

Senate Committee on Indian Affairs supports Roselyn Tso

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer thank the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, for voting to support the confirmation of Roselyn Tso, a member of the Navajo Nation and the current director of the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, to serve as the next director of the Indian Health Service. Tso was nominated by U.S. President Joe Biden earlier this year. Final confirmation of her appointment now awaits approval from the full Senate.

“This is a historic nomination put forth by the Biden-Harris Administration and we commend the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs for supporting the confirmation,” Nez said. “Over many years, Director Tso has demonstrated her commitment to public health and the well-being of all people at the federal and tribal levels, which has prepared her for this new opportunity.”

Nez went on to compliment Tso on her work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, her leadership, expertise, and compassion have helped to reduce the spread of this modern-day monster and to save lives. Director Tso is exceptionally qualified to lead IHS and we are confident that she will serve all tribal nations with great dedication and commitment. We now look forward to continuing to advocate for the support of the full Senate,” Nez said.

In March, President Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez met with members of the Senate to speak to them about Director Tso’s qualification and to request their support. On May 26, President Nez also spoke in support of her confirmation, during a hearing held by the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in Washington D.C.

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As the head of the Navajo Area IHS since 2019, Tso has provided exemplary leadership in the administration of a comprehensive health care system. She began her career with the IHS in 1984. She previously served in various roles in the Portland Area, both at the service unit level as the Administrative Officer for the Yakama Service Unit and at the Area level as the Planning and Statistical Officer, Equal Employment Officer and Special Assistant to the Area Director.

In 2005, Tso assumed the role of Director, Office of Tribal and Service Unit Operations for the Portland Area. In this leadership position, she was responsible for the implementation of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act and worked directly with tribes. Tso also worked with the three urban programs in the Portland Area that provide services ranging from community health to comprehensive primary health care services. In addition, she previously served as Acting Director of the ODSCT in 2010 and 2016-2018.

The IHS, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides federal health care to approximately 2.6 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. In 37 states, there are over 605 IHS hospitals, clinics, and health stations located on or near tribal communities. The IHS director oversees the administration of health care programs and services within the agency, including managing the total budget of approximately \$7.4 billion and the employment of more than 15,000 health professionals.

“We have many health concerns throughout Indian Country. With Director Tso’s nomination, we have taken a big step forward to creating more solutions and partnerships that will benefit tribal communities for many generations. For over 35 years, she has personally dealt with the health care disparities and challenges, and as a tribal member, she will bring value, knowledge, and a greater vision. We congratulate Tso and her family,” Lizer stated.

Tso holds a Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies from Marylhurst University in Portland, Ore., and a master’s degree in organizational management from the University of Phoenix, Portland, Ore. Her nomination is subject to confirmation by the United States Senate.

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