

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**Eighty-second Session
April 5, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Finance was called to order by Chair Marilyn Dondero Loop at 5:06 p.m. on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, in Room 1214 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair
Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro, Vice Chair
Senator Dallas Harris
Senator Dina Neal
Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen
Senator Pete Goicoechea
Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert
Senator Robin L. Titus

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wayne Thorley, Senate Fiscal Analyst
Cathy Crocket, Chief Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst
Joko Cailles, Committee Secretary
Michelle Friedlander, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Paula Luna, Operations Manager, Battle Born Progress
Carter Bundy, Political Action Representative, American Federation of State
County and Municipal Employees
Richard McCann, Nevada Law Enforcement Coalition
John Abel, Director of Governmental Affairs, Las Vegas Police Protective
Association, Inc.
Alejandro Rodriguez, Director of Government Relations, Nevada System of
Higher Education

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Michael Flores, Vice President of Government and Community Engagement,
President's Office, University of Nevada Reno
Daniel Gordon, President, Nevada Police Union
Kent M. Ervin, State President, Nevada Faculty Alliance
Eddie Ableser, Nevada Police Union
Stephanie Dube
Sonja Whitten
Jack Robb, Director, Nevada Department of Administration
Luana Davis
Unidentified Caller
Troy Lovick

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We have one Bill Draft Request (BDR) that requires a Committee introduction, one bill hearing and a possible work session. We will begin with the BDR.

BILL DRAFT REQUEST 3-1074: Revises provisions governing structured settlement purchase companies. (Later introduced as [Senate Bill 449](#).)

SENATOR CANNIZZARO MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 3-1074.

SENATOR NEAL SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We will open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 440.

SENATE BILL 440: Makes appropriations requiring certain one-time payments and salary increases for state officers and employees. (BDR S-768)

SENATOR NICOLE J. CANNIZZARO (Senatorial District No. 6):

I am presenting S.B. 440 which makes appropriations regarding certain one-time payments and salary increases for State officers and employees. This bill lets our State employees know we value their service. It also recognizes their right to collective bargaining to create agreements for workplace raises, cost of living adjustments (COLAs) or longevity payments after negotiating job standards for

things like working hours and other instrumental areas that allow State employees to perform their job duties.

I believe wholeheartedly that a strong State workforce enhances our constituents' lives. They sent us here to represent them, and we are the touchstones by which our constituents connect to, benefit from and support our communities. Senate Bill 440 represents our belief in our State's employees, and how we support them and their efforts. The Legislative and Judiciary staff and State employees, all vital to the efficiency of the Legislature, will benefit from the proposed COLA raises in S.B. 440.

A fiscal year (FY) 2021-2022 Division of Human Resource Management salary survey revealed the State pays its employees, on average, 30 percent less when compared to local governments and the private sector. The pay disparity has resulted in State agencies experiencing difficulty filling vacant positions, leading to a current Statewide vacancy rate of approximately 23 percent.

State employees' salaries have not kept up with inflation. Since 1979, the COLAs for State employees approved by the Legislature have lagged behind inflation by about 31 percent, and two significant events recently impacted policy decisions regarding wages: the Great Recession and COVID-19. Substantial Public Employees' Retirement System of Nevada contribution rate increases over the last decade have further reduced State employee take-home pay.

As part of a comprehensive approach to address the disparity in State employees' compensation and benefits, S.B. 440 funds a 2 percent COLA effective April 1, 2023. Senate Bill 440 also provides funding for the employee compensation portion of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) approved by the Board of Examiners (BOE) on March 8, 2022. This bill appropriates \$26 million in General Fund monies and \$1.5 million in Highway Fund monies in FY 2022-2023 for these purposes.

The dollar amounts included in S.B. 440 align with the information provided last week by Fiscal staff during the Joint Senate Committee on Finance and Assembly Committee on Ways and Means work session on State employee compensation and benefits. Funding for the ongoing associated costs will be included in a separate bill later this Session. The purpose of S.B. 440 is to

provide the 2 percent COLA funding through the end of FY 2022-2023 and the employee compensation portion of the CBAs approved last year by the BOE.

To summarize, sections 1 and 2 of S.B. 440 appropriate \$658,489 in General Fund monies and \$891,725 in Highway Fund monies for a 1 percent COLA, longevity bonuses and educational attainment payments retroactive to July 1, 2022, to fund the new CBA provision between the State and the Nevada Police Union for Bargaining Unit G, category 1 peace officers, approved on March 8, 2022, by the BOE.

You have a mockup of proposed Amendment No. 3569 ([Exhibit C](#)) to S.B. 440 sections 1 and 2. Adjustments made to the amounts in the bill include section 1, subsection 1. The General Fund sum appropriated to the State BOE of \$658,489 is now \$697,880. In section 1, subsection 2, the amount designated for the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) was increased from \$44,392 to \$83,783. This portion provides payment and retroactive payment for members of the Nevada Police Union who negotiated the 1 percent COLA with longevity and educational attainment pieces. Funding requires Legislative approval.

Sections 3 and 4 appropriate \$19,737,672 in General Fund monies and \$80,024 in Highway Fund monies for a 3 percent COLA, retroactive to July 1, 2021. This funds the revised CBA provision between the State and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 4041 for Bargaining Units A, E, F and I, approved by the BOE on March 8, 2022.

Bargaining Unit A includes labor, maintenance, custodial and institutional employees including penal and correctional institutions employees who are not responsible for security at those institutions. Bargaining Unit E includes professional employees who provide health care including physical therapists and other employees in medical and other professions related to health. Bargaining Unit F includes non-professional employees who provide health care and personal care, including employees who care for children. Bargaining Unit I includes category III peace officers.

Sections 5 through 10 appropriate \$5,744,071 in General Fund monies and \$566,090 in Highway Fund monies for a 2 percent COLA effective April 1, 2023, through June 30, 2023, for State employees, including those

employed by the Judicial Branch, Nevada Legislature and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Section 11 stipulates any unspent funds appropriated through this bill must be reverted by September 15, 2023. The amended bill is effective upon passage and approval.

We worked extensively to determine the best way to pay State employees and how it will impact our budget decisions. This portion is the first step, this fiscal year's 2 percent COLA. I am aware of conversations about whether or not the Legislature should decide to fund our State employees' CBAs.

Many of the employees described in Bargaining Units are Nevada Police Union category 1 peace officers, which are including our State law enforcement officers. It is no surprise these positions have high vacancy rates, especially when local municipalities and counties pay significantly more. Nevada is training many in law enforcement who leave the State workforce for more lucrative positions.

We have to do better. I have worked for over a decade in law enforcement and passionately support these people. It is irresponsible of us to say, despite negotiating pay increases and other incentives, we believe we do not have to fund them, especially when it fits into our budget. Supporting the State, Judicial and Legislative employees' 2 percent COLA increase is extremely important, not only because it shows our support and appreciation, but so they continue to provide services to meet the needs of our constituents.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

In March 2022, the BOE approved, but did not fund, some CBAs. These included the 1 percent increase, plus some longevity, for certain groups effective July 1, 2022; another 3 percent for those same groups starting July 1, 2021; plus 2 percent for all employees beginning April 1, 2023. Are these the three pieces?

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

Yes. There are two specific CBAs approved by the BOE on March 8, 2022, after the Eighty-first Session in 2021. They were not funded because the BOE does not have the authority to appropriate funds for CBA agreements. The first CBA between the State and the Nevada Police Union included a 1 percent COLA with

some additional educational attainment and longevity pieces. This agreement included a non-appropriation clause requiring the Legislature to appropriate funds.

The second CBA was an AFSCME agreement that covers the four Bargaining Units A, E, F and I, which included a 3 percent COLA beginning retroactively on July 1, 2021. The second CBA included a non-appropriation clause requiring the Legislature to fund the agreements because the BOE lacked the authority to appropriate the funds.

Bill draft requests submitted by the previous administration were not pursued. To make good on the agreements, they are included in S.B. 440.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

We all value our employees and must increase their pay. The Executive Budget allocates 8 and 10 percent in the first year, depending on the catch-up COLA amount outlined in a CBA approved during the Eighty-first Session, and the 4 percent for all other employees.

When I look at this, I see a disparity between employees in a union and those who are not, continuing the COLA inequity between employees working side by side. That is concerning, and we need to take that into account along with the various time frames for amounts from different pieces. Are there any fiscal notes regarding ongoing costs?

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

Yes, they are the proposed 8 and 10 percent COLA increases for the first year of the 2023-2025 biennium and an additional 4 percent COLA increase in the second year of the 2023-2025 biennium from the Executive Budget. The 2 percent COLA in S.B. 440 would be in addition to those increases. Also built into the CBAs are additional COLAs.

Inequities across State agencies already exist. Attorneys in certain agencies, or Legislative Branch versus the Judicial versus the Executive Branch may have different pay scales. It is inaccurate to talk about this as being one particular inequity when there are many pieces to the conversation.

Nevada law provides employees the ability to join a union. When they do that, they have the absolute right to go and collectively bargain. They join together,

make an agreement and are permitted under Nevada law to bargain with the State for certain conditions of employment, including working conditions, the hours worked, uniforms, components of their daily activities, and even working remotely or on-site. They also can bargain for pay increases. That is part of the State law and the purpose of collective bargaining, be it at the State or county level.

I will share one anecdote. As a Clark County employee, I was part of the Clark County Prosecutors Association. We had CBAs we negotiated with the County. Our counterparts at the Office of the Clark County Public Defender did not have CBAs because they were not unionized. That resulted in differences in pay and working conditions. Now they have a union. They have the right to collectively bargain, and they have chosen to do so. That is true for any public employee union opportunity that exists in Nevada.

If a group such as the Nevada Police Union, who are law enforcement category I officers, bargains with the State and reaches an agreement approved by the BOE, it is not within our ability to not fund it because we believe there might be some inequity. They have done their job under the collective bargaining law to achieve that purpose.

I am willing to have a conversation about existing inequities, but I do not think we should make particular distinctions between a law enforcement officer that works for the State and belongs to the Nevada Police Union and others who have gone to the bargaining table and negotiated. There is give and take on both sides per Nevada law.

As for the various time frames, I will leave it to Fiscal staff to delineate some of the specifics. We have gone through many scenarios and their potential impact on the entire budget. This is not something offered without any context or forethought as to the State's ability to fund portions of S.B. 440 in the 2023-2025 biennium. Other bills will come before this Committee for consideration to implement the other portions of State employee compensation and what that means going forward into the next biennium.

I do not know exactly what the fiscal notes would be or what this will look like going forward. What I know is, this is something we worked through with Fiscal staff to determine whether or not this can be built into the overall proposed budget and the future decisions for this Committee.

WAYNE THORLEY (Senate Fiscal Analyst):

Related to the portion of the bill dealing with the 2 percent COLA effective April 1, 2023, costs to the General Fund are \$27.4 million for FY 2023-2024 and \$29.1 million for FY 2024-2025. Highway Fund costs would be \$5.5 million for FY 2023-2024 and \$5.9 million for FY 2024-2025. Other Fund costs not related to the General Fund or Highway Fund would be \$11.1 million for FY 2023-2024 and \$11.8 million for FY 2024-2025.

For the portion of the bill related to employee compensation of the two CBAs, General Fund costs are \$13.6 million for FY 2023-2024 and \$14.6 million for FY 2024-2025. The Highway Fund cost is \$1.8 million for FY 2023-2024 and \$2 million for FY 2024-2025. Other Fund costs not related to the General Fund or Highway Fund would be \$1.6 million in FY 2023-2024 and \$1.7 million in FY 2024-2025. Funding for the FY 2023-2024 and FY 2024-2025 costs and for both portions of the bill are not included in S.B. 440.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We will hear public comment on S.B. 440.

PAULA LUNA (Operations Manager, Battle Born Progress):

We fully support S.B. 440. The one-time bonus will provide State employees with immediate help, and the salary increases will offer longstanding support. This is a comprehensive compensation bill and a well thought out bill aimed at improving the lives of our State employees. We urge this Committee's approval.

CARTER BUNDY (Political Action Representative, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees):

One of the core concepts in collective bargaining is making our case to the administration, whoever is in the administration at the time. To some degree, it also enables us to get ahead of the curve. We saw and lived through high vacancy rates previously; they are not new.

The average vacancy rate is about 23 percent, although some agencies have a vacancy rate as high as 35 percent. That is why this is so important, not just for State employees who earn significantly less than their counterparts in counties and cities throughout the State, but for Nevada's citizens to continue receiving the services from the employees paid by the State. We will continue to have significant vacancy problems in all areas, and the State will remain a training ground for both local and out-of-state employers.

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This is an important piece of legislation to improve compensation for State employees to end the staffing shortage.

RICHARD MCCANN (Nevada Law Enforcement Coalition):

I will not belabor what all of my colleagues have said. You have already heard it from me before. This bill is an excellent effort to move the progress forward so our State employees are adequately compensated. I sat in this very room when we passed S.B. No. 135 during the 80th Legislative Session. It was the first time in Nevada's history we gave our State employees the opportunity to collectively bargain. Senate Bill 440 and other measures put forth this Session for a more comprehensive package are more steps toward recognizing our State's employees need to be taken care of.

JOHN ABEL (Director of Governmental Affairs, Las Vegas Police Protective Association, Inc.):

We support S.B. 440. I am relatively new to how collective bargaining works at the State level but am familiar with how it works at the local level. I hope we can make some changes to make it easier for them in the future.

ALEJANDRO RODRIGUEZ (Director of Government Relations, Nevada System of Higher Education):

We support this bill and urge your support.

MICHAEL FLORES (Vice President of Government and Community Engagement, President's Office, University of Nevada Reno):

We support S.B. 440.

DANIEL GORDON (President, Nevada Police Union):

I was the Nevada Police Union vice president when we negotiated these in good faith. We went to arbitration in July 2021 and won. The State must fund our previous CBA but has refused to accept the arbitration award in October 2021. The district court ruled in our favor, forcing the State to fund the CBA and pay our attorney's fees. The State did not appeal the ruling in 2022. To fund the previous contract, we feel S.B. 440 should be approved.

KENT M. ERVIN (State President, Nevada Faculty Alliance):

Since our founding 40 years ago, we have worked to empower members to be fully engaged in our mission to help students succeed. We support S.B. 440 and appreciate it being brought forward. Ditto on what the other speakers have said

regarding this compensation package. It will be a big boost for classified colleagues including campus police and the faculty at NSHE included in the 2 percent COLA effective April 1, 2023.

This is a great step in your overall compensation plan for State employee retention and recruitment. The turnover rate at NSHE rose to 14 percent last year. Our support positions are severely understaffed. We are having a hard time recruiting and keeping academic faculty and professional staff. Applications have decreased dramatically, and top candidates decline when they calculate salary versus living expenses.

Since 2010, State-funded take-home salaries for faculty after accounting for the State COLAs, retirement contributions and inflation have declined over 25 percent. It would take a 30 percent increase to get back to 2010 levels. The COLA in S.B. 440, along with the enhancements outlined during the Thursday, March 30, 2023, meeting are huge leaps forward. Please pass and fund S.B. 440. Thank you for looking out for all State employees.

EDDIE ABLESER (Nevada Police Union):

At its inception, the Nevada Police Union was an association consisting of about 100 Nevada highway patrol officers. In 2019, we worked diligently with other labor organization members on S.B. No. 135 of the 80th Session. When it passed, we worked hard to unite members in our category unit to get the required 50 percent plus one to officially become the labor unit for Bargaining Unit G, category I law enforcement. Upon designation, we worked aggressively with the State, aware of certain nuances we had to navigate when negotiating our first agreement with the State. This body had the chance to vote on many other agreements in the Eighty-first Session.

We eventually reached an agreement. When the State pulled back on that agreement, we went to arbitration in July 2021. Almost immediately, the arbitrator ruled in our favor. Then in October 2021, we went to district court following section 43 of S.B. 135 of the 80th Session, which states a labor organization can sue the Governor if there is no agreement in place. From the bench, the district court ruled in our favor and awarded us attorney fees. We reached out, asking if anything else needed to be done. The State said it would not appeal, and we could move forward. We moved to the BOE where it was approved.

I implore you to support this bill in good faith of the hard work the Nevada Police Union put in for over three years. This is the final piece to the first bargaining agreement in Nevada. It is important to entrust the men and women who serve and protect our State and ensure them they have a small amount of financial support and negotiated agreements we worked hard for. We also appeal that there is no reason not to back pay.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Due to audio issues with people outside Room 1214, we have moved to Room 2135 for the remainder of the meeting.

STEPHANIE DUBE:

I am a member of AFSCME Local 4041 and am calling in support of S.B. 440. I have worked for the State for about six years, and it has been understaffed.

SONJA WHITTEN:

I am calling in support of S.B. 440. I have been a Nevada State employee for almost 20 years. It is high time for the State to acknowledge what AFSCME has been fighting for and saying for decades. State workers are underpaid and overworked. The staffing shortage is a reflection of the low pay and the decrease in our benefits. I am very thankful for this Committee taking a look at this and taking the steps to move forward to correct it.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Seeing no comments in opposition of the S.B. 440, we will go to neutral here in Carson City.

JACK ROBB (Director, Nevada Department of Administration):

I met with the Department of Administration staff in charge of getting the payroll out every other week. We have concerns with the way the bill is put together. We are also concerned with its implementation knowing how our system works, or how we hope it works every week.

We still use the Advantage Payroll system. Every time we go to process payroll, we collectively hold our breath. Staff will spend a great deal of time babysitting the system over weekends to ensure we all get paid. We have ten full-time equivalents (FTE) on staff, but we will soon be down to six. We are losing some to the Nevada Department of Public Safety, some to Carson City and one is retiring.

The retroactive component in this bill will require us to go back and look at it step by step. This would have to be done manually because merit increases are awarded at different times for employees, and staff have been promoted during that time frame. We have people coming and going, new employees and employees retiring. It is a very manual process.

To calculate back to 2021, as S.B. 440 specifies, approximately 4,300 employees would have to be reviewed. You would have to go through every payroll meticulously starting with the earliest one and, like a staircase, build on it for the specified length of time. For that length of time, for that many employees, we will need two FTEs for a full year to get there. If we are trying to provide employees relief and get something in their hands in an expedited manner, this is not the way.

Processing weekly or bi-weekly payroll is already a concern. This year, getting W-2 forms out on time required staff to work all hours of the day and night. We started the payroll process three times, and it failed. We had to babysit the system. We also had help from the Nevada Department of Administration's, Mail Services Division and Enterprise IT Services to make sure the forms got printed and mailed out to avoid penalties being assessed by the federal government. It came down to the wire. Our biggest concern is the way the bill is put together and our ability to make it work through an antiquated system.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We recently canceled one system and are preparing to purchase another. How long will it take to get the new system up and have employees manage it?

MR. ROBB:

We canceled the Silver State Modernization Approach for Resources and Technology in the 21st Century (SMART21) contract last week and are hoping to fast-track a new system. The earliest we can contract for a new system is October 2023. We hope to have the system up and running in two years. It will not happen any sooner than two years.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We have payroll on Friday, April 7, 2023, for all the employees here in this building, yourself included, the Governor, and everybody else. How will they get their paychecks?

MR. ROBB:

We are still using the legacy system to process payroll. The other contract had modules in it, but payroll was still through the Advantage system, which causes some of our concern. We had not converted to the new system for payroll.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Are we going to have paychecks on Friday?

MR. ROBB:

We will have paychecks on Friday without a doubt.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Maybe we can work on that and hire some babysitters?

MR. ROBB:

It is the same staff that handled payroll two weeks ago using the same system. The SAP cloud-based platform did not have the payroll system built into it yet. The financial models had not been rolled over. Some of the Human Resources modules have been brought in, but the payroll and financial modules had not. We are using the same system last month that we will use next month.

The issue is the actual babysitting of that system, the lack of employees to babysit that system and the fragile nature of that system would result in an increased workload. We are trying to unwind the whole SAP system while prepping to implement a new system. We are already short-staffed without compounding it with turning off old systems while trying to implement new systems and babysitting the payroll processing system every other week.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Bill or no bill, if we owe people money, we need to get it to them. When this bill passes, we need to figure out how to do so because employees are counting on those funds.

With no additional neutral testifiers, we will move on to closing remarks.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

If we owe State employees money, we have to be able to pay them. That has to happen. I understand there are difficulties with the system, and that is a conversation legislators have been having for quite some time.

This is not the first time this Committee has talked about money this Session nor the first time the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) has talked about money for State employees' back pay. Many members of this Committee will remember IFC approved a partial settlement payment for corrections officers who attended briefings before clocking in and were awarded back pay. Many of them had been doing that for quite some time. During this Session, we heard an Assembly bill intended to appropriate money to the contingency account to bring the balance of the statutory contingency account up and to pay the rest of the back pay settlement to those State employees.

This is an issue we are all aware of after many conversations about SMART21 and other pieces, although it was not a concern brought before this Committee when we were asked to fund the settlement payment. I am happy to look for solutions on ways to pay these employees. Regardless, if they are owed money as part of their agreements, we have an obligation to pay. I urge the Committee's support.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 440 and move into a work session to discuss the bill and proposed amendment.

SENATOR HARRIS MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 440 WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT 3569.

SENATOR NGUYEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

I appreciate recognizing the need to increase our public employees' pay. We realize how hard they have worked, especially during COVID-19. Our Governor has put forth substantial raises of 8 and 10 percent, depending on if you were to receive the 2 percent as part of the collective Bargaining Unit, plus another 4 percent.

I was a legislator during the Seventy-third, Seventy-fourth and Seventy-fifth Sessions and several Special Sessions in between. When the Modified Business Tax went into effect in FY 2004-2005 following the Twentieth Special Session, there was enough money in 2005 to issue a refund of about \$300 million to people across the State along with significant increases and raises. Then, from 2008 through 2010, we found ourselves dealing with furloughs, rolling back raises and COLAs, and cutting many services.

We are always measuring what is an essential service versus what is not. It is extremely difficult to face challenges and make decisions when you give employees significant COLAs. Based on my calculations, we have 1 percent and 3 percent, plus 2 percent for the bargaining group members, then another 8 percent. That equals 14 percent. The Governor is also proposing an additional 4 percent. That is a total of 18 percent. For those not in the bargaining groups, it is 10 percent plus 4 percent, for a total of 14 percent.

We spoke about pay disparity and attempts to catch up with 8 and 10 percent bumps for the first year of the 2023-2025 biennium. Now, we will have a 4 percent pay disparity overall at the end of the 2023-2025 biennium. The Governor has proposed significant raises and retention incentives, which because they are one-shots, we can manage those better. With the rollover dollars we have from FY 2021-2022 to FY 2022-2023, and potentially FY 2022-2023 to FY 2023-2024, funds are available for incentive bonuses without the concern of ongoing liability.

We have to make sure we are fiscally prudent. When I add the numbers, just for these pieces, it exceeds \$40 million per year, ongoing, and will increase over time. This is on top of the retention incentives, plus the Governor's proposed 8 or 10 percent for the first year of the biennium and the additional 4 percent.

No one will argue that we need to pay our employees more. I recognize we need to be fiscally responsible today and look to the future. These types of raises can become insurmountable. For that reason, I am going to vote no. We need to pay our employees more and work diligently to be able to do so. Funds may be available now, but we do not know where they will be in the future. We have to make fiscally responsible decisions now. We don't want to face challenges six months or a year from now and have to roll back and put our employees on furloughs, creating significant hardships.

SENATOR TITUS:

I appreciate what our State workers have done, especially our law enforcement officers, and how hard they have worked. I think our Governor has made excellent progress in making sure we reinforce those that have stuck with the State throughout. He has, in good faith, offered some significant increases and raises.

We represent all State employees, not just a few. It still bugs me that in a hearing during the Eighty-first Session, the Assembly Ways and Means Chair said any State employee not a part of the union was a freeloader. I do not feel any of our State employees are freeloaders. Our Governor has done a good job trying to catch up with some of these truly bad situations with our employees. We should represent all of our employees. For that reason, I am not going to support this bill the way it is written.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

We passed Assembly Bill 268 giving State employees a \$500 bonus. I thought that was a good-faith effort as we go forward. I am voting no on this bill until we look at the total budget and overall ramifications.

ASSEMBLY BILL 268: Makes appropriations for the payment of retention incentives to certain employees of the State Government; and providing other matters properly relating thereto. (BDR S-1037)

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

I have a motion to amend and do pass as amended with a second; we will now vote.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATORS GOICOECHEA, SEEVERS GANSERT AND TITUS VOTED NO.)

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CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We will move on to public comment.

LUANA DAVIS:

I am a family support services worker and would like to comment on getting a raise. I have been with the State going on four years and provide

translation services. Trying to support my family and raise my children without raises is an extreme hardship. The pay does not meet up when compared to other sectors. We should get a raise sooner rather than later. I heard the Senator speak about furloughs, and I would prefer to get a furlough in the future than not getting a raise.

UNIDENTIFIED CALLER:

I am with AFSCME Local 4041 and am a 20-year Nevada State employee. I am calling to support S.B. 440. I am thrilled the Committee heard the constant statements about employment, especially those stating we are severely underpaid for the work we do. We need to honor the arbitration award won for those in a collective Bargaining Unit. Anyone who is a classified employee has an opportunity to participate in AFSCME. I would encourage anyone who is a State of Nevada employee to join the union, whether you are an athlete or a public safety officer. I am thankful to you for looking into our wages, honoring the arbitration award won and the other one, and making these people whole.

TROY LOVICK:

I am a health program specialist in the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public and Behavioral Health and a member of AFSCME Local 4041. We are asking the Legislature to support S.B. 440.

Regarding understaffing, my unit is exclusively federally funded. We have had to make some expensive choices, including going through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Foundation to hire contractors to fill many of the jobs in our unit. This is more expensive than setting up some of the old State positions.

I was asked to move from southern Nevada to Carson City, which took a month's salary. I moved to an area where more than 50 percent of my take home pay goes to rent. I came to the State with decades of service and a master's degree in my chosen profession. I am asking you to stand behind us.

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CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Seeing no public comment, this meeting is adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Michelle Friedlander,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair

DATE: _____

| EXHIBIT SUMMARY | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bill | Exhibit Letter | Introduced on Minute Report Page No. | Witness / Entity | Description |
| | A | 1 | | Agenda |
| | B | 1 | | Attendance Roster |
| S.B. 440 | C | 4 | Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro | Proposed Budget Amendment No. 3569 |