



NNWO Priorities for Fall Congressional Session

As Congress prepares to return from its August recess, the Navajo Nation Washington Office will continue advancing initiatives identified as a priority by the Navajo Nation government. These efforts build on the foundation that NNWO has already laid but will push forward with renewed focus this fall. Below are a few priorities we will be advancing in the months ahead:

1. PARITY FOR TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT

The Parity for Tribal Law Enforcement Act of 2025 was introduced by Congressman Newhouse (R-WA-04) in the House and Senator Cantwell (D-WA) in the Senate in July 2025. The bill seeks to address the recruitment and retention challenges in tribal law enforcement by allowing 638-funded tribal law enforcement officers to seek recognition as federal law enforcement officers for the purpose of better retirement and benefits, under standards developed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

NNWO has been advocating for the Parity Act since 2023 and worked with our congressional partners to ensure the legislation would be reintroduced. Prior to its reintroduction, NNWO met with multiple congressional offices to build support. As a result of these efforts, Congressman Ellzey (R-TX) signed on as a co-sponsor within days of its reintroduction, and several democratic members of Congress have likewise signaled support as a result of our advocacy.

2. BRIDGING AGENCY DATA GAPS TO ENSURE SAFETY FOR NATIVE COMMUNITIES ACT

The Bridging Agency Data Gaps to Ensure Safety for Native Communities Act (BADGES) seeks to address the MMIP crisis by expanding data sharing and cooperation between the federal government and tribes. Additionally, it would expand mental health and counseling resources to tribal police officers, mandate new annual reports on Indian Country law enforcement, and order GAO studies. It was introduced in the House in February by Congresswoman Leger Fernández (D-NM-03) and in the Senate in March 2025 by Senator Cortez Masto (D-NV). NNWO will continue to advocate for support and its passage.

3. VETERINARY SERVICES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH IN RURAL COMMUNITITES ACT

The Veterinary Services to Improve Public Health in Rural Communities Act, introduced by Senator Murkowski (R-AK), would strengthen access to veterinary public health services in tribal communities by funding services directly or through Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act contracts and assigning U.S. Public Health Services veterinary officers to help prevent and control rabies and other diseases.

The Navajo Nation Council previously passed a resolution supporting an earlier version of this legislation, recognizing its importance in expanding veterinary care, reducing risks from feral and wild animals, and protecting both our people and livestock. As Congress reconvenes, we plan to work with Chair Murkowski's office and seek a Republican-led companion bill in the House to build support for this legislation.

4. ADVANCED APPROPRIATIONS

NNWO has been coordinating with Senator Luján (D-NM) on the reintroduction of the Indian Programs Advance Appropriations Act of 20205. This bill helps provide advance appropriations for Navajo's federal partners, such as Indian Health Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Indian Education, to enact funding one fiscal year ahead. This way, dollars are immediately available without risk of delay from continuing resolutions or shutdown delays at the federal level. This will ensure continuous patient care at IHS and other tribal facilities, stable school year operations for BIE and grant schools, steady support for law enforcement, social services, and road.

NNWO identified this bill early through our federal partnerships and has helped secure two additional co-sponsors who have agreed to sign on once it moves forward. Our working relationship with the Senator's office remains positive and NNWO will continue to advocate to ensure the Nation's priorities are reflected.

5. FY26/FY27 BUDGET

We are working with Congress to support the Fiscal Year 2026 House budget, which increases funding for Indian Country, while noting that the Senate version holds funding at current levels and that a continuing resolution remains likely. At the same time, we are engaging with the administration to advocate for stronger funding commitments in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget. We are also pressing for the publication of green books for BIA and BIE to provide greater transparency and allow the Navajo Nation to better plan around how federal resources are allocated.