

MINUTES

LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 9, 1977

Members Present: Chairman Glover
Mrs. Brookman
Mr. Bremner
Mr. Coulter
Mr. Murphy
Mrs. Wagner

Members Absent: Mr. Bennett

Guests Present: Nancy Sawyer, Citizens for Private Enterprise
B. R. Bogart, Citizens for Private Enterprise
Janet MacEachern, League of Women Voters of Nevada
Fred Davis, NCAA and Greater Reno Chamber of Commerce
Charles Malone, private citizen
Assemblyman Jacobsen

Chairman Glover called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

SJR 6: Commends Gerald R. Ford and Nelson A. Rockefeller, former President and Vice President, respectively, of the United States upon their service to this nation.

Mr. Coulter moved DO PASS on SJR 6, seconded by Mr. Bremner and unaminously carried by the members present.

Chairman Glover stated that he had received a memo from Assemblyman Mann asking that the committee consider AJR 19 rather than his bill AJR 4.

AJR 19: Proposes annual sessions of the legislature.

Assemblyman Brookman: Mrs. Brookman referred to population figures and the Governor's budget requests as compiled by Donald R. Rhodes, Chief Deputy Research Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (Exhibit A). She stated that she feels it is time for the people of Nevada to vote again on annual sessions, that it will mean more efficient government, that you cannot run a multi-million dollar business in sixty days every other year and do a proper job. She added that she did not feel, considering the projected population growth, biennial sessions would be feasible by the time this would be on the ballot. She urged a do pass in the committee in order to get it on the floor and learn the feeling of colleagues. Assembly

Janet MacEachern representing the League of Women Voters of Nevada: Ms. MacEachern, in her prepared statement (Exhibit B), stated that the League of Women Voters of Nevada believe annual sessions would give legislators time and authority to consider Nevada's needs, allow better planning, make the Legislature an equal and independent partner in State government, reduce the possibility of special sessions, and strengthen the State role in government, and, therefore, were definitely in favor of annual sessions.

Nancy Sawyer representing Citizens for Private Enterprise: Ms. Sawyer complimented the Legislature on doing a great job. She then stated that her organization opposed annual sessions in the last session and are again opposing it primarily because of the cost to the tax payer, not because of actual cost but because of the demand on the Legislature to spend more money by adding more programs. They feel business can be handled every two years and that part-time legislators versus professional politicians is a plus for Nevada. She agreed that most people do not realize how much time legislators devote to their task, and her organization felt the people should have voted for 100 day sessions in the last election.

Mrs. Brookman asked Ms. Sawyer how many belonged to her organization and how many times they met each year. She answered that there 1200 to 1500 members statewide and they had met twice within a four-year period.

Mrs. Brookman then asked how many times each year the satellite organizations met and how they polled the members of CPE. Ms. Sawyer answered that their Executive Committee meets irregularly about every two months but their Legislative Committee meets every week during the session to consider bills of the Legislature. Mrs. Brookman drew a comparison between their committee meeting every week while the Legislature meets only every two years. She added that the Legislature would not make this law but that it would be up to the people of Nevada and that the budget would be more equable if it did not have to be considered twenty-four to thirty-six months ahead.

Assemblyman Jacobsen: Mr. Jacobsen stated that he was definitely opposed to annual sessions at least for a few years because the electorate feels we spend enough time here, the Ways and Means Committee is able to handle the budget, and the Legislature, as well as the interim committee system, operates economically and well. He added that he likes having citizen legislators, that some could not come every year, and that they should have worked harder to sell 100 day sessions. He said that he had toured statewide and had met with many Chamber of Commerce groups, as well as other groups, who feared more taxes and more control.

Assembly

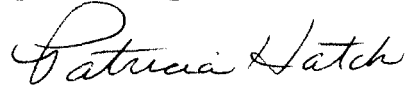
Mrs. Brookman said that the last time the annual sessions was on the ballot was in 1958 when the population was 300,000, that Mr. Jacobsen had said he would like to go on as now for at least a few years, but that it would be a few years before the annual session did get on the ballot.

Ms. MacEachern stated that she was also a member of the Legislative Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of Boulder City which had a split decision on annual sessions, and they did not feel she should speak for or against the subject.

Chuck Malone, private citizen: Mr. Malone stated that he has had enough government and quoted Thomas Jefferson: "No man's life, liberty or property is safe while congress is in session."

Chairman Glover adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Hatch, Assembly Attache

STATE OF NEVADA
LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
CAPITOL COMPLEX
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89710

EXHIBIT A



LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION (702) 885-5627

JAMES I. GIBSON, *Senator, Chairman*
Arthur J. Palmer, *Director, Secretary*

INTERIM FINANCE COMMITTEE (702) 885-5640

DONALD R. MELLO, *Assemblyman, Chairman*
Ronald W. Sparks, *Senate Fiscal Analyst*
John F. Dolan, *Assembly Fiscal Analyst*

ARTHUR J. PALMER, *Director*
(702) 885-5627

FRANK W. DAYKIN, *Legislative Counsel* (702) 885-5627
EARL T. OLIVER, *Legislative Auditor* (702) 885-5620
ANDREW P. GROSE, *Research Director* (702) 885-5637

February 8, 1977

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Assemblyman Eileen Brookman
FROM: Donald A. Rhodes, *Dan* Chief Deputy Research Director
SUBJECT: Comparison of Nevada Population Figures with Selected Governor's Budget Requests

I have been asked to respond to your request for a comparison of the 1960 Nevada population and governor's budget request figures with current population estimates and executive budget requests.

Table I shows Nevada population figures for 1960, 1970, 1976 and 1980. The 1976 and 1980 figures are estimates supplied by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Nevada-Reno. For a more complete range of Nevada population estimates, including figures to the year 2000, you may wish to review page 224 of the Legislative Manual.

Table II lists the governor's budget requests, by general fund and total expenditures for the 1960-61, 1977-78 and 1978-79 fiscal years.

DAR/jd
Encl.

COMPARISON OF NEVADA POPULATION FIGURES WITH
SELECTED GOVERNOR'S BUDGET REQUESTS

TABLE I

Population Estimates 1960-1980

<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1980</u>
285,278	488,738	628,487	728,582

TABLE II

Governor's Budget Requests (Selected Years)

	<u>1960-61</u>	<u>1977-78</u>	<u>1978-79</u>
General Funds	\$32,433,902	\$218,792,964	\$238,508,483
Total all Funds	\$74,009,624	\$446,419,028	\$475,709,967

STATEMENT OF LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEVADA

To: Assembly Committee on Legislative Functions

REF AJR 4 (AJR 19) proposing to amend Nevada Constitution by requiring annual legislative sessions.

Wednesday, 9 February, 1977 - 3 P.M.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am Janet MacEachern, 1300 Denver St., Boulder City, appearing on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Nevada.

The first question that arises regarding annual sessions is, Can We Afford Annual Sessions? Consider that the entire cost of the Legislature is less than 1% of the General Fund budget. This does not include the other budgets the Legislature must consider. Surely this is a small price to pay.

Do any boards of directors of nearly one-half billion dollars per year businesses meet only once every two years? How many stockholders in such an operation would be content with such policy management. How often do local government officials meet in order to adequately manage their local business?

How is it possible for a group of citizen-legislators, in only 60 days every two years, to introduce, consider and make intelligent decisions, about a ^{biennial} nearly one billion ^{dollar} business affecting 600,000 people?

Legislators' responsibilities, as you well know, include appropriations which must be projected two years into the future. They must enact the basic laws under which we all live; establish priorities for allocating public funds; review and frame our tax system; protect our health and welfare; control our system of higher education as well as the powers and capabilities of local governments and participation in Federal programs; regulate commerce and industry and establish our system of courts and prisons. They control the process by which every public official from township to President is elected.

YES, we must afford annual sessions to get the job done right.

An annual session would allow more intensive consideration of budget needs and time to establish priorities for allocating public funds. Appropriations could be considered closer to the time of expenditure rather than trying to outguess the future. The present schedule called for agencies and departments to submit budget requests by September 1976 for fiscal years July 1977 through June 1979. Knowing about Nevada's swiftly expanding population and economy and changing Federal programs, how would you like to project your needs for 1979 in 1976 if you were the head of Health, Welfare and Rehabilitation? Of Education? As a legislator, can you make intelligent appropriations according to this schedule? Or are you almost forced to accept the Governor's and Staff recommendations?

It can well be argued that an annual budget developed in accordance with long-range needs would make it possible to figure state finances "closer to the belt" both in terms of needs and projected income. That spells fiscal responsibility--thrift not waste.

A second area to consider is the size of government. Many Nevadans agree that Federal Government has grown too big, that there must be more decentralization, more local responsibility. If this is to happen, the State Legislature must have the time to consider problems in time.

Constitutional amendments AJR 4 or 19 would require it to meet annually. When citizens find the State does not act upon their concerns effectively and promptly, they turn to the Federal Gov't. Annual sessions allow better planning and enable the Legislature to respond more rapidly to fluctuations in the economy, to rapidly changing Federal programs, and to the needs of local governments.

The annual session makes possible a continuity of experience for the legislators, giving you all an opportunity to become oriented before considering crucial legislation, and allowing you to follow through.

on those recommendations you develop during your first session and in the interim between sessions.

What is the Legislature's responsibility? Our system is based on a balance and separation of powers between executive, legislative, and judicial. The first and last named are on the job full time - the Legislature is, speaking generously, a part-time occupation. Annual sessions would assist the Legislature in maintaining its rightful place as an equal and independent branch of State government. It should not have to depend upon the Executive (The Governor) to determine not only the need for a legislative session but what shall be on the agenda. An annual session would remove political connotations often ascribed to the Governor's call for a special session, and would allow the Legislature, not the Governor, to determine the agenda. It would allow the consideration of a Governor's veto to be made within a shorter period of time and by those who passed the measure.

Another question raised is "Will annual sessions discourage top-quality candidates who question whether they can leave their businesses or employment every year? Many think not. Would not a top-quality candidate prefer to know that a session will convene on a certain day each year- we could perhaps then set a definite time limit- rather than wonder about being called to a special session at the Governor's discretion at an unknown time? Is the candidate running for a 60-day session biennially or is the commitment to a two-or-four year term of service to the State? Quality candidates will be attracted to the Legislature when they are given power, authority and resources to do the job.

A majority of our states, ^{3 bind off,} fast growing Arizona, Alaska and Hawaii among them, now require annual sessions, and ^{more} four have instituted annual sessions, by recessing to a definite date instead of adjourning sine die (without setting a date to reconvene) as is Nevada's custom. A fundamental

fault with Legislatures is that they are not available many times when problems arise due to constitutional restrictions which set short and infrequent sessions.

^{In}
~~The~~ summary, the League of Women Voters believes Annual Sessions would

- 1- Give Legislators time and authority to consider Nevada's needs.
- 2- Allow better planning through yearly sessions:
 - a. A yearly budget can be more timely and more responsive to priorities
 - b. The Legislature and respond more rapidly to local government and people needs.
 - c. Legislators can follow through on recommendations developed in first session
- 3- Make the Legislature an equal and independent partner in State Gov't.
- 4- Reduce the possibility of political decision by the Governor for special sessions.
- 5- Let the same lawmakers who passed a measure vote on a Governor's veto
- 6- Strengthen State role in government with decisions made closer to home-when citizens find State is not acting on their concerns effectively and promptly, they turn to the Federal Government.

We want to revitalize our Legislature by permitting it, equipping it, and requiring it to function as a modern, effective and decision-making instrument of the people.

Thank you.