Navajo Voters Coalition Conference

"Impact of Rural Addressing: Voter Registration, Elections & Tribal Services"

NAVAJO VOTERS COALITION, INC.

Co-Sponsors:
Arizona Citizens Clean Elections Commission & Navajo Voters Coalition

Twin Arrows, Flagstaff, AZ
Friday, June 17, 2022
8:00 am - 4:00 pm (MST)
**President's Message**

Greetings -Ya'at'eeh,

As President of the Navajo Voters Coalition Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce this year's Navajo Voters Coalition Conference at Twin Arrows Casino Resort. An array of knowledgeable presenters will be talking about rural addressing, voter registration & plus codes, elections, redistricting outcomes, along with updates in voting rights, bills and voter initiatives. The conference will have networking booths available to you to visit and gather information and material.

We appreciate everyone who has tirelessly volunteered and donated funds to support this conference. We especially thank our co-sponsor, the Arizona Citizens Clean Elections Commission for their financial contribution and support for this conference. We hope that you will take what you have learned here and share with your communities and your family and friends. Please carry our message that your vote makes a difference in tribal, state and federal elections. The coalition welcomes you to join our organization and together we can all work to ensure that our vote counts.

Tom M. White, Jr., President
Navajo Voters Coalition, Inc.

**Special Recognition Awards**

The nine 2014 Navajo Board of Elections Supervisors (NBOES) stood firm in refusing to terminate an on-going legitimate 2014 General Election as ordered by the Navajo Supreme Court Chief Justice. With just fours days before the General Election, on October 31, 2014, the NBOES were removed from office under the recall provisions of the Navajo Election Code and without due process. None of the 2014 NBOES had violated any Navajo laws nor were they recalled by the people. Chief Justice's Order also prevented the NBOES from holding a political office for 8 years, which will end on October 31, 2022.

At the risk of being incarcerated, the 2014 NBOES vowed to protect the people's voting rights and made every effort to ensure that the 2014 General Election was held. This was accomplished, only the Office of the Navajo President was delayed by Chief Justice. The elections of the Navajo Nation Council, the Kayenta Township Board, the Navajo Board of Election Supervisors and the Navajo Education Board were held and the new elected officials were installed. The courageous actions of the 2014 NBOES prevented a major election catastrophe; thereby the integrity of the 2014 election process was maintained for the people and the government continued to provide services without delay.

In December 2014, the Navajo Nation Council pardoned the 2014 NBOES and the pardon legislation was signed by the Navajo Nation President, but the Chief Justice ruled it out. Currently, 107 Navajo Chapters have passed Exoneration Resolutions and a Pardon Resolution is being devised to go before the Navajo Nation Council soon.

**CHINLE AGENCY:**
Norman Begay

**EASTERN AGENCY:**
Frannie George and Michael Coan

**FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY:**
Tom M. White, Jr., and LeNora Y. Fulton

**NORTHERN AGENCY:**
Jonathan Tso and Wallace Charley

**WESTERN AGENCY:**
Ruth Watson and the late Harry Brown, Sr.

“We believe in the principle that the Dine people's right to vote is at the highest level of political authority and they have an inherent governmental power that reigns supreme in choosing their leaders”

- 2014 NBOES -
NAVAJO VOTERS COALITION CONFERENCE
Friday, June 17, 2022    8:00 AM – 4:00 PM (MST)

“IMPACT OF RURAL ADDRESSING: VOTER REGISTRATION, ELECTIONS & TRIBAL SERVICES”

Emcee: Lena Fowler, Coconino County Supervisor

7:30 am    Registration & Fee ($3.00)

8:00 am    Posting of Colors
Song “National Anthem”
Pledge of Allegiance
Video

8:15 am    Invocation

8:20 am    Welcome Address

8:30 am    Keynote Speaker: Navajo Census 2020 and 2022 States Redistricting Outcome
Leonard Gorman, Executive Director Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission

9:30 am    Physically Addressing Navajoland for a better tomorrow
M.C. Baldwin, GIS/Rural Addressing Coordinator Navajo Nation Addressing Authority

10:15 am   Break (15 minutes)

10:30 am   Panel: Update on Voter Registration and Elections
Patty Hansen, Coconino County Recorder
Professor Patty Ferguson-Bohnee, Az State University
Geneva Jackson, Chief Deputy Recorder Apache County Recorder’s Office

11:30 am   Arizona Citizens Clean Elections and Voter Manager
Tom Collins, Executive Director
Gina Roberts, Voter Education Manager Arizona Citizens Clean Elections Commission

12:00 pm   LUNCH BREAK (1 hour)

1:00 pm    Voter Registration and Plus Codes in San Juan County, UT
Darlene Redhorse, Field Organizer/Rural Utah Project
Drew Cooper, Programs Director/Rural Utah Project

1:30 pm    Voting Rights Initiatives, Bills and Impacts
Eric Kramer, Arizona Deserves Better

1:45 pm    National Indivisible Rural Voters
Ellen Ferria, Indivisible

2:00 pm    Navajo Nation Tribal Elections Update
Rosita Kelly, Executive Director Navajo Nation Elections Administration

2:15 pm    Navajo Board of Election Supervisors Update
Melvin Harrison, Chairman Navajo Board of Elections Supervisors

2:30 pm    Chapter Reports: Status of Rural Addressing
Michele Peterson & Evevia Nez Shiprock & Aneth Chapters, LRAC

3:00 pm    Break (15 minutes)

3:15 pm    Panel: Congressional Voters: Voter Suppression Laws
Moderator: Steven C. Begay, Vice Chairman Navajo Voters Coalition, Inc.

4:00 pm    Closing Remarks
LeNora Y. Fulton, Conference Coordinator Navajo Voters Coalition, Inc.

4:15 pm    Benediction and Adjournment
Ruth Watson, Shonto, AZ

KTNN LIVE REMOTE 9 AM TO 1 PM
Brief Synopsis of the Navajo Voters Coalition

The Navajo Voters Coalition originated in October 2014, after the Primary Election, when the voters disagreed with the Navajo Supreme Court Chief Justice's Order to not allow a most qualified Presidential candidate to run for Navajo Nation President. The general election was in progress and over 10,000 early voters had voted and thousands of early ballots were already mailed. With just 4 days before the general election, the Chief Justice ordered that all ballots for the Presidential candidates not be counted and to be hidden from the public.

Concerned voters assembled to question the Chief Justice's decisions to overrule the Office of Hearing & Appeals, the Navajo Board of Election Supervisors, the Navajo Nation Council, the Navajo Department of Justice, and the Navajo Nation President. A dissenting Supreme Court Justice was also dismissed from the case, leaving only 2 out of a 3-Judge Court to make its rulings.

As a result, the three-branch government was in turmoil. The Chief Justice overruled all actions to intervene by the President, the Council and the Election Supervisors who under the threat of jail time, were also removed from office and prohibited to hold an elected office for 8 years, which will end October 31, 2022.

The Coalition through the people’s power came into play as the coalition founders filed their Articles of Incorporation in January 2015. In February 2015, the Navajo Voters Coalition Inc. was approved as a nonprofit social welfare 501(C)(4) organization under Arizona law and the Navajo Nation code.

The Coalition set up its bylaws, established a board and its volunteers attended over seventy chapters throughout the Navajo Nation to sponsor resolutions to fire the Navajo Supreme Court Chief Justice for wrongdoing, abuse of court procedures, and failure to apply proper due process of law. On a late Friday afternoon, the Chief Justice quit his life-long pension job before the Navajo Nation Council were to convene the following Monday to fired him. To follow through, the Coalition pushed legislation to change the law to amend the fluency part of the Navajo Election Code so that candidates who may speak limited Navajo can run for tribal President. This opens the door for many people. The people and not the judges can now decide the fluency of the candidates of their choice.

To right a wrong, the Coalition has obtained 107 Chapter resolutions supporting the pardon legislation for the former members of the Navajo Board of Election Supervisors who were unlawful removed from their election duties in 2014. The pardon legislation is being finalized to be presented to the Navajo Nation Council soon.

The Navajo Voters Coalition advocates for the people who vote and those who may not be represented in the government or in the Navajo political structure. The Coalition consists of volunteers who participate and advocate for the people to address matters affecting the Navajo people. The Coalition holds meetings to continue the operation and mission of the organization.

-Navajo Voters Coalition 2022-

Acknowledgement & a Special Appreciation to:

Co-Sponsor, The Arizona Citizens Clean Elections Commission and the Navajo Voters Coalition Committee