

# THE NAVAJO NATION

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JONATHAN NEZ | PRESIDENT   MYRON LIZER | VICE PRESIDENT



June 15, 2021

The Honorable Mimi Stewart  
Senator New Mexico District 17 President Pro Tempore  
New Mexico State Senate  
313 Moon Street N.E.  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87123

The Honorable Brian Egolf  
House Representative New Mexico District 47 Speaker of the House  
New Mexico House of Representatives  
Suite 104, State Capitol  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Senate President Pro Tempore Stewart and House of Representative Speaker Egolf:

We are writing to express our disappointment of a June 12<sup>th</sup> article in the Santa Fe New Mexican that captured Rachel Gudgel's disparaging remarks of Native Americans, and according to committee staff cited in the newspaper column, made "snide" comments about Indian Education during a meeting held in the Jicarilla Apache Nation. Ms. Gudgel's behavior was apparently concerning enough for legislative leadership that Ms. Gudgel received a two-week suspension and leadership coaching. We also learn attorney Mr. Thomas Hnasko was hired to investigate the allegations; as explained the investigation report has not been read by legislative leadership who oversees the Committee and Ms. Gudgel.

As the director of the Legislative Education Study Committee, Ms. Gudgel holds a particularly important position that provides research and advice to New Mexico law makers, legislative committees, and to you. The legitimacy and integrity of the Director of the Legislative Education Committee is called into question as to whether Ms. Gudgel can undertake her duties without implicit bias or racism overshadowing her role to improve the education of thousands of Native American students in the State of New Mexico. Given the Santa Fe New Mexican reporting and what we know of Ms. Gudgel's behavior, and the extent of actions taken to address Ms. Gudgel's behavior, and the importance of addressing Native American education in New Mexico with respect, professionalism, and empathy, we request that Ms. Gudgel be removed immediately from her role as director of the Legislative Education Study Committee, and that a personal apology be

NAVAJO NATION OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

POST OFFICE BOX 7440 · WINDOW ROCK, AZ 86515 · PHONE: (928) 871-7000 · FAX: (928) 871-4025

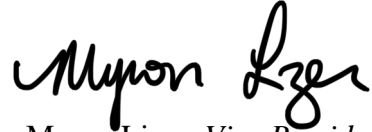
issued by Ms. Gudgel for disrespecting Native Americans, a major New Mexico populace.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Nez, *President*

**THE NAVAJO NATION**



Myron Lizer, *Vice President*

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Cc: Legislative Education Study Committee Members  
Chairman Herrera, All Pueblo Council of Governors  
President Velarde, Jicarilla Apache Nation  
President Aguilar, Mescalero Apache Tribe