



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Governor Doug Ducey joins Navajo leaders for historic signing ceremony in the Navajo Nation Council Chamber



PHOTO: Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey signs the Diné College-Navajo Technical University Compact extension at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on June 1, 2018.

WINDOW ROCK – Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey joined leadership from the 23rd Navajo Nation Council and the Apache County Board of Supervisors on Friday, as he signed several legislative bills into law – the first time in history that a governor of any state has done so in the historic Navajo Nation Council Chamber in the capital of the Navajo Nation. Speaker LoRenzo Bates and Council Delegates Otto Tso, Amber Kanazbah Crotty, and Raymond Smith, Jr. were in attendance.

Apache County District II Supervisor Alton Joe Shepherd, who also serves on the Navajo Nation Council, invited Gov. Ducey to the Navajo Nation for the signing ceremony on the same day that the Treaty of 1868 exhibit was officially opened to the public at the Navajo Nation Museum. Apache County Supervisors Joe Shirley, Jr. and Doyel Shamley also joined Supervisor Shepherd.

Supervisor Shepherd provided the opening remarks, thanking Gov. Ducey for accepting the invitation to the Navajo Nation, for his continued partnership with the county, and for his support of the legislative bills that will serve to help many Navajo people.

Gov. Ducey was joined by Arizona State Sen. Steve Smith (R-Dist. 11) and Rep. T.J. Shope (R-Dist. 8) as he thanked Supervisor Shepherd and the Navajo Nation Council for supporting the bills through testimony provided during the most recent State Legislative Session.

The first bill signed was S.B. 1498 entitled the “Ashlynne Mike AMBER Alert on Tribal Lands Act,” sponsored by Sen. Smith (R – Dist. 11), which requires the Arizona Department of Public Safety to assist tribes in implementing and testing AMBER alert notifications on tribal lands. The Act also allows the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board to provide additional training resources for tribes.

Delegate Crotty, who has been a strong advocate for implementing an AMBER Alert system on the Navajo Nation, said the additional resources provided through S.B. 1498 will assist in protecting Navajo children and provide AMBER Alert training for communities.

“Ashlynne Mike remains in our hearts and our prayers. As leaders of the Navajo Nation, we will continue to prioritize the protection of our precious children, while we continue to work toward strengthening communication infrastructure so that we have an effective alert system that reaches all of our 110 chapters,” Delegate Crotty stated.

Gov. Ducey said the protection of all Arizona citizens, particularly young children, is a top priority for his administration.

“For years the AMBER Alert system has aided in the recovery of abducted children across the country. With Senate Bill 1498, an AMBER Alert system will be implemented and tested right here on the Navajo Nation,” added Gov. Ducey.

Gov. Ducey also signed into law S.B. 1505 also sponsored by Sen. Smith to extend resources to continue the Native American Code Writers Program, which provides funding to partnering schools on the Navajo Nation for equipment and computer code writing curriculum to increase student interest in STEM career opportunities. The program was initiated in 2015 when former State Sen. Carlyle Begay introduced S.B. 1332 that extended Arizona’s Empowerment Scholarship Account to Native American children.

Diné College President Dr. Charles M. Roessel and Navajo Technical College President Dr. Elmer Guy were present as Gov. Ducey and tribal leaders signed the Diné College-Navajo Technical University Compact extension. As a result, the two tribal colleges will receive up to \$52.5 million over the next 20 years. Diné College receives \$1.75 million a year for capital construction and building rehab, while NTU receives \$875,000 annually from the Arizona Transaction Privilege tax revenue generated on the Navajo Nation.

“I want to thank the Navajo Nation Council, first of all, for always working hand in hand with Navajo Technical University in support of Navajo students. The fact that Governor Doug Ducey is here today is a credit to both him and our Navajo leaders. Education is the key to the future, and the more students we can help earn associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees, the more successful the Navajo Nation is going to be,” said NTU President Dr. Guy.

“This compact will assist Diné College in building new facilities and upgrading current structures to better prepare our students to meet the demands of a changing economy for the Navajo Nation

and Arizona. We are thankful to Gov. Ducey, President Begaye, Speaker Bates, and the Navajo Nation Council for their leadership in ensuring that America's first tribal college is a part of Arizona's higher education solution," stated Diné College President Dr. Roessel.

Prior to concluding the signing ceremony, Speaker Bates acknowledged that when the 23rd Navajo Nation Council took office in 2015 one of the top priorities was to build and strengthen partnerships with the states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

"Today's ceremony is a reflection of the success that this Council has worked toward and we thank Gov. Ducey, State Legislators, and County Supervisors for their support and partnership," said Speaker Bates.

Following the signing ceremony, Gov. Ducey, Council members, and County Supervisors visited the Treaty of 1868 exhibit, which will be open to the public for the entire month of June at the Navajo Nation Museum.

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