

## Press Release

Having lost the voting rights battle to redistrict San Juan County, the County has decided to attack the outcome that gave County Commission District Two a Navajo majority by challenging the residence status of Willie Grayeyes, who is the Democratic candidate for the reconfigured district. On March 28, 2018, the County Clerk/Auditor, John David Nielson, sent Mr. Grayeyes (whose family has lived in the Navajo Mountain, Utah, area since time immemorial) a letter demanding that Grayeyes prove his residence status. The Clerk/Auditor's action followed an "investigation" by a County Sheriff's employee who was incapable of finding Mr. Grayeyes' residence (which can be readily located on satellite maps) in the remote Navajo Mountain area. As part of his response to this spurious attack, Mr. Grayeyes has invited the Clerk/Auditor to meet at this Navajo Mountain residence.

Leonard Gorman, the Executive Director of the Navajo Nation Civil Rights Commission said, "The Navajo people's permanent residence is within the four sacred mountains. Navajo individuals' permanent residences, to which they return after being away for work, school and/or military services, is the place where their umbilical cords are buried. I believe the Utah laws, inadvertently, respect Navajo cultural beliefs, that is where the voter believes he or she returns on a permanent basis is his/her permanent residence."

Mr. Grayeyes expressed his sadness over the County's actions, saying "I hope to focus on healing and cooperation, rather than fighting. We need to be united, as one people, and focus on how to address common issues for the benefit of everyone."

A copy of Mr. Grayeyes' formal legal response to the Clerk/Auditor is attached to this Press Release. Questions may be directed to Steven Boos or Maya Kane at 970-247-1755 or 970-749-6688.