



DINÉ POLICY INSTITUTE

Diné Policy Institute Results for Initial Survey

During the Winter Session of 2017, Navajo Nation Council tabled Legislation No.0395-16 until the Spring Session. The legislation would amend the Navajo Nation Code to change the name of the “Navajo Tribe” to “Diné Nation”.

Those in favor of the name change cited self-identification as the reason. “Navajo” is not the original or traditional name of the people and it was important to utilize the language of the people.

Others opposed the name because of the expenses that may occur, the current use of the word “Navajo” within institutions, and the interpretation of “Diné” as “male”.

Diné Policy Institute decided to study the opinions of the name change. We issued 195 surveys to the population of three Diné College campus sites. We asked two simple questions, “Should the Navajo Nation change its name from Navajo Nation to Diné Nation” and “Why or Why not”?

Our goal was to figure out who supported the name change and their reasons for their choice. Our results show that:

Overall [Graph 1]

- **65%** Support the name change, **33%** do not, and **3%** did not answer

Those who support the name change: [Graph 2]

- **31%** of those who support the name change wrote that “Diné is our traditional name, **32%** wrote that the Navajo name was given to us by non-Navajos, **17%** wrote that we should use our language to identify ourselves, **11%** wrote that it sounded more indigenous, **4%** wrote that it invokes stronger nationalism, and **4%** wrote that it was more representatives of the people.

Those who did not support the name change: [Graph 3]

- **41%** of those who did not support the name change wrote “N/A”, **13%** wrote that Navajo sounds better, **11%** wrote that “its been like that for years”, **9%**

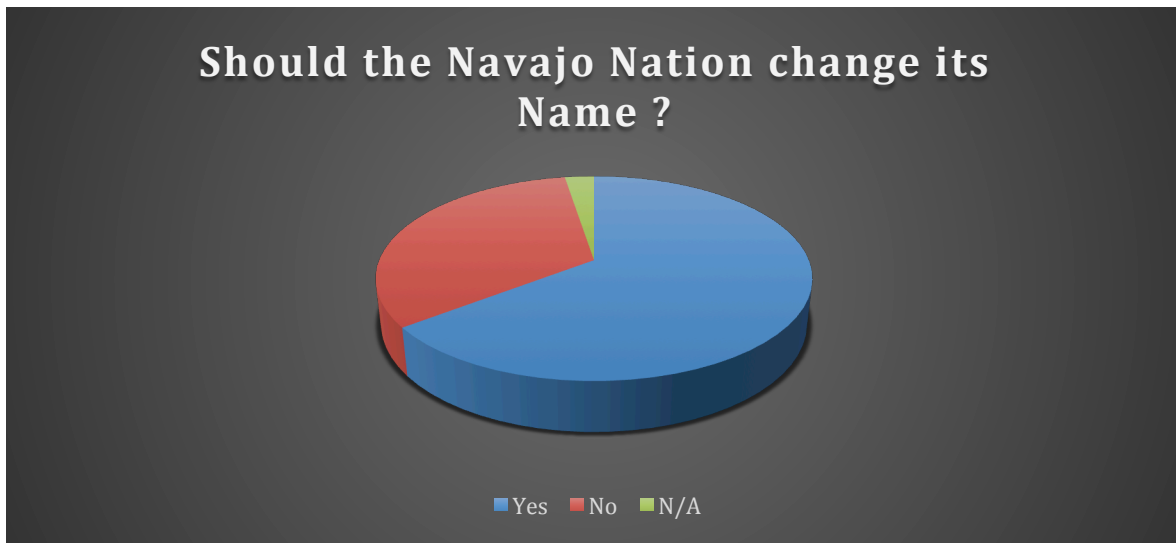
wrote that “Diné” means “men”, **6%** wrote that it would be too expensive to change name, **6%** wrote that it was fine the way it is, **6%** wrote that people will mispronounce it, **5%** wrote that Navajo is easier to understand, **1%** wrote that Diné was not representative of the people, **1%** wrote that the term “Diné” was only meant for Diné people to know.

The results echo some of the Council’s opinions on the matter. A large number of participants, who support the name change, would agree with the need to self-identify on the terms of the people’s original name and language.

Those who did not support the name change cited that “Navajo” has been the term for years while being easier for people to understand and it sounds better. The interpretation of “male” or “men” was another reason why participants did not support the name change.

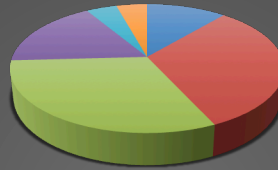
For the time being, Diné Policy will issue a larger survey for the Navajo Nation and will have policy recommendations based on the findings by Spring Sessions.

Graph 1:



Graph 2:

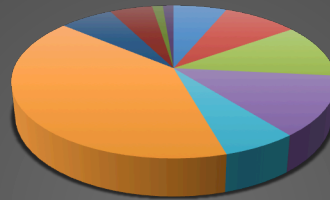
Reasons in favor of the name change



- Sounds better more indigenous
- It was given to us by Nonnavajos
- Dine is our traditional name
- We should use our language to identify ourselves
- Its more representative of people
- stronger nationalism

Graph 3:

Reasons not in favor of the name change



- Its fine the way it is
- It means men
- Its been like that for years
- Navajo sounds better
- Difficult change for the government for it to be effective and expensive
- N/A
- People will mispronounce it
- Its easier for people to understand
- Not representative of the people
- Its only for Navajo people not others