



# 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council

## Office of the Speaker

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Speaker Damon Designates April Sexual Assault Awareness Month

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhááíí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) designated April 2019 as Navajo Nation Sexual Assault Awareness Month in a proclamation signed April 3, 2019.

Speaker Damon signed the proclamation, which aligns with the National Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign, to elevate the issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment and their effects on Navajo families and communities.

For 2019, the national theme is *I Ask*. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center explains that *I Ask* “champions the message that asking for consent is a healthy, normal, and necessary part of everyday interactions.”

According to a study conducted by the National Institute of Justice, 1 in 2 Native women and more than 1 in 4 Native men have experienced sexual violence in their lifetimes.

Since taking office in January, the 24th Navajo Nation Council has led efforts to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

Speaker Damon, Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tséahnáoz't'l'i), and Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) have advocated at the state and federal levels for VAWA's reauthorization.

Speaker Damon released the following statement regarding the proclamation.

As Diné, we have long recognized the value and importance that each living being possesses. We have obligations to one another, through *K'é*, to protect and enhance the sacred beams of life each of us hold.

As a government, it is our foremost duty to protect our people. But the government cannot accomplish that mission alone. It is up to each of us to call out inappropriate behavior when we witness it, to create safe, welcoming spaces for all persons, and to promote and model healthy relationships.

In many of our communities and families, sexual assault and harassment have been normalized. I challenge all Diné to end that normalization and break the cycle. It's hard, but there are resources to help you, your family, your community, and your nation live a life aligned with hózhó.

The Office of the Speaker encourages all people to educate themselves on the issues of sexual assault and harassment. Educational resources are available at the following organizations.

- Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women. <https://www.csvanw.org/>
- Hopi-Tewa Women's Coalition to End Abuse. <http://htwcea.org>
- National Indigenous Women's Resource Center. <http://www.niwrc.org>
- Restoring Ancestral Winds. <https://www.restoringawcoalition.org/>
- Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition. <http://www.swiwc.org>

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