

My name is Zach Pahmahmie and I am seeking re-election for the position of Tribal Council Vice-Chairperson. My parents are Cheryl Simon (Kickapoo) and Richard Pahmahmie, Jr. (Prairie Band Potawatomi). My paternal grandparents were Josie (Wamego) and Richard Pahmahmie. I have lived on both the Kickapoo and Prairie Band Reservations for a significant part of my life. I received my undergraduate degree from Stanford University in 1996 and my law degree, with an emphasis in Tribal Law, from the University of Kansas School of Law in 2001. Shortly after law school, I served as Tribal Council Chairperson in the early 2000's.

An essential part of the day-to-day workings of tribal government and the exercise of tribal sovereignty, whether that be in business or elsewhere, is an understanding of the law. With each passing day, the demand for legal knowledge is becoming increasingly obvious and a necessity. I believe my experience and legal education will continue to serve the Nation well in the capacity as Vice-Chair in all settings requiring input or representation on behalf of the Nation's government. When I previously served as the Tribal Council Chairperson and presently, possessing this legal knowledge proves invaluable to representing the Nation in instances of meeting with local, state, and federal officials. One particular instance was testifying before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on the benefits of Indian gaming. More recently, Native people have witnessed repeated attempts by the federal government and its agencies to re-engineer the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the federal government contrary to longstanding federal case law and the United States Constitution. Now more than ever, Tribes must remain vigilant to hold the federal government accountable and preserve our rights under the law. When tribes signed the multitude of treaties giving up millions of acres of land in exchange for certain monies and services, tribes paid in full and expect the government to uphold its end of the bargain.

In addition to serving the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation in a tribal government capacity, I have previously worked in the Nation's gaming enterprise for approximately 7 years. I have also worked in an administrative role in a tribally run health care facility. These experiences were valuable in gaining insight from both the government and enterprise perspectives of the Nation.

Like all previous professional experiences, my current position as Vice-Chair has allowed me to play a role in shaping the Nation's future, especially concerning the health and well-being of the membership. In the past in my role as Chairperson, the proposal to build and operate our own health clinic advanced. More recently, the Nation opened its own behavioral health facility that not only serves the Nation's members, but all tribes in Northeast Kansas. I have also continued to serve in a role as a member of the Tribal Health Summit Planning Committee and have taken on the role as Committee Co-chair for the past few years. In this role, I have assisted in the organization and planning of the annual Health Summit. During the Summit and through other programming, the committee works to strengthen tribal communities' health and well-being through health promotion and education. In the absence of these types of efforts, our Nation and tribal communities around the country for that matter, risk the loss of valuable knowledge of elders and shortened lifespans of the younger generations due to high incidences of illnesses like diabetes. The recent pandemic has underscored to need to continue this work as people with certain underlying health conditions many of which are all too common among Native communities. Certain underlying medical conditions create a higher risk of complications amongst Native populations as evidenced by the high death rate on the Navajo Nation that is higher per capita than three of the most affected states.

In my role as Vice-Chairperson, I have advocated for a recommitment of efforts to further economic development. In addition to ideas and initiatives under review by Tribal Council, such as soliciting proposals for the recently completed feasibility study for 150/75 highway interchange project, I currently serve in the role as Chair of the Board of Directors of Prairie Band LLC since shortly after my election in 2016. During this period, the LLC has grown year over year and continues becoming more sophisticated in its work and expertise with each passing day. Three of the companies now qualify for bidding on major federal government contracts.

I thank you in advance for your support in the upcoming election. It would be an honor to continue serving the Nation as Tribal Council Vice-Chairperson. I will continue to serve as a partner and advocate for the Nation's membership to advance on a path to greater prosperity and success in all matters facing our Tribe.