

# POLICY BRIEF ON SEN. CARLYLE BEGAY

## Nominee for Special Assistant to the President for Native American Affairs

December 21, 2016

Presented-elect Donald Trump selected Carlyle Begay to serve on his White House staff, potentially to fill a position currently held by Karen Diver as the Special Assistant to the President for Native American Affairs, under the Obama administration. This briefing on Carlyle Begay provides an overview to his professional expertise, political record, and potential actions he may take on key issues in the future.

Carlyle Begay is a Republican member of the Arizona State Senate, representing District 7. First appointed to the Senate Chamber on July 31, 2013, following the resignation of Jack C. Jackson, Jr., he was sworn-in to the chamber on August 6, 2013. He is a member of the Education, Government and Environment, and Natural Resources and Rural Affairs committees.

In November of 2015, Begay switched his party affiliation from Democrat to Republican, saying he believed that the Republican Party “better reflects the values of self-determination and self-empowerment that he holds and wants to emphasize to his district, which includes the Navajo and Hopi reservations.”<sup>1</sup>

Begay was a 2016 Republican candidate seeking election to the U.S. House to represent the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District of Arizona. He suspended his campaign on June 27, 2016, and endorsed Paul Babeu.

Begay has a public health and health policy background, and is the Chair of the community advisory board to the Center for American Indian Resiliency, which focuses on resiliency research among local Native American communities. He also champions education. In April 2016, he testified in support of SB 2711, the Native American Education Opportunity Act, a bill that takes money away from Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools and creates a voucher-type program for use at non-BIE institutions.

### Public Health

In 2014 Indian Country Media Network reported, “He wanted to become a doctor to tackle disparities afflicting his people, but what started as a path to medicine detoured to health policy, then health care and now public office.”<sup>2</sup>

- Voted Yea - HB 2508 - Requires Background Checks for Federal Health Care Navigators (2014)



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# REP. CARLYLE BEGAY

## Tribal Health

About a meeting with Trump in June of 2016 Begay said, "It's important to build bridges. I don't think we should turn down the opportunity to meet with any candidates and get them to understand the importance of federal trust responsibilities, about the history of tribes, which is replete with mistakes, tragic actions and lost opportunities. We can't change that history, but we're not condemned to repeat it."<sup>3</sup>

- Cosponsored - SB 1332 - Expands Empowerment Scholarship to Include Native Americans (2015)

## Women's Health

- Cosponsored - SB 1324 - Amends Requirements for Certain Abortion-Inducing Drug Prescriptions (2016)
- Voted Nay - SB 1318 - Limits Health Insurance Coverage for Abortions (2015)
- Voted Nay - HB 2284 - Authorizes Unannounced Inspections of Abortion Facilities (2014)

## Medicaid

In 2011, Begay co-authored a report titled "Medical Home Model Reimbursement Rates for IHS & Tribal Health Facilities in Arizona,"<sup>4</sup> which recommends a per member per month (PMPM) reimbursement methodology, acknowledges IHS, Tribal, and urban Indian health (I/T/U) system dependence on Medicaid and the importance of urban Indian health programs.

- Voted Nay – SB 1092 – Requires (employment) Waivers for Certain Health Insurance (Early 2015)
- Voted Nay – HB 2367 – Establishes Work Requirements for Certain Medicaid Recipients (2014)

## References:

1. Pitzl, M. J. (2015, November 23). Arizona lawmaker Carlyle Begay switches parties. *The Arizona Republic*. Retrieved from <http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/arizona/politics/2015/11/23/arizona-lawmaker-carlyle-begay-switches-political-party/76137704/>
2. ICMN Staff. (2014, August 7) Sen. Carlyle Begay is turning tide against chronic diseases in Indian Country at the policy level. *Indian Country Today Media Network*. Retrieved from: <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/culture/health-wellness/sen-carlyle-begay-is-turning-tide-against-chronic-diseases-in-indian-country-at-the-policy-level/>
3. Landry, A. (2016, June 20) Navajo leaders opt out of meeting with Trump. *Indian Country Today Media Network*. Retrieved from: <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/politics/navajo-leaders-opt-out-of-meeting-with-trump/>
4. Tonemah, D. C., & Begay, C. W. (2011) Medical home model reimbursement rates for IHS & Tribal health facilities in Arizon. Retrieved from: [https://www.azahcccs.gov/AmericanIndians/Downloads/Consultations/Meetings/2011/Aug2/AHCCCSSupportingDocumentation\\_AIHMPPFinalReport.pdf](https://www.azahcccs.gov/AmericanIndians/Downloads/Consultations/Meetings/2011/Aug2/AHCCCSSupportingDocumentation_AIHMPPFinalReport.pdf)

