

Navajo Nation Speaker Seth Damon faces discipline for Las Vegas photo

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 29 October 2022 12:36 -

Navajo Nation Speaker Seth Damon faces discipline by the Navajo Nation Council after an unflattering photo of him in a Las Vegas casino showed up on social media.

Damon was in Las Vegas earlier this month to attend the Indian Nationals Finals Rodeo when he visited the casino. Someone took a photo of him slumped in front of a slot machine, appearing inebriated, and posted it online.

In a statement addressing what he called an “unauthorized photograph,” Damon said:

“Accountability and transparency are important leadership values I uphold as Speaker of the 24th Navajo Nation Council. Taking ownership is important to me.”

He said he was on a private vacation to Las Vegas to support the Navajo cowboys and cowgirls. But rather than making the decision on how he should be held accountable, he left it up to his colleagues and said he will be working with them in the coming days to decide on a course of action.

More Navajo Nation news: [Navajo Code Talker will get a new roof for his 70-year-old cabin after donations pour in](#)

On Friday, the 24th Navajo Nation Council met for a leadership meeting to discuss the matter and later that evening [posted legislation to place Damon on administrative leave without pay](#) . The legislation will be available for a five-day comment period and then go before the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee. From there, it would go to the Navajo Nation Council.

If the legislation is approved, Damon will be put on administrative leave beginning Nov. 5 until the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee decides to rescind it. Alcohol is illegal on the Navajo Nation, except in Navajo-owned casinos where it is sold.

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On the Navajo Nation, there is the Navajo Code, which is enacted through resolution of the Navajo Nation Council and then codified. Then there is what is known as Navajo Fundamental Law, which are laws of the Diné that recognize four specific constituent elements: traditional law, customary law, natural law and common law.

“When the members of the Navajo Nation Council select and confirm their Speaker, they do so with the expectation that the selected Speaker can be trusted to be their Natahnii” (leader) and lead the Council by example with honor, integrity, veracity and reliability at all times. They do not expect their leader, the Speaker, to violate their trust and bring disrepute on the Council,” stated the legislation.

The legislation further states that while Damon complied with Navajo fundamental law and accepted personal responsibility by reporting his actions to the Council, and issuing a public apology to the Navajo people, he still has to face the consequences.

“After much deliberation and discussion with Speaker Damon, the Navajo Nation Council has determined that placing Speaker Damon on administrative leave without pay for an indeterminate time is the appropriate path to restore Hozho within the Navajo Nation Council and with the Navajo People,” stated the legislation.

While placed on leave a Speaker Pro Tem will be rotated in 15-day increments among the chairpersons from each standing committee.

Damon is running unopposed to continue on as Council Delegate representing the communities of Bááháálí, Chilchiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh. He is serving in his second term as speaker.

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