we look forward to working with the 117th Congress and the next Administration.

President Nez Urges Vote on NUWRSA



[Click here to watch video](#)

On November 4, 2020 Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez delivered the keynote address at the 10th Annual Upper Colorado River Basin Water Forum. President Nez focused his remarks on the joint accomplishment of the Navajo Nation and State of Utah in negotiating a historic water rights settlement that will bring desperately needed drinking water to Navajo Utah communities. In order for that to happen, however, the U.S. House of Representatives must pass S.886, the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act (NUWRSA), before the end of the year.

“As President of the Navajo Nation, I am unwavering in my commitment to protecting the Navajo people’s fundamental human right to having access to the basic standards of living, including potable water supplies. The United States is likewise duty bound to make the Nation’s permanent homeland inhabitable for the Navajo people. Together, we as sovereigns, along with the State of Utah, have reached a fair and equitable agreement which achieves these goals. All that is required now is the U.S. House of Representatives’ approval of S. 886,” President Nez said.

More than 40% of Navajo households in Utah lack running water or adequate sanitation in their homes. In some cases, such as in the community of Oljato on the Arizona-Utah border, a single spigot on a desolate road, miles from any residence, serves 900 people.

NUWRSA authorizes approximately \$210 million for the planning, construction and maintenance of water development projects for Utah Navajos. President Nez said, “[i]n the end, the importance of this legislation cannot be overstated. Securing the Nation’s water rights in Utah, and building infrastructure to convert paper water rights into wet water, is vital to the general health and welfare of the Navajo people.”

NUWRSA enjoys bi-partisan support and has no substantive objections. As a result, the Senate passed the legislation unanimously on June 4, 2020. The House, however, has not enacted the legislation. Consequently, the Navajo Nation respectfully requests that House leadership and the Chairman of the House Natural Resources schedule a vote on final passage of S. 886 as soon as members return from their recess. Any additional delay in voting on final passage of the legislation only delays the relief it will bring the Navajo people.

Because of the House’s inaction, last week, Representative Ben McAdams (D-UT) and Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT) sent Speaker Pelosi a letter requesting that the House pass the bill as soon as possible, stressing the lack of safe drinking water on the reservation: “[a]s you are aware, Indian Country, and especially the Navajo Nation, has been devastated by COVID-19 in large part because of the lack of safe drinking water for essential preventative measures, such as hand washing”.

The House has 21 days left in this Congress to act. “As I stand here today,” President Nez concluded, “[i]f the House does not pass S. 886 before the end of the year, the legislation will have to be reintroduced in 2021 and the Navajo people will have to wait that much longer for its people to have a clean and reliable water supply.”

Meet Navajo's New Representatives

Senator-elect Mark Kelly

Captain Mark Kelly is a retired U.S. Navy combat pilot, engineer, and NASA astronaut. As a naval aviator he made two deployments to the First Gulf War on the aircraft carrier the U.S.S. Midway and flew 39 combat missions in Operation Desert Storm. He flew his first of four missions into space in 2001 aboard Space Shuttle Endeavour, spent more than 50 days in space, and lived on the International Space Station.



Photo courtesy of Fox News

of sound and bad stuff starts to happen, you have to work the problem as a team,

“Through 25 years in the Navy and at NASA, I learned how to solve really tough problems, and I also learned to get along with and lead people from different backgrounds and different opinions in service of a greater mission. [w]hen you’re orbiting the Earth at 25 times the speed

and you can’t dismiss ideas based on the politics of the person offering them,” he says.

Senator-elect Kelly lives in Tucson with his wife, former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords.



Photo courtesy of Tom Williams, CQ Roll Call

Ben Ray Luján is not new to Congress, having represented the Navajo Nation in the House of Representatives since 2008, but on January 3, 2021 he will become New Mexico’s newest Senator, succeeding Senator Tom Udall who is retiring after 20 years of service in the House and Senate.

Senator-elect Luján was born on a small family farm in Nambé, New Mexico, that borders the Pojoaque Pueblo. He is the Assistant Speaker of the House in the 116th Congress and a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Select Climate Crisis, and the House Native American Caucus.

He has introduced and co-sponsored numerous bills to improve the lives of American Indians,

Senator-elect Ben Ray Luján

including the *Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Amendments of 2019* to reauthorize the existing RECA Trust Fund until 2045 and expand eligibility for former uranium workers and downwinders, the *Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act* to extend Department of Veterans Affairs coverage of care Native American veterans to urban Indian health centers, a sweeping broadband infrastructure package that would provide \$5 billion to improve broadband infrastructure in rural and Tribal communities, and the *Not Invisible Act*, to improve intergovernmental coordination for victims of violent crimes on Tribal lands against Native Americans, which President Trump signed into law on October 10, 2020.

“In Congress, I have worked to clean up contamination left behind by our nation’s nuclear legacy, improve the standard of living in Tribal communities, protect sacred lands, and honor the treaties between the federal government and tribes. In the Senate, I will be a strong voice for the proud Tribal communities in New Mexico and beyond,” he says.

Representative-elect Teresa Leger Fernandez

Teresa Leger Fernandez is a mother and attorney born in Las Vegas, New Mexico who earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at Yale and her law degree at Stanford. For 30 years she operated a law firm in Santa Fe that specializes in community development, tribal advocacy, civil rights, and social justice. In 2011, she helped the Pueblo of Laguna, Pueblo of Acoma, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, Pueblo of Santa Ana, and Pueblo of Isleta win a historic redistricting case.

Representative-elect Leger Fernandez received tribal endorsements for her bid to win the House seat vacated by Ben Ray Luján. Taos Pueblo Gov. Richard Aspenwind wrote, “Teresa has served Taos Pueblo as its general counsel with integrity, wisdom, passion, a clear understanding of our tribal sovereignty and deep knowledge of our community needs. The Taos Pueblo Tribal Council is pleased to endorse her for the 3rd Congressional District of New Mexico.”
The Taos Pueblo Council



Photo courtesy of Will Costello, Santa Fe Reporter

signed a resolution of endorsement that noted Fernandez helped draft and pass into law the first tribal-state tax agreement, “and has participated in the successful passage of every other tribal-state tax agreement since 1995.”

Representative Deb Haaland (D-NM), one of the first two American Indian women elected to the U.S. House of Representatives who won her 2020 re-election race, endorsed Leger Fernandez saying, “During this unprecedented time in our world, I believe that Teresa has the intellect, the work ethic and the compassion to ensure that no communities get left behind.”



Photo courtesy of Yvette Herrell

Representative-elect Herrell

Yvette Herrell is a realtor who has served in the New Mexico legislature since 2010 and is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. In defeating Representative Torres-Small (D-NM) Herrell turns representation of New Mexico’s Second Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from blue to red. When President Trump endorsed Herrell in October he told her, “I’m sitting in the Oval Office of the White House and

there's nothing more important than getting you to Washington because we need you badly." Herrell describes her political stance as "pro-God, pro-life, pro-gun, pro-family and pro-business."



Representative Haaland Introduces Native American Language Resource Center Act

Native American language schools face unprecedented challenges with limited resources during a global health crisis. [H.R. 8729](#) would authorize a Native American Language Resource Center to provide Native American Language schools and programs with necessary technology and training centered on distance learning, digital libraries and other online resources, support in the development of distance learning curricula, and pedagogical training for teachers. Representatives Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) are cosponsors of the bill.

Tribal Interior Budget Council Meeting

While our nation decided this week who will be the next President of the United States, the Tribal/Interior Budget Committee (TIBC) conducted a virtual meeting November 2-6 attended by President Nez, Speaker Seth Damon, Delegate Key Allen Begay, Jr., Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton, Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Delegate Pernel Halona and other members of the Navajo Nation Council.

Highlights of this year's meeting included a behind-the-scenes tour of the new Bureau of Trust Fund Administration, which was 3 years in the making, the unpacking of the Progress for Indian Tribes Act, which was 18 years in the making, and the announcement that BIE will soon roll out a behavioral health program throughout its system across the country.

Speaker Damon implored BIE to prioritize teacher housing to improve teacher recruitment and retainment to improve opportunities for students. "This is a dire need not only on the Navajo Nation but throughout Indian Country," Speaker Damon said.

Delegate Crotty raised concerns about wellness checks and internet safety protocols for children who are now at home rather than school because of the COVID-19 pandemic. She asked BIE Director Tony Dearman whether his agency is doing wellness checks during this period of remote learning and whether BIE is doing anything to ensure that online learning remains safe for our children. Mr. Dearman said that BIE continues to make wellness checks through this pandemic, require staff reports about those wellness checks, and ensure that the information technology BIE issues to students complies with the Child Internet Protection Act.

Other highlights from this TIBC meeting include the introduction of [26 IAM 103](#), which for the first time clearly outlines the system for distribution of funds and a new 2023 Tribal Budget Formulation Preferred Program Ranking Tool.

[Click Here for 2023 Tribal Budget Ranking Tool](#)

Navajo Nation Leads the Way!

On Monday, March 23, 2020, the Navajo Nation was among the initial alerting authorities and the **first from a tribal nation** to issue a live wireless emergency alert as part of the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency response when 49 initial cases of COVID-19 were confirmed on the western part of the reservation. Lavina Willie-Nez, Deputy Director of the Navajo Nation's Department of Emergency Management, "pushed the button" to send that initial alert using FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). She and Navajo Nation Emergency Management Director Harland Cleveland will discuss their experience at this free FEMA webinar on Nov. 18, 2020 at 1:00 pm ET.



Join webinar at <https://femaipawslab.webex.com/femaipawslab/onstage/g.php?MTID=ee613293857bbc72098a4082740a335b3>



What is Native American Heritage?

**FACEBOOK LIVE EVENT
11-20-2020 AT 1:00 ET
HOSTED BY NNWO**

GRANTS

BIA Energy & Mineral
Development Program
Grant ([Click Here](#))

Energy Technology
Deployment on Tribal
Lands Grant ([Click Here](#))

Indian Housing Block Grant
Competitive Grant Program
([Click Here](#))

EVENTS

November 1-30, 2020
Red Nation International
Film Festival

November 8-13, 2020
NCAI Annual Convention
& Marketplace

November 10, 2020
EPA Webinar on Tribal
Environmental Justice

FEDERAL NOTICES

U.S. Forest Service notice
of proposed rule making
for Assessing Fees for
Excess and Unauthorized
Grazing. ([Click Here](#))

Fish and Wildlife Service
notice of final rule
removing the gray wolf

IHS Community Opioid Intervention Pilot Projects ([Click Here](#))

[IHS Repayment of Health Professions Educational Loans](#) ([Click Here](#))

National Science Foundation Tribal Colleges and Universities Program Small Grants for Research ([Click Here](#))

Bureau of Reclamation Drought Contingency Planning Grants ([Click Here](#))

Homeland Security-FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant ([Click Here](#))

[November 10-13, 2020 Indigenous Law Virtual Conference](#)

[November 17-18, 2020 USDOJ Office of Justice Programs Consultations on the Tribal Set-Aside from the Crime Victims Fund for Fiscal Year 2021.](#)

[November 18-19, 2020 CMS Tribal Technical Advisory Group Meeting](#)

November 30 & December 7, 2020. CMS & IHS Training for IHS Phoenix Area

[December 4-6, 2020 NMAI: Healing Through Creativity Virtual Conference](#)

from the endangered species list. ([Click Here](#))

Department of Veterans Affairs proposed rule to eliminate the copayment requirement for opioid antagonists furnished to veterans who are at high risk of overdose of a specific medication or substance in order to reverse the effect of such an overdose. ([Click Here](#))

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