



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

#### MEDIA CONTACTS

Alray Nelson, Communications Director  
Kyron Hardy, Public Information Officer  
Koltan Nephew, Legislative Staff Writer  
E-mail: nnlb.communications@gmail.com  
Phone: (928) 530-8329

## Speaker Damon and Council Delegates welcome Diné Sáanii for Justice Advocates to the Capitol

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** September 17, 2021



PHOTO: Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton and Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty lead the Diné Sáanii for Justice marchers to the Navajo Nation Capitol.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Today, Diné Sáanii for Justice marchers made their way to the Navajo Nation Council Chambers to speak on the injustices women on the Navajo Nation face. This march comes after last Thursday's Navajo Nation Comprehensive Budget Hearing where amendment three (3) of Legislation No. 0182-21 was short one vote of passing. Amendment three (3) would have re-allocated \$86,806.00 from the Navajo Nation Washington Office to the Navajo Nation Office of the Prosecutor.

“This is an action we’re taking, to ask Navajo Nation leadership and the government to reflect the needs of its people, so no more promises, just pure action,” said Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé’alnáoozt’í’í, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gad’ii’áhi/Tó Ko’i). “Fund our public safety, police department, and the investigators. We need advocates to help families and survivors with their healing journey, and for them to be provided wrap-around services.”

During last week’s budget session meeting, Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock) humbly shared her own sexual assault experience on the chamber floor, in pleading for support of re-allocation of funding for the Prosecutors Office. Emotions of support stirred amongst online listeners, resulting in a public outcry over the amendment vote and the lack of funding for resources for marginalized communities on the Navajo Nation.

– MORE –

“The position originally proposed during the budget session for an administrator to track cases, is needed for the entire Navajo Nation because it is important for victims, it is important for healing, it is important for family, and it is important for the home,” said Delegate Charles-Newton. “If this position in the Prosecutors Office can be funded for more than 30 years, and if it can grow by starting off with one [position] in each agency – it will help our people to heal. More importantly, this position can give victims hope that their case will see some justice, and that somebody is fighting for them. Sometimes when we are in a situation, where we find ourselves to be victims, the strongest person still needs somebody to fight for them.”

Over the past week, supporters of Delegate Charles-Newton and Delegate Crotty organized with the Diné Sáanii for Justice movement on Facebook to coordinate a peaceful march from the Navajo Nation Museum to the Navajo Nation Council Chambers. The march was organized to uplift the voices of Navajo women and to address the concerns of community leaders, elders, and local activists.

At 9:30 A.M. (MDT) Friday, marchers also held signs that advocated for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), resources for sexual assault survivors and families, and change for the Navajo Nation.

“We came together soon after we heard from Honorable Delegate Charles-Newton on the council floor [last week]. We were all moved by what she has gone through, because we all have our personal experiences with violence in our lives,” said Kristine Laughter, an organizer for the Diné Sáanii for Justice march. “We all knew we couldn’t sit back, so we needed to organize to do something that would benefit the victims of violence, which would bring forth people like we have today.”

Those in attendance and looking on to the crowd of concerned Navajo citizens, were Honorable Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh), Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tónaneesdizi), Council Delegate Paul Begay (Coppermine, K’ai’bii’tó, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake, Bodaway/Gap), Navajo Nation First Lady Phefelia Nez, former Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Dennehotso), and former Council Delegate Genevieve Jackson (Shiprock).

“We’re all dealing with our trauma. The time of shame and blame is over, this is a time to create a safe space for people to heal and we’re all part of that healing process, so that is why we are walking today,” said Delegate Crotty.

“I thank the leaders and communities from across the Navajo Nation for bringing their concerns to the people’s house. Our women have led the charge against injustices towards our people and they continue to fight for equality for all people across the globe,” said Speaker Seth Damon. “As elected leaders, we hear the constant struggles the Navajo people fight every day and we continue to work together to ensure our Navajo Nation sovereignty is upheld. I am here as the Speaker of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, along with my colleagues, to listen and learn from you and take everything into consideration.”

###