

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

**Eighty-second Session  
March 27, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Edgar Flores at 3:37 p.m. on Monday, March 27, 2023, in Room 2149 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 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 Edgar Flores, Chair  
Senator James Ohrenschall, Vice Chair  
Senator Skip Daly  
Senator Pete Goicoechea  
Senator Lisa Krasner

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Senator Melanie Scheible, Senatorial District No. 9  
Senator Pat Spearman, Senatorial District No. 1

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jered McDonald, Policy Analyst  
Suzanne Efford, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Rick McCann, Nevada Association of Public Safety Officers; Nevada Law Enforcement Coalition  
Todd Ingalsbee, President, Professional Fire Fighters of Nevada  
John Abel, Las Vegas Police Protective Association  
Marlene Lockard, Service Employees International Union Local 1107  
Kent Ervin, Nevada Faculty Alliance  
Morgan Biaselli, Las Vegas City Employees Association  
Fran Almaraz, Teamsters

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Andrew Regenbaum, Executive Director, Nevada Association of Public Safety Officers

Sean Gallagher, President, Nevada State Law Enforcement Officers' Association  
Dan Nuqui

Bruce Snyder, Commissioner, Government Employee-Management Relations Board, Nevada Department of Business and Industry

Brittany Benesi, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Rebecca Goff, Nevada State Director, Humane Society of the United States

Nick Vander Poel, Nevada Humane Society

Doralee Martinez, Nevada Disability Peer Action Coalition; Nevada Council of the Blind

Christina Thomas, Veterans Advocacy Council

Patrick Donnelly, Center for Biological Diversity

Paul Cather, Culinary Workers Union Local 226

Annette Magnus, Battle Born Progress

Steven Cohen

Lilith Baran, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada

Leilani Hinyard

Sophia Romero

Reverend Robert Bush, President, National Action Network

Tyrone Jones

Timothy C. Smith

Reverend Leonard B. Jackson, Executive Director, Faith Organizing Alliance

Shawn Navarro

Brian Harris, Battle Born Progress

Dakota Hoskins, Service Employees International Union Local 1107

Emily Woodall, Dream.org

Wilson Crespo

Yesenia Moya

Lisa Mayo

Marla Turner

Dina Velasco Smith

Leonard Cardinale

Jovan Jackson

Emily Persaud-Zamora, Executive Director, Silver State Voices

Quentin Savvoir, President, NAACP, Las Vegas Branch

Leo Benavides, City of North Las Vegas

Pamela Goynes-Brown, Mayor, City of North Las Vegas

Stephen Wood, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities

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Warren Hardy, City of Las Vegas; City of Reno; City of Sparks; City of North Las Vegas; City of Henderson  
Paul Moradkhan, Vegas Chamber  
Fernando Romero, President, Hispanics in Politics  
RaeAnn Peterson  
Ana Wood, Las Vegas Asian Chamber of Commerce  
Diana Ramirez, President, The People of the Community  
Kristina Kleist, Latin Chamber of Commerce, Nevada  
Michelle Romero, Mayor, City of Henderson  
Bryan Wachter, Retail Association of Nevada  
David Damore, Ph.D., Interim Executive Director, The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West; Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Jordan Anderson  
Brian Knudsen, Councilman, Ward 1; Mayor Pro Tempore, City Council, City of Las Vegas  
Kathy Hendrick  
Josiah Jensen, President, North Las Vegas Firefighters; International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1607  
Elizabeth Karaz  
Unidentified Testifier

CHAIR FLORES:

We will open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 319.

**SENATE BILL 319**: Revises provisions relating to public employees. (BDR 23-953)

RICK MCCANN (Nevada Association of Public Safety Officers; Nevada Law Enforcement Coalition):

*Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 288.425 states that for purposes of collective bargaining, a State employee is defined as one who is employed in the classified service of the State or is employed by the Nevada System of Higher Education in the classified service of the State or is required to be paid in accordance with the pay plan for classified service.

*Nevada Revised Statutes* 288.515 created bargaining units for each of 11 separate occupational groups of employees. One of those groups is category II peace officers. Nevada Gaming Control Board agents are left out of

category II because they are unclassified State employees. They are sworn category II peace officers.

Section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (b) of S.B. 319 adds to the definition of an employee unclassified category I, category II and category III peace officers. This will allow them to collectively bargain pursuant to NRS 463.080, subsection 4—Gaming Control Board employees, except for clerical employees, are all unclassified.

*Nevada Revised Statutes* 463.080 also requires the Gaming Control Board to establish and modify as necessary a comprehensive plan governing employment. Under S.B. 319 the Board will be able to allow collective bargaining for its peace officers.

For the past four years, Gaming Control Board agents, as category II State peace officers, have been standing by while all other category I, II and III peace officers have benefited from collective bargaining.

Someone asked me if putting them into collective bargaining would make them classified employees. According to the Board's administration, placing them into collective bargaining will not make them classified employees. That can only be accomplished legislatively with changes to NRS 463.080. That is not the purpose of this bill.

It is time category I, II and III unclassified State peace officers are permitted to engage in collective bargaining like their peace officer brethren. There is already a place for them in one of the 11 groups mentioned in NRS 288.515. They are category II peace officers.

We ask you to support S.B. 319.

TODD INGALSBEE (President, Professional Fire Fighters of Nevada):

The Professional Fire Fighters of Nevada (PFFN) believe in the ability for all our brothers and sisters to collectively bargain. Because this group has been left out, they should have the option to collectively bargain if that is what they choose. The PFFN supports the bill and asks you to do the same.

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JOHN ABEL (Las Vegas Police Protective Association):

The Las Vegas Police Protective Association (LVPPA) represents all Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department police officers. The LVPPA supports S.B. 319.

MARLENE LOCKARD (Service Employees International Union Local 1107):

The Service Employees International Union Local 1107 supports this bill and urges your positive consideration.

KENT ERVIN (Nevada Faculty Alliance):

The Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA) is the independent Statewide association of professional employees of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). The NFA dittos what others said and supports S.B. 319. The bill provides collective bargaining for a small group of category II to peace officers within the sections of NRS 288 along with other peace officers.

The NFA represents the much larger group of unclassified employees at NSHE— faculty and other professional employees. The NFA has a separate bill in the Assembly to authorize collective bargaining for NSHE professional employees. This bill does not conflict with that one. The NFA urges you to support S.B. 319.

MORGAN BIASSELLI (Las Vegas City Employees Association):

The Las Vegas City Employees Association supports this bill.

FRAN ALMARAZ (Teamsters):

The Teamsters support S.B. 319.

ANDREW REGENBAUM (Executive Director, Nevada Association of Public Safety Officers):

The Nevada Association of Public Safety Officers supports S.B. 319.

This bill will give the unclassified Gaming Control Board category II peace officers the same collective bargaining rights their brothers and sisters have. I urge this Committee to please support S.B. 319.

SEAN GALLAGHER (President, Nevada State Law Enforcement Officers' Association):

The Nevada State Law Enforcement Officers' Association (NSLEOA) supports S.B. 319.

The NSLEOA represents many of the Gaming Control Board agents this bill will impact. This bill is not political; it is not a union bill. It is a commonsense employment bill for State government that already suffers from substantial recruitment and retention problems. Nearly every other law enforcement officer employed by counties, cities or the State have collective bargaining and a seat at the table regarding working conditions and wages.

Gaming Control Board agents have the credentials, training and experience to easily qualify at other law enforcement agencies that would be happy to have them. If this bill does not pass, why would anyone become an agent and why would experienced agents with a long career ahead of them stay?

The NSLEOA supports this bill.

DAN NUQUI:

I work for the Gaming Control Board. I am one of the sworn peace officers that S.B. 319 would directly affect, and I support this bill.

BRUCE SNYDER (Commissioner, Government Employee-Management Relations Board, Nevada Department of Business and Industry):

The Government Employee-Management Relations Board (EMRB) is the agency that administers collective bargaining at the State and local levels. The EMRB is neutral on this bill.

When S.B. No. 135 of the 80th Session was passed extending collective bargaining to State employees, a petition was filed with the EMRB asking that Gaming Control Board agents who are category II peace officers be allowed to collectively bargain. After a briefing on the issue, the EMRB issued an order which denied the petition, claiming the threshold issue was whether they were classified employees. To that extent, Rick McCann is correct, that is a threshold issue. The EMRB issued dicta in that order which stated,

If the Legislature wanted to include certain exceptions and individuals, they would have done so. As such, it is up to the Legislature to change the statute pursuant to proper procedure. We at the EMRB are fully adamant that it is the sole province of the Legislature to decide who gets collective bargaining or not. In those we are neutral and if the Legislature believes that these people should be added, we will effectively administer that provision.

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CHAIR FLORES:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 319 and open the hearing on S.B. 331.

**SENATE BILL 331**: Revises provisions relating to state and local emergency management plans. (BDR 36-813)

SENATOR MELANIE SCHEIBLE (Senatorial District No. 9):

Senate Bill 331 is a good, simple bill that requires local governments, when developing emergency evacuation plans, to take pets into consideration and ensure that everybody has a place to go that is safe for them and their four-legged, scaly, slithering, flying family members.

This bill has only one section. It does what I just said it does.

BRITTANY BENESI (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals):

Senate Bill 331 updates State statute to ensure that an emergency management plan, to the extent possible, accounts for the needs of people with pets in terms of evacuation, transport and shelter. It will also ensure that emergency plans designate at least one emergency shelter able to accommodate people with pets. This policy will improve public preparedness, increase evacuation compliance and streamline emergency response for when the next disaster, unfortunately but inevitably, strikes.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) has a long history of disaster response and support of local governments during natural disasters. The ASPCA field response team deploys nationwide to assist in relocation, search and rescue, sheltering, and reunification efforts during disaster events. In addition, this team works closely with local agencies to help enhance their animal response capabilities and stands ready to help support this bill through training and grant opportunities.

The ASPCA field response team has seen the importance and benefits of planning for the evacuation, transport and especially the shelter of people with pets and the risks to public safety when they fail to do so; for example, risks associated with evacuation noncompliance. The highest risk factor for evacuation noncompliance is found to be pet ownership, particularly with families who do not have children. This obviously puts residents in danger but also puts first responders' lives at risk.

It is estimated that 80 percent of people who illegally reenter an evacuation site do so to rescue a pet that was left behind. Notably, abandonment or unintended separation from a pet is the highest risk factor for post-traumatic stress or other psychopathologies following a disaster—even more so than the loss of one's home during that disaster.

Disaster risks are increasing across Nevada. We have seen growing severity of extreme heat events with eight of the ten warmest years since 1895 occurring between 2000 and 2020. These warming temperatures are increasing wildfire risk. Between 2000 and 2018, the rate of wildfire in acreage burned more than doubled over the previous 19 years from 4.2 million acres between 1980 and 1999 to 9.5 million acres. Additionally, warmer atmospheres can carry more water as we have seen this past winter, increasing the instances of atmospheric rivers which can cause rapid runoff and the dangerous potential for flooding. As extreme weather and resulting emergencies grow in size and intensity, the importance of comprehensive emergency planning is clear now more than ever.

Nevada's local governments recognize this growing need. Many have updated their emergency plans already, increased public outreach, added pet preparedness checklists to their websites and collaborated with groups like the ASPCA and the National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition.

However, gaps remain that S.B. 331 will help fill. When a local government emergency management website includes pet preparedness, it often has somewhat confusing messaging—suggesting or declaring never to leave your pet behind during an evacuation, but make sure you have pet-friendly accommodations to go to because shelters may not allow for pets. The typical follow-up is to have pet-friendly hotels lined up or friends or family who will take your pets. This is obviously prohibitive for families who are unable to afford an unforeseen hotel expense or may not have local social networks.

Research identifies these gaps as areas in need of improvement. A national survey released in 2021 found that while more than 90 percent of pet owners plan to take their pets with them during a disaster, less than 16 percent had secured places where they could go. They do not have an emergency shelter. Only 46 percent had a preparedness plan in place.

Senate Bill 331 will help ensure that residents can be confident when an evacuation order comes down to leave and be able to stay with their pets.



A similar law was passed in Florida in 2020. Florida House Bill 705 requires local governments that designate emergency shelters also designate a shelter that can accommodate people with pets.

During the Hurricane Ian disaster, the ASPCA national field response team saw on the ground the benefits and impact this Florida law had. Benefits included an effective centralized incident command, improved resource-sharing across shelters and notably higher levels of preparedness and comfort among evacuees.

It is important to note that many local jurisdictions are already meeting the parameters of S.B. 331. The City of Henderson, for instance, has acquired a large animal trailer that can make any human shelter into a colocated, multiuse shelter facility where people can be with and take care of their pets themselves. The Douglas County Community and Senior Center, the most frequently used evacuation center, notes itself as being pet-friendly on its website.

Regarding other local governments, the ASPCA is determined to ensure the impact of this bill meets its intent. It has either connected with or reached out to many local government agencies to ensure this bill is not a burden but helps to prepare and put protocols in place and facility identification that will help them be ready for the next disaster.

Senate Bill 331 is a step toward ensuring Nevadans never face the impossible decision of seeking safety or staying with their pets.

I have submitted a letter of support ([Exhibit C](#)) and an explanation ([Exhibit D](#)) of S.B. 331.

REBECCA GOFF (Nevada State Director, Humane Society of the United States):  
The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and its Nevada supporters urge your support of S.B. 331.

The rate and intensity of natural disasters and extreme weather events are rapidly increasing throughout the Western region of the U.S. We often hear many of today's disasters are historic or record-breaking events leading to people and animals displaced for extended periods of time. These emergencies bring significant risk to public health and community safety.

Sharing in this risk but often overlooked are residents' pets. The HSUS deploys staff and volunteers to assist with rescue and relief efforts following a catastrophic event. While its role is to help animals in need and keep families together after a disaster, its people have seen firsthand the devastation unpreparedness brings.

In my own experience having worked at evacuation centers for the Caldor Fire and the Dixie Fire in the summer of 2021, I saw evacuees choosing to live in their cars in the parking lots of these shelters, despite the extreme heat and suffocating smoke, rather than be separated from their pets. I remember a woman, her adult daughter and their two large dogs living in a small sedan along with whatever belongings they could grab when they left. The humans took turns getting relief from the elements in the shelter while the other human stayed with the dogs in the car. It was heartbreaking to see, but this is just one example.

Too many emergency management plans neglect to consider pets. These traumatic events cause our communities enough chaos and confusion without the added stress of having a beloved companion unable to shelter with you. We have seen the impact ignoring this bond between human and pets can bring—unnecessary hardship to families who have already lost so much.

Senate Bill 331 will not only help protect residents and their pets but also first responders. Households are more likely to heed evacuation orders knowing they have a safe place to shelter that allows all their family.

The HSUS thanks Senator Scheible for her leadership on this important matter and asks the Committee to vote yes on S.B. 331.

I have submitted a letter to the Committee supporting S.B. 331 ([Exhibit E](#)).

NICK VANDER POEL (Nevada Humane Society):

The Nevada Humane Society has no-kill shelters located in Reno and Carson City and appreciates Senator Scheible and S.B. 331.

DORALEE MARTINEZ (Nevada Disability Peer Action Coalition; Nevada Council of the Blind):

This is a commonsense bill. During the peak of the pandemic, people I know who are visually impaired were trying to find shelter. They could not afford their

rent and were turned away. This bill would make it easier for disabled people, veterans and those with pets to get shelter when needed.

CHRISTINA THOMAS (Veterans Advocacy Council):

I am the Chair of the Veterans Advocacy Council. I support this bill along with veterans and those with disabilities who have support animals that may not be registered as service animals but are emotional support animals. They will have a better outcome for healing during a disaster.

As a veteran who went through evacuations during several hurricanes, it is imperative to be more aware of the needs of veterans and those who are facing disabilities and rehabilitations.

CHAIR FLORES:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 331 and go to the introduction of Bill Draft Request (BDR) 18-1089.

**BILL DRAFT REQUEST 18-1089**: Revises provisions relating to governmental administration. (Later introduced as [Senate Bill 431](#).)

SENATOR OHRENSCHALL MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 18-1089.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR FLORES:

We will open the hearing on S.B. 210.

**SENATE BILL 210**: Revises provisions governing state boards and commissions. (BDR 18-899)

SENATOR PAT SPEARMAN (Senatorial District No. 1):

I am here as the Vice Chair of the Sunset Subcommittee of the Legislative Commission for the 2021-2022 Interim to present S.B. 210. This bill revises various provisions related to boards and commissions as approved by

the Subcommittee, including but not limited to increasing the equality, equity and diversity on each board.

The Subcommittee is charged with conducting a review of all Nevada boards, commissions and similar entities created by statute, which is roughly 231 entities, and determining whether each entity should be continued, modified, consolidated with any other entity or terminated. The Subcommittee also recommends improvements to the entities to be continued, modified or consolidated and determines whether any tax exemptions, abatements or money set aside for an entity should be continued, modified or terminated.

During the 2021-2022 Interim, the Subcommittee held six meetings in which it reviewed 18 entities and received reports from several entities previously reviewed in past interims. The recommendations included in S.B. 210 address broader concerns identified during the Interim. These recommendations address the problem of member vacancies, the diverse makeup of individuals appointed to boards and commissions, reports to the Legislative Commission concerning the review of occupational licensing, applicants' criminal history and the appointment of the chair of the Subcommittee.

Section 2 of S.B. 210 declares it to be public policy of the State, except as otherwise required by law, that persons appointed by the Governor to certain public bodies must, to the extent practicable, reflect the diversity of Nevada, including without limitation the age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnic and geographic diversity of the State.

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 1 of the 32nd Special Session declared systemic racism and the structures of racial discrimination a public health crisis. The Subcommittee voted to recommend a legislative change to further promote education and outreach to encourage recruitment of Black, Indigenous and People of Color to reflect the diversity of the State's boards, commissions and similar entities.

Section 3 of the bill requires Nevada's boards, commissions and similar entities to submit to the Governor a list of persons qualified for membership within 60 days after a position appointed by the Governor on a board, commission or similar entities becomes vacant. Many entities reviewed during that Interim had not met for some time because of member vacancies. This recommendation

requires certain boards and commissions to play an active role in recruiting members to fill their ranks.

Section 4 requires the Chair of the Legislative Commission to appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Subcommittee, each representing a different House of the Legislature. *Nevada Revised Statutes* 232B.210 sets forth requirements for a quorum of the Sunset Subcommittee, provides for the composition of the Subcommittee's members and requires the voting members of the Subcommittee to elect a Chair from one House of the Legislature and Vice Chair from the other House. Authorizing the Chair of the Legislative Commission to appoint the Chair and Vice Chair will allow the Subcommittee Chair to establish a work plan for the Subcommittee before its first meeting.

Section 6 removes the requirement of certain professional and occupational licensing boards and regulatory bodies to submit a quarterly report to the Legislature concerning petitions for the review of criminal histories of potential applicants for an occupational or professional license.

In addition, section 5 requires the Subcommittee to review not less than three professional or occupational licensing boards and regulatory bodies that are required to establish a method for reviewing the criminal histories of applicants each legislative interim.

To provide some background to sections 5 and 6, A.B. No. 319 of the 80th Session was enacted to authorize a variety of professionals to petition a regulatory body to determine whether a person's criminal history disqualifies him or her from obtaining a certificate, license, permit, qualification or registration. The intent of the measure was to give those with past criminal convictions the opportunity to explore and establish a suitable career.

Among other provisions, S.B. 210 requires the Subcommittee to review certain regulatory bodies to determine whether the restrictions on an applicant's criminal history are appropriate and in accordance with NRS 232B.237. In addition, a variety of regulatory bodies are required to maintain statistics related to criminal history reviews and report these statistics on a quarterly basis to the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB).

The information requested by the Subcommittee is substantively the same as information required to be submitted on a quarterly basis. However, according

to the records held by the LCB, only a few of the regulatory bodies, such as the Southern Nevada Health District, the State Department of Agriculture, the Board of Accountancy and the Board of Medical Examiners, have submitted the reports to the Legislature since 2019.

To remove redundancies from statute and instead of being dependent on the regulatory bodies to submit this information, the Subcommittee recommended removing the requirement for these regulatory bodies to submit quarterly reports and require the Subcommittee to review not less than three regulatory bodies for restrictions on criminal histories of applicants each legislative interim. The Subcommittee is in a better position to request this information and can hold regulatory bodies accountable for not submitting the requested reports.

These recommendations are the result of the considerable work done by the Sunset Subcommittee during the 2021-2022 Interim.

SENATOR DALY:

Section 3 states that boards, commissions and similar bodies must submit a list of names of qualified persons. That is a good idea. However, the bill states "names," so what happens if there is only one name submitted? That body could choose who it wants. Perhaps it should say two or not less than three so there is a choice other than just that body's.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

The Subcommittee wanted to ensure diversity. If there is one vacancy, one or more names can be submitted. The idea is to make sure those appointed to boards and commissions represent the diversity of Nevada.

SENATOR DALY:

I understand that is the goal. But if only one name is on the list, the goal is not being met. Perhaps the bill could state not less than two on the list regardless of how many vacancies exist.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Some entities require more than one applicant whenever they are choosing. That is why it is so broad.

SENATOR DALY:

Why does section 5, subsection 3 state not less than three professional or occupational licensing boards or regulatory bodies are to be reviewed by the Subcommittee?

I served on the Sunset Subcommittee twice. It reviewed at least 12 entities.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

It is a matter of time. Getting more than three done in the allotted time is difficult. If the Subcommittee can get more done, perhaps it will do more.

SENATOR DALY:

I want to make sure I understand what is happening in section 6 of the bill. A report with the required information must be submitted before the twentieth day of January, April, July and October. Is it correct that the three items deleted do not have to be included in the report anymore?

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

That is correct.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Section 3 includes boards, commissions and similar bodies to which the Governor might make appointments. If there is a vacancy, they have up to 60 days to submit a list. How many days does the Governor have to appoint from that list? Some boards and commissions must meet at least quarterly. I am concerned about that time frame. It seems like a long way out.

Maybe that can be shortened. There were a couple of county commissioner vacancies. In one case, it took at least 5 months and in another it was about 90 days. Some boards and commissions must have those vacancies filled in a timely manner.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

The Subcommittee discussed this before it decided on the recommendations. It asked many of the boards and commissions what would work for them. Some entities have been disbanded because they have never had anyone appointed. That time frame gives the entity and anyone who has applied for an appointment an idea that it will happen this year, not five years from now.

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PATRICK DONNELLY (Center for Biological Diversity)

The Center for Biological Diversity supports S.B. 210, especially section 2, which would instruct that boards and commissions must represent the diversity of Nevada.

I have been working with various boards and commissions in State government for about six years. Many of them do not represent Nevada and Nevadans. That is because, in general, appointments are made on a political basis and politics do not necessarily reflect the diversity in the State. This is an important needed change for boards and commissions. The Center for Biological Diversity supports this bill.

PAUL CATHER (Culinary Workers Union Local 226):

The members of the Culinary Workers Union Local 226 are diverse. They come from 178 countries and speak 40 different languages. The Union would like to see the boards and commissions be representative of the diversity of the State.

ANNETTE MAGNUS (Battle Born Progress):

I will just say ditto.

STEVEN COHEN:

I support S.B. 210 contingent upon the proposed amendment ([Exhibit F](#)) I submitted.

LILITH BARAN (American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada):

The American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada supports S.B. 210.

CHAIR FLORES:

The Committee has received a letter ([Exhibit G](#)) supporting S.B. 210 from Christine Saunders on behalf of the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada.

We will close the hearing on S.B. 210 and open the hearing on S.B. 184.

**SENATE BILL 184**: Revises the Charter of the City of North Las Vegas. (BDR S-5)



SENATOR PAT SPEARMAN (Senatorial District No. 1):

I would like to start by clearing up an egregious rumor insinuating that I am doing this for personal reasons to run for one of the new council seats. Let me be clear, I have absolutely no interest in running, walking, standing, sleeping or any other activity that includes accepting a seat on the North Las Vegas City Council.

The rumor is not just false; it is a lie from the pit of hell and accomplishes nothing related to fair and diverse representation for the residents of North Las Vegas. Again, it is a lie and perhaps started by someone who wanted to divert attention away from the good that the modernization will bring to the City. The rumor has absolutely no redeeming value, and it is arguable for its asininity alone. There is absolutely no one on this planet or any other with working brain cells or neuroembryonic tissue who will believe the lie about my intentions.

A 2019 video created by the City of North Las Vegas to introduce the former mayor's state of the City address begins with "define us by our diversity, measure us by our numbers." The challenge is accepted with S.B. 184.

The bill revises the Charter of the City of North Las Vegas. Most of the provisions in the City's Charter date from 1970 when the City was originally incorporated. It included the number of members who serve on the City Council.

According to the Charter, the City is run by a council-manager form of government which combines the political leadership of elected officials with the managerial experience of an appointed city manager. The balance of influence over the direction of the City is determined by the leadership qualities of the council. For good policy outcomes, the City Council must have a wide range of ideas and experiences.

The City of North Las Vegas is the most diverse city in the State. It needs diverse voices to ensure all communities are represented and valued. By adding two members to the City Council, more voices and diverse perspectives will help build a foundation for success. We owe this modernization of the City Charter to those who came before us, current citizens and future generations.

Some will argue that this proposal should go through the Charter Committee. Assembly Bill No. 55 of the 81st Session created a Charter Committee with the hope that its members would take the opportunity to review the charter and provide recommendations to the Legislature. The bill included a provision stating, the committee "will meet at least once every 2 years." The committee has the liberty to meet more than that.

The City or the chair of the Charter Committee can call a meeting. Assembly Bill No. 55 of the 81st Session was effective on June 2, 2021, just three days following the end of the Eighty-first Session. This gave the City ample time to set up a charter committee and provide opportunities for robust discussions on issues the City is facing.

Unfortunately, the Charter Committee met only once during the Interim. Not only did the Committee fail to make any recommendations to modernize the City Council, the only measure it considered ran afoul of the intent of the Legislature and a lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

The City ran into trouble when it attempted to appoint a judge to a new municipal court instead of following the City Charter as intended by the Legislature. A *Las Vegas Review-Journal* article reported on a lawsuit filed by the ACLU which accused the City of appointing a former judge to a term that extended beyond what is allowed by the City Charter or the State's Constitution.

The Charter requires vacant appointed positions go to the voters in the first election following the appointment. In the end, the City lost the case and was forced to hold an election. This is just one example that highlights the need to expand the North Las Vegas City Council to provide more voices with varied experiences and backgrounds.

During the Eighty-first Session, I was asked to sign on to a bill that would change the Charter. At that time, I said no, absolutely not, because the State Constitution requires council members to be elected. Several of my colleagues said the same thing, but the City opted to do that anyway. There are other issues a more diverse council could have addressed differently, including a more critical review of tax abatements for large corporations to ensure development agreements contain clawback measures if certain employment and wage thresholds are not met.

A more experienced City Council would have a broader set of tools needed to scrutinize development agreements to gauge the feasibility of financing for major development projects. A Council with more diverse voices would also have an opportunity to review policies and procedures of City agencies under its review.

I have submitted documentation giving brief details about 13 lawsuits against the City of North Las Vegas between 2011 and 2022 ([Exhibit H](#)). This is just a portion of what is available. Some of the judgments required staff training as in the case of an African-American woman who was deaf. In May 2021, I called the City Manager and suggested he contact the Nevada Commission for Persons Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. When I called back, I did not get the impression that he had followed through on that. Maybe he has and if he has, I will apologize. I do not mean to impugn his integrity. A case in 2019 revealed that police officers did not wear body cameras. This is counter to the 2017 law mandating all police officers wear body cameras.

Fair representation and diverse voices are a matter of democracy. I am not sure how anyone who supports democracy would be against fair representation. The City of North Las Vegas has grown immensely over the last 53 years. The U.S. Census Bureau ranked the City of North Las Vegas fifth on the list of cities with the greatest population increase since 2020. In June 2022, the Census Bureau said the City's population increased by 9,917 people. The Bureau now estimates the City's population at over 274,000. In 1970, the City's population was roughly 36,000. On a percentage basis, the City has grown by roughly 657 percent since 1970.

In the twenty-third State of the City Address on January 29, 2019, former Mayor John Lee said, "the City has also experienced population growth, surpassing the quarter-million residents mark." He also boasted that the City has overtaken Reno as Nevada's third largest city—only Las Vegas and Henderson are larger. During the same 2019 State of the City Address, former Mayor John Lee also said we are keeping up with the trend by bringing thousands of new homes in North Las Vegas, both luxury and affordable dwellings. This is a clear demonstration that North Las Vegas City leadership was aware of the ever-increasing growth taking place in the City.

According to a 2023 article in the *World Population Review*, North Las Vegas is currently growing at a rate of 1.68 percent annually. Its population has

increased by 5.21 percent since the most recent census which recorded a population of 262,527. North Las Vegas has a population density of 2,818 people per square mile. It is not just the third largest city in Nevada, it is also the eighty-second largest city in the U.S.

Since its inception in 1970, the ratio of citizens to council members has grown from approximately 9,000 per member to over 68,000 per member. Additionally, based on current growth rates, the City's population will surpass 300,000 in the next few years, further exacerbating the representation issue.

As the City grows, it attracts people with a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, making it the most diverse city in the State. Forty-two percent of the population is Hispanic or Latino, 22 percent is African American, and 6.7 percent identify as Asian.

While the City has done relatively well economically in recent years, it has also failed to modernize in many ways. For instance, similarly sized cities have expanded their city councils for better representation of their constituents. The City of Reno with a similar population has five ward-based council members, one at-large member and a mayor. The City of North Las Vegas has the same number of council members it had in 1970 when 36,000 people were living in the City.

By adding two council members as S.B. 184 proposes, the City Council's representation would be strengthened by proportionally reducing each council member's constituency. Smaller wards will improve transparency, encourage accountability and increase in-person interactions between constituents and their representatives. By modernizing the Council, diversity of ideas and leadership will improve. The City should represent the diversity of its citizens.

Senate Bill 184 will require the City to conduct a diversity study, so the council and public have a better understanding of the racial and ethnic makeup of employees of the City.

Senate Bill 184 would require the City to establish a supplier diversity program to ensure that businesses located in the City owned by women, veterans and other members of minority groups are made aware of the City's advertisements for bids or requests for proposal.

By implementing these provisions, we can determine if the City needs to widen the recruitment net within the City to attract more minority employees and suppliers. Administrators of the City of North Las Vegas are some of the highest paid public employees in the State. Some of them do not live in Nevada, let alone the City. In my view, this arrangement shows that the current administration may be out of touch with taxpayers and citizens.

A story recently in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* noted the assistant to the chief of staff lives in South Carolina," and that she's one of multiple city consultants who work across the U.S." The City is sending its citizens' hard-earned money and taxes out of state. This money should stay within the City to benefit its economy.

To correct this problem, S.B. 184 will require the city manager and the chief financial officer to be residents of North Las Vegas. These individuals must become residents of the City not later than six months after their appointments and remain residents of the City for the duration of their employment. A conceptual amendment will remove all other senior staff, including the City's lead attorney from this requirement.

I have checked with some of the larger cities in Nevada. The city managers of Henderson, Sparks and Reno live in the cities they manage. A council person said if they do not live in the city, they cannot gauge the pulse of the citizens for whom they make laws or ordinances.

Senate Bill 184 makes three changes that will improve transparency, oversight and operational efficiency within the City. First, the bill clarifies that the city attorney or an attorney hired to assume some of the duties of the city attorney may not opine or provide legal advice to the mayor or a council member on any issue or matter that does not directly relate to his or her official duties.

Second, the bill requires the city manager to present a report to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections during the Legislative Interim regarding redistricting wards from four to six.

Finally, S.B. 184 requires the city manager to submit a report to the Senate Standing Committee on Government Affairs and the Assembly Standing Committee on Government Affairs on vacant or leased space in the North Las Vegas City Hall.

Sections 1 and 2 of the bill increase the number of wards in the City of North Las Vegas from four to six and provide that the City Council consists of six council members and a mayor.

Section 3 requires the City Manager to prepare an annual diversity study to determine the number of city employees who are in managerial positions and are women, veterans or members of minority groups and to establish a supplier diversity program.

Section 4 requires the City Manager to become a resident of the City not later than six months after the date of his or her appointment and remain a resident of the City while in office. The City Charter has that requirement, but the City Council can grant a variance. Residents pay the salary and should know that the City Manager is in the community and shares the community's highs and lows.

Similarly, section 5 requires an appointed administrative officer who is the chief financial officer, an assistant city manager or assistant chief of staff become a resident not later than six months after the appointment date and remain a resident while in office. These requirements are going to be stricken by amendment. Unfortunately, I do not have an amendment here, but it is coming. In essence, the conceptual amendment provides that the city manager, the city financial officer and the lead city attorney must become residents of the city.

Sections 7 and 11 provide that city council members who represent the fifth and sixth wards will be elected for the first time in the general municipal election held in November 2024. Wards will not be considered vacant before that election.

Section 8 requires that seats for City Council members be designated one through six. Section 9 requires the City Manager to submit a report to the Senate Standing Committee on Government Affairs and the Assembly Standing Committee on Government Affairs on vacant or leased space in the North Las Vegas City Hall.

Section 10 requires that between July 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023, the City Council establish the boundaries of the new fifth and sixth wards and change the boundaries of the existing four wards so that the boundaries of all six wards are contiguous and as equal in population as possible.

Section 12 requires the City Manager to present a report to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections during the Legislative Interim regarding the redistricting of the wards.

Finally, section 13 provides that if the City Manager or chief financial officer is not a resident of the City on July 1, 2023, he or she must become resident of the City no later than December 31, 2023, and remain a resident while in office.

Many people will say this should have gone through the Charter Committee. I agree. The Charter Committee was formed in 2021. The City had ample time to convene the Committee. Based on statements of not only the former mayor but several different people in elected offices, everyone knew the city was growing rapidly. If for some reason, someone was not aware, the 2020 Census should erase all doubt.

Some will say, we cannot do this in North Las Vegas because it means it may set a precedent for other cities. This is about the City of North Las Vegas modernizing the City Council. If other cities take advantage of their charter committees when they see their populations growing and their citizens have needs, they should convene their charter committees to address those needs.

LEILANI HINYARD:

I am a resident of the City of North Las Vegas. I would like to comment on the city management residency portion of this bill.

This section ensures that policies and programs implemented by city management are in the best interest of North Las Vegas residents. The City Manager does not live in North Las Vegas. He is not using the City's services or programs.

As the Chair of the North Las Vegas Democratic Club, I have had conversations with members and residents of North Las Vegas regarding this bill. They were appalled that the City's chief executive does not live in the city. They had no idea.

I analyzed what the City is paying its chief executive. I looked at salaries from 2021. Las Vegas was paying its City Manager, who lives in Las Vegas, a base pay plus other pay of \$288,600 rounded up to the nearest \$100. The compensation package which includes benefits is \$190,000 less than the

North Las Vegas City Manager. Reno was paying its City Manager, who lives in Reno, \$253,900. The total compensation package including benefits is \$214,000 less than the North Las Vegas City Manager. The North Las Vegas City Manager is paid \$397,000 including base pay and other pay. With benefits, the total compensation package is an astounding \$563,000 of taxpayers' money. North Las Vegas has a median household salary of only \$61,000. The City Manager of North Las Vegas does not live in the City. The President of the United States only earns \$400,000 and lives in the Nation's capital.

I ask you to consider this question. Would the City Manager think differently about the City's programs and services if he lived in North Las Vegas, if he was invested in the City and had skin in the game? I would say that the answer to that question is a resounding, yes. I support this bill.

SOPHIA ROMERO:

I am a resident of the City of North Las Vegas and the Vice Chair of the Charter Committee.

In 2021, the City of North Las Vegas attempted to change the Charter to appoint a judge for a longer term. That did not pass, but the City did it anyway and appointed Judge Chris Lee for a period of six years without an election. The ACLU of Nevada sued the City of North Las Vegas and was successful in that suit. Judge Lee had to run for reelection that same year.

On June 27, 2020, the North Las Vegas Charter Committee was convened. The only agenda item for that meeting was to discuss possible charter changes, staff-recommended changes and affirm recommendations to the City Council regarding revisions of the North Las Vegas City Charter. That is a broad and vague agenda item.

After the meeting was convened, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Charter Committee were elected. After a short presentation by the City, the only agenda item allowed for discussion was the creation of hearing masters who would be appointed rather than elected. They had no term limits and could do anything a municipal court judge could. If any municipal court judge decided his or her caseload was too big, he or she could transfer cases to a hearing master. The hearing master would then take on the role of a municipal court judge.



The Charter Committee unanimously voted that down because the City was attempting to put in a new judge without an election process with limitless terms. Someone could be appointed for life as a hearing master in the City of North Las Vegas. The Committee unanimously voted against the provisions and instead, advised the City that since the Charter already allows for it, the municipal court should be expanded to a third department.

Some of my colleagues on the Committee asked to discuss other items, other points of business affecting the City of North Las Vegas. They were told no because of the Open Meeting Law, and those items were not posted on the agenda. However, additions would have fallen under that broad agenda item. Any type of new business was turned down; only the presentation by the City was allowed.

After the Committee voted against the City's proposal and adjourned, several members of the Committee asked to call a new meeting. Unfortunately, only the City Council or the Committee Chair can convene a meeting. That has not happened. Members of the Committee have attempted to meet again to discuss other measures, and that has been denied. There was no opportunity for this bill to come before the Committee because it was never allowed to convene.

REVEREND ROBERT BUSH (President, National Action Network):

I represent a large part of the community that grew up in North Las Vegas and needs S.B. 184 to become law. I also graduated Rancho High School. My family moved to North Las Vegas in 1970. In fact, my 85-year-old mother still lives in the same house across the street from Lincoln Elementary School.

As a civil rights organization that fights for the community, the National Action Network received numerous calls from citizens of North Las Vegas about situations that could have been avoided had the City Council listened to its constituents.

In fact, residents, which include friends, my mother, brother and cousins, have all had their voices silenced and their quality-of-life change because of an inept City Council that does not listen to or have time to listen to its residents. It is time to modernize the City Council of North Las Vegas and make the City more manageable for its Council members.

The 2020 U.S. Census says there are 274,000 people in North Las Vegas. It is one of the fastest-growing cities in Nevada and the fifth fastest-growing city in the U.S. Having worked with the census marketing team in Washington, D.C., I know our biggest challenge was the vast number of people who would not submit their information for fear of how the government would use it. In fact, the U.S. Census Bureau says 18 million people have not submitted their information. With over 63 percent of North Las Vegas being Black, Indigenous and People of Color, it is safe to say there were omissions in the census results. There are more than 274,000 people in North Las Vegas; it is probably closer to 300,000.

The City Council size and the outdated districts each covering 101.4 square miles according to the census, is a key reason why the government of North Las Vegas has gone tone-deaf and does not function at maximum capacity. It is not possible for four people to represent that large area and that many people and still provide the localized attention residents deserve from their City Council members.

A small city council hurts democracy, community, cohesion and fair representation of the community that makes up underrepresented groups. It hinders the ability of government to effectively respond to people's needs and concerns. Cities that are the same size or smaller than North Las Vegas know the importance of having more voices at the table. Little Rock, Arkansas, has 60,000 less people than North Las Vegas but has 10 city council members. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the same size as North Las Vegas, has nine council members. Buffalo, New York, has only 10,000 more people than North Las Vegas and has 9 council members. Reno, a smaller city, has seven council members including the mayor. Richmond, Virginia, has 40,000 less people than North Las Vegas and has 9 council members. Salt Lake City, Utah, has 60,000 less people than North Las Vegas and has 7 council members. The capital of Connecticut, Hartford, has only 120,000 people and has 9 city council members.

The question is why the North Las Vegas City Council does not see the value of proper representation and did not create this bill themselves. The answer is it does not want to. It will never do this itself.

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I understand that every municipality gets two legislative bill draft requests. This City Council, in the opinion of most, wasted one of its BDRs on a Juneteenth bill questioned because it is already federal law signed by President Biden.

The question is why my 85-year-old mother or any citizen of North Las Vegas is paying taxes for a law firm hired by the City to fight S.B. 184. The City is okay with the status quo and mediocrity. It is okay with four people getting in a corner and agreeing to policies that help them look good but do not help the City become better.

The citizens of North Las Vegas need more representation, not less. My mentor, Robert W. Bogle, who is the president of the largest Black newspaper in the Country, has always said to me nobody has cornered the market on brains or ideas. More city council members mean more brains, more ideas, better debates, more inclusive positions, stronger decisions, better communications with constituents and more control by the residents of North Las Vegas of their local affairs. It will produce a better quality of life for the residents. A better quality of life means a larger, stronger, more innovative city council which means a stronger North Las Vegas, a stronger Las Vegas metroplex and a stronger Nevada.

We need this to pass and Legislators to support S.B. 184.

TYRONE JONES:

I am a veteran and a long-time resident of the City of North Las Vegas. I would like to ditto what has been previously said. I support S.B. 184 for several reasons.

It was brought to my attention that members of the North Las Vegas City Administration made claims in the State Legislature that the North Las Vegas Charter Committee had come to some sort of opinion or conclusion regarding S.B. 184. I am a member of that Charter Committee. I am appalled that anyone from the North Las Vegas City Administration or the City Council would make such a claim. I emailed a detailed summary of what I learned to the Committee.

Under the Charter and according to law, the Charter Committee would have been restricted from meeting under the Open Meeting Law. For anyone to have suggested to members of the State Legislature that the North Las Vegas Charter Committee had come to some opinion or conclusion is false. I do not know if

anyone has talked to the City of North Las Vegas Administration or the City Council with respect to that.

I am an old-school attorney. I have read this bill several times. I asked myself what would be detrimental to the citizens of North Las Vegas if the City Council was expanded from four to six seats or from four to six wards? I could not find a detriment. Furthering diversity of thought, voice, participation, opportunity, governance and fostering economic diversity is not a detriment. That is a plus.

As a North Las Vegas City Charter Committee member, I took an oath to do what was right for the citizens of North Las Vegas, not for myself and not for any group. The City Council and members of the executive administration of North Las Vegas took that same oath to do what is in the best interest of the citizens of North Las Vegas.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

I have submitted 13 pages of lawsuits, [Exhibit H](#), that the City of North Las Vegas has been engaged with. Those not pending total \$1,588,229.45 so far.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

I just need to get a little basic background. There are four city council members. Does the mayor serve as the fifth member of the council?

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Yes, according to the City Charter, there is no distinction between the mayor and the Council members.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

How many people sit on the Charter Committee?

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Some are appointed by the City Council, and some are appointed by the Legislature.

Ms. ROMERO:

There are 13 members on the Charter Committee.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

I am a product of local government, and I am concerned about the Legislature intervening with a city's charter committee. If it is good for North Las Vegas, it is probably good for Reno and Sparks and other communities. Legislation is applied across the board to all charter cities. I get concerned when the Legislature talks about moving in and telling a charter committee that it will be going to wards. The bottom line is that it is up to the constituents. They should be changing the mayor and the city council people in those communities if they want to change. That is how I look at it because I believe in local government and democracy.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

That should have happened. The bill this Legislature passed in 2021 says the Charter Committee must meet at least every two years. It does not say the Committee cannot meet more than once.

Charter Committee members testified that this issue is not new. Someone brought this issue to me in 2020 after the census and asked if I would carry the bill to expand the City Council. The City Council has not been updated since 1970—53 years. A provision in State law that saves citizens is that Nevada is a Dillon's Rule state. When a city does not do what it is supposed to, the Legislature has an obligation to step in.

The City said it was growing, but no one did anything to expand the City Council so there would be more representation. That is all this bill does.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

In 2015, I brought home rule. The closer you can get to the people, the better you are.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Two or more additional council members would be close to the people.

SENATOR DALY:

I support the charter concept. We want cities to review their charters more than once every 20 years. There is an ongoing process for reviewing and updating a city charter. However, in the end, it must come back to the Legislature.

A charter committee can make a recommendation and a Legislator will bring the bill forward. The city can use one of its bill draft requests to make a charter change with or without the blessing of the charter committee, although the Legislature would like to see that. This is not the first time Legislators have brought a bill to change or update a charter.

The North Las Vegas Charter Committee is trying to find its footing. Maybe it will do better next Interim before it comes back with some recommendations.

Page 8, subsection 8 of section 3.050 of the Charter of the City of North Las Vegas states the city attorney cannot opine or provide legal advice not related to city business. Is there a history of people asking for advice on such things as divorces or on buying a piece of property that is not city business?

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Yes, there is. I asked if the person would be willing to testify. The person did not want to encounter retribution.

SENATOR DALY:

Are you saying instances of someone asking advice from the city attorney occurred that were not related to city business?

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

There is a document on City letterhead. I will leave it at that.

SENATOR DALY:

The language on page 8, subsection 8 would take care of that.

Section 10 says, "as nearly as equal in population as possible," when redrawing districts. I suggest allowing a slight deviation—perhaps a 3 percent or even a 1 percent deviation. Then if the deviation gets over 5 percent, the districts could be realigned.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

It has been 53 years since the charter has been modernized. North Las Vegas has more than 274,000 people. The City continues to grow, and it only has four City Council members. The citizens are asking for fair representation.

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SENATOR DALY:

I understand that, but when districts are redrawn, you might want to allow a percentage of deviation.

If this bill moves forward and the City expands to seven districts, the Charter Committee should be updated. There should be one appointment to the Committee from each of the seven districts.

TIMOTHY C. SMITH:

I live in North Las Vegas adjacent to the historic westside. I served as a city council member and justice of the peace in a municipality of 40,000 people in Massachusetts. I moved to Nevada in 2018, and I support S.B. 184.

I am the charter commissioner who asked for discussion of more items. I did not get that opportunity. The agenda for the Charter Committee meeting I attended after appointed to the Committee by Ward 2 City Council member Pamela Goynes-Brown contained only one item mentioned earlier by Ms. Romero.

There should have been further discussion on the expansion of the Charter. The Committee was not given the opportunity to continue its work. Other Committee members and I tried to meet again, but we were strongly reminded of the Open Meeting Law. The City Council took the slow approach to allow the Committee to meet again to continue other items, and the clock ran out. There are other serious items that concern this community. This community has grown stronger and is expanding.

I have submitted written testimony ([Exhibit I](#)) supporting S.B. 184.

REVEREND LEONARD B. JACKSON (Executive Director, Faith Organizing Alliance):

I support S.B. 184 with a few exceptions. If elected officials are to represent the community, they must be a part of the community. A community is only as strong as the number of times the dollar turns over. If people are elected and have key positions, how are they to represent the community? "Get paid grand theft dough" and spend it outside of the community they represent? This is not possible, not feasible and should not happen.

Make the changes recommended, make the adjustment, level the playing field, and we all will be satisfied.

SHAWN NAVARRO:

I support S.B. 184. It is about more than how local government in North Las Vegas is run. It is about ensuring basic civil rights for the people of North Las Vegas. Too often when we think about civil rights, we think about the fight that occurred in the past. However, the discriminatory practices so many fought against never truly went away. They still exist in subtler and hidden ways.

Four council members for a city the size of North Las Vegas is not enough to manage a growing city. It puts the City's resources in the hands of a few and shuts out new voices. This is denying the people of North Las Vegas true representation. It is a subtle form of discrimination against a majority population of Black and Brown people.

As an organizer, I talk to many different people in North Las Vegas. There is a growing feeling that government does not work for them. What is the point of voting or getting involved because their voices are not being heard?

This bill contains commonsense practices that people will support. It is hard to be against it. When auditing people sitting in positions of leadership in city government, it is important that city government looks like the people it represents. When auditing vendors, it is important to know where the citizens' hard-earned tax dollars are going. That money should go to vendors that benefit the community. I urge you to pass this bill.

BRIAN HARRIS (Battle Born Progress):  
Battle Born Progress supports S.B. 184.

The 2020 census showed that nationally, Nevada is the third most diverse state, fourth with the most Asian-American and Pacific-Islander residents, and fifth with the most Latino residents. With so much diversity in the State, it is important to increase the number of council members in the North Las Vegas City Council. Any time we get the chance to expand our democracy, we put our best foot forward.

DAKOTA HOSKINS (Service Employees International Union Local 1107):  
The Service Employees International Union supports S.B. 184 because the City of North Las Vegas is long overdue for additional representation to support the citizens' needs. By expanding the number of wards from four to six and with



the residency requirements laid out in the bill, constituents will be better served and advocated for.

EMILY WOODALL (Dream.org):

Dream.org supports S.B. 184 specifically for the provisions outlined in section 3. Dream.org supports policies that allow new opportunities for overlooked communities.

MS. THOMAS:

I am a resident of North Las Vegas, an air force veteran, and I support S.B. 184.

About eight out of ten cities of similar size to North Las Vegas have more than five council members. I echo what was heard through all the different testimonies. North Las Vegas is once again an outlier. It is no longer an underdog due to the growth it has shown. It does not need to have this perception as a below-average City with constituents whose voices are not heard. This does not have to be the case.

I also want to dispel the myths that this has anything to do with the election of our first Black mayor. This is about the constituents. As a minority, disabled female veteran represented here, who has businesses and chairs nonprofit organizations here, I must implore that we continue to have a diverse view on the needs we have seen within the troubling gaps in care.

This bill will provide the mayor with diverse options, opinions and information that will better allow her to lead North Las Vegas.

Some will say we should postpone this, but we cannot postpone this any longer. You have heard from different Charter Committee members that this should have been done two years ago after the last census. But for some reason it was not. We give grace for that. Now is the time. The City is growing, and it needs a council that matches the greatness and diversity of the community. We cannot keep kicking the can down the road when the obvious solutions are available with leaders who are here to present that to you.

The City needs more council members to match the diversity and give residents greater representation. This is our constitutional right.

WILSON CRESPO:

I am a resident of North Las Vegas and have lived in Nevada since 1986. I lived in North Las Vegas from 1992 until 2020, which was most of my police career. I am an U.S. Air Force veteran and honorably served the citizens of North Las Vegas with the North Las Vegas Police Department for 25 years, retiring with the rank of lieutenant. I am of Black-Latino descent and have served as president and treasurer of the North Las Vegas Police Supervisors Association. I support S.B. 184.

The addition of two more council wards will enhance the quality of representation for the citizens of North Las Vegas. Diversity is good and long overdue. Elected officials are required to live in the city. Why is that? It is because when they reside within the city they provide a service to, they have a better understanding of what people want and need. Requiring the city manager to live in the city is an easy no-brainer. There is always pushback on why they can do the job without living in the city. This argument holds no water. In theory, it sounds good; but ask yourself, why are you, as elected officials, required to live within the district you represent? It is because this allows you to have your finger on the pulse of your district. It is more important for the city manager to live in the city than the elected officials because he manages the day-to-day operations of the city.

Diversity is good and long overdue in the City of North Las Vegas. The diversity study should also include how workers' comp benefits are being approved and distributed among all races and genders. Remember, racism is not only committed by individuals, but it is also committed systemically. The token appointment of minorities and women in limited administrative positions is a smokescreen used to hide the disparities minorities and women face daily in the City of North Las Vegas.

YESENIA MOYA:

I support S.B. 184. A vote for this is a vote for the voice of the people. Please expand the City Council. The people need it.

LISA MAYO:

I support S.B. 184. I have managed several elections in North Las Vegas and worked with neighbors on many issues they faced in their neighborhoods over the years. The residents do not feel they have a voice. Adding two seats to the North Las Vegas City Council will allow forgotten neighborhoods to be

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represented and have a voice in the decisions made that impact the quality of life, their neighborhood safety and their business development.

The challenges and stresses that families face today should not take a backseat to protecting power in North Las Vegas. Please vote yes on S.B. 184.

MARLA TURNER:

I am a native Nevadan and a resident of North Las Vegas. I support S.B. 184 for all the reasons already stated. I submitted a letter ([Exhibit J](#)) supporting S.B. 184.

DINA VELASCO SMITH:

I am a retired U.S. Air Force noncommissioned officer and a resident of North Las Vegas. I support S.B. 184.

If passed, this bill will potentially add diversity of people as well as diversity of opinion to the North Vegas City Council. Passing this legislation will have an immediate effect. There will be greater opportunity for veterans, Latinos, African Americans and Asian American Pacific Islanders with the North Las Vegas City Council.

I am aware that the North Las Vegas City Council does not want this bill to pass. By passage of this legislation, the Council will not use citizens as an excuse to cut back on city services to those who are in most need, especially those with lower income and veterans.

This is common sense. North Las Vegas has grown significantly since I was initially assigned here. There were five city council members back then. The City needs additional City Council members now. This is just part of growth.

I made North Las Vegas my home because I believed it would do the right thing. I believe our Legislators will do the right thing. I urge you to please vote in support of S.B. 184.

LEONARD CARDINALE:

I am a resident of Henderson and have lived in Nevada since 1989. I support S.B. 184.

I am a retired police lieutenant and spent nearly 25 years with the North Las Vegas Police Department. I spent several years as a union president for sergeants and lieutenants and was one of the original founders of the union. I have experience as a nonpaid and a paid lobbyist.

Senator Pat Spearman's presentation was outstanding, and the other presenters also did an outstanding job. There were many things I wanted to say, but they pretty much covered them, and I agree with what they said.

I would add one thing. Part of the problem with the mayor and city council is that a few years ago, everyone's terms were extended. A councilman and the mayor are serving terms that extend beyond 4, 8 or 12 years. It was an issue when Pamela Goynes-Brown ran for mayor because people were not sure if her term had expired and if she was able to run for mayor. I am not sure if voters knew her term could expire. Everyone is waiting for an opinion on that. In about three months, her term expires. Are they going to appoint another mayor at that time like they appointed the person who took Pamela Goynes-Brown's spot on the council? If that person must leave the City Council, will they appoint another council member to the mayor's spot and then appoint someone else to the other seat?

The point is, this Council has been around for a long time. The members serve long terms. I agree with Senator Spearman. It is time for fresh eyes, fresh ideas, for diversity, for people who have different experiences and lived in different parts of the United States who have come here or lived here their whole lives.

JOVAN JACKSON:

I am a resident of North Las Vegas. I support S.B. 184 which will allow more voices to be heard. Senator Pat Spearman represents the citizens of North Las Vegas. When something comes from her, it comes from the people.

Diversity is a matter of equality. A city manager who lives in North Las Vegas is a matter of equity. Communities and citizens beg for rent control, but because of the lack of representation, rent control was shot down by the City Council. Opposing this bill will be no different than the North Las Vegas City Council members denying rent control in time of need.

Ms. BARAN:

The ACLU supports S.B. 184.

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EMILY PERSAUD-ZAMORA (Executive Director, Silver State Voices):

I have submitted a letter ([Exhibit K](#)) to the Committee in support of S.B. 184.

QUENTIN SAVVOIR (President, NAACP, Las Vegas Branch):

The NAACP is grateful to Senator Spearman for bringing forth this community-driven legislation and supports S.B. 184.

I echo the sentiments of my friends and colleagues who have already spoken in support of this bill. However, I want to discuss it from another perspective. In this moment when we are facing so much political turmoil, an onslaught of misinformation, disinformation and mistrust in our public system, legislation like this fortifies our democracy. It will make our democracy more inclusive and representative of the communities that city council persons are supposed to represent.

I often speak with people who feel they should not be engaged in the process because no matter what, it will not get better. Senate Bill 184 is the first step to ensure things get better for North Las Vegas. This Committee should consider passing this bill. Not only will it have deep implications for members of the NAACP in North Las Vegas, but it goes a long way in sending a signal to the rest of the world about how democracy in the United States of America is working.

LEO BENAVIDES (City of North Las Vegas):

I have submitted written testimony ([Exhibit L](#)) in opposition to S.B. 184.

SENATOR DALY:

Why do you think it is unreasonable that top officials appointed by the City Council should reside in the City? That is not unreasonable. Why is that antidiversity?

MR. BENAVIDES:

The concern is about successful efforts to diversify the City's workforce if it could not always achieve what it requires and if it forces a current employee, once promoted, or a local candidate to relocate. Strict residency requirements have been shown to negatively impact efforts to achieve the broadest base of qualified candidates from which to fill various management positions. It is important to note that the residency requirements of this bill would directly

impact three women—including women who are members of ethnic and minority groups.

SENATOR DALY:

I have experience in northern Nevada. The City of Reno has made nationwide searches for city managers, school district superintendents and others. Everyone who applied for a job did it with the expectation of the need to move to Nevada and live in the City. So, I do not agree with you.

PAMELA GOYNES-BROWN (Mayor, City of North Las Vegas):

I have submitted written testimony ([Exhibit M](#)) opposing S.B. 184.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Insinuations imply that you have not held City Council meetings. Have all four of the City Council members been elected in the last two or four years?

MAYOR GOYNES-BROWN:

Yes, they have.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

I know you were elected last fall. There were allegations that regular elections have not been held, but that is not true.

MAYOR GOYNES-BROWN:

That is not true.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Why has the Charter Committee not been meeting and has met only once? That is my concern. The Charter Committee should be making the decision whether the City needs four or six council members.

MAYOR GOYNES-BROWN:

I agree that the Charter Committee must make those recommendations. It has met once as a newly formed committee. It is a learning process.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Are you saying this is a process in motion?

MAYOR GOYNES-BROWN:

It is a process that is in motion. The Charter Committee can choose to meet, or it can request to have the required once-every-two-year meeting or request more meetings from the City Council.

STEPHEN WOOD (Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities):

The Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities opposes S.B. 184.

The Legislature has prescribed how amendments to a city charter should come about. The process that exists in North Las Vegas and many other cities in the State is a bottom-up approach. Charter committees are made up of residents appointed by city councils and State Legislators. Committees consider and recommend charter changes to their city councils and/or the Legislature.

This bill undermines that process. The North Las Vegas City Charter Committee did not have an opportunity to review and consider these recommended changes in an open meeting in which residents of the City could express their desires before changes were sent to the Legislature. The City Council never had a chance to review these amendments to the Charter.

The League is concerned about the precedence this bill sets by circumventing the charter review process. A letter ([Exhibit N](#)) expressing a similar concern was signed by 18 of Nevada's mayors and submitted to the Committee.

The League urges the Committee to also consider the process that allows residents and city officials to recommend changes to the way their communities are governed.

WARREN HARDY (City of Las Vegas; City of Reno; City of Sparks; City of North Las Vegas; City of Henderson):

Issues regarding charter changes are best resolved at the level of government closest to the people. Senator Daly asked an excellent question about whether this City Manager should reside in the city. That is a question the residents of the City of North Las Vegas should take up. That is a question for a charter committee to consider, fully vet and make on behalf of its residents and then make a recommendation to the city council.

I grew up in North Las Vegas. North Las Vegas is my home. My father was on the North Las Vegas City Council for many years. I love that community. I am

grateful it has started a Charter Committee. The Committee should have an opportunity to do its work and come back with solid recommendations on behalf of the community.

The Cities of Las Vegas, Reno, Sparks, North Las Vegas and Henderson oppose this bill based on the precedent it would set for charters throughout the State.

PAUL MORADKHAN (Vegas Chamber):

The Vegas Chamber is the Voice of Business in North Las Vegas and is proud to represent its business members in that community. The model of the North Las Vegas City Council is fair, transparent and efficient and serves the needs of its residents and constituents.

The Chamber opposes section 1 of the bill. A larger city council will not automatically address policy concerns. Many times, larger councils can be cliquish and dysfunctional. The City of North Las Vegas has done an excellent job managing the City over the last eight years. The City has turned around since the Great Recession and become a premier community.

The City Council composition reflects a strong commitment to its constituents and in the engagement it has as it meets week after week. If the City Council wishes to expand, it should come from the Council or the Charter Committee. That is the proper process.

Regarding section 5 of the bill, the residence requirements are typically addressed in local ordinance and not in the charter. The Chamber is concerned this will create precedence for other charters.

The Chamber is opposed to page 8, subsection 8 regarding the City Attorney giving legal guidance to the City Council and Mayor. The Chamber understands the intent of the bill. The Chamber has no issue with section 3 of the bill. Diversity of components are important.

The Chamber's concerns relate to sections 1 and 5 of the bill.

FERNANDO ROMERO (President, Hispanics in Politics):

I am a 57-year resident of southern Nevada. In 1997, the City Council of Las Vegas voted to consider adding two members to its City Council. I am one of four individuals who was appointed by then-Mayor Jan Jones to conduct



a study. The study was presented to the City Council. The City Council voted and Wards 5 and 6 were created.

I bring that up because, to my knowledge, the City Council of North Las Vegas was presented with the idea for two extra wards. I am not opposed to the two wards. I am opposed to the way it was approached. The City Council was not given the respect to do the job that should be done.

We must take into consideration wrongful termination, severance pay and discrimination in all its aspects. For the logical reasons I have mentioned, I am opposed to S.B. 184.

RAEANN PETERSON:

I have lived in North Las Vegas since 1960 and have spent those 63 years living in Ward 1. I have been involved in many aspects of government and residential improvement in Ward 1.

I oppose S.B. 184 because it is an unfunded mandate that will have a negative financial impact upon the City of North Las Vegas. I am also opposed to it because the State did not work with local leadership in devising this bill.

The State should run State government, the county should run county government, and the city should run city government.

It is interesting that the City of Henderson has a larger population than North Las Vegas, has a mayor and four city council members, all elected at large. The State is not breathing down its neck to expand its level of representation on the city council. However, the City of North Las Vegas seems to be singled out to force it to have more people on the City Council.

I am also troubled about other things happening. The State is changing how we choose to govern and how our elected leaders choose to lead and govern in North Las Vegas. If the law needs to be changed, then let us work through North Las Vegas to change things but not have the State tell us how to run our own house.

ANA WOOD (Las Vegas Asian Chamber of Commerce):

The Las Vegas Asian Chamber of Commerce opposes S.B. 184.

Paying to redistrict again and expand the City Council will cost the taxpayers millions of dollars that are supposed to pay for park improvements, resource centers and public safety which the residents have asked for.

The Mayor of North Las Vegas and the diverse City Council work hard on behalf of its constituents and for the continued growth of small businesses. North Las Vegas continues to thrive and attract new Asian businesses which will also further the economic development of the State.

DIANA RAMIREZ (President, The People of the Community):

I am a resident of downtown North Las Vegas, a minority woman and a community leader representing minority groups who cannot speak for themselves. We are heard and our ideas are accepted. Many positive changes have come from that. Do not let anyone tell you that the City of North Las Vegas does not listen to its residents.

I have been supported in grassroots projects such as neighborhood cleanups. I was given ten dumpsters, no excuses and all the support needed for these grassroots projects. No other city in southern Nevada does that. Other cities control everything and do not allow grassroots events to be resident-led.

My council person responds right away and helps with issues in the community. If residents are not being heard, it is because they are not speaking up. An elderly neighbor spoke up in a City Council meeting and was helped right away. If residents do not speak up, how will our leaders know of issues directly affecting them. City Council individuals are elected by the people, not handpicked. How else do you control who sits on the City Council?

By the way, not many people run for these seats. There is not much of a selection. We vote for who will be the best representative. The City has its first female Black mayor and a female Black chief of police. That is just a piece of it. How is that not diverse?

I oppose S.B. 184. This bill should be tabled so more residents can have input.

KRISTINA KLEIST (Latin Chamber of Commerce, Nevada):

In the interest of time, I echo many of the comments already put on the record.

MICHELLE ROMERO (Mayor, City of Henderson):

I join my fellow mayors in opposition to S.B. 184 because this legislation takes away the ability for residents of North Las Vegas to fully participate in a decision that will have long-lasting consequences for their community.

A change of this magnitude should not be forced upon North Las Vegas but should come through the charter review process. This is not the case with S.B. 184. As the mayor of a charter city, I understand how important it is to involve the public in discussions about changing a city charter, especially when it comes to questions about representation on the city council.

I urge this Committee to reject the effort being made to short circuit the charter review process and all it offers by way of public input. Reject S.B. 184 so the residents of North Las Vegas, joined by their Mayor and City Council, will ultimately decide whether to seek the charter change this bill would require. This is the pathway that respects the role of the community and honors the tradition of local decision-making in matters of such great importance.

BRYAN WACHTER (Retail Association of Nevada):

In the interest of time, I echo the comments of the Vegas Chamber.

The Retail Association of Nevada is opposed to the addition of two new wards. However, diversity and residents' needs are worth talking about.

DAVID DAMORE, PH.D. (Interim Executive Director, The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West; Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, University of Nevada, Las Vegas):

I oppose S.B. 184. The deadline created by the bill will result in the creation of ward maps using data that may not reflect the population and demographic shifts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, redistricting North Las Vegas City Council wards using 2020 census data could have a negative impact on the composition of existing wards that historically elected diverse representatives and make it difficult to create new wards and ensure diversity.

As with any census data, the passage of time creates issues of reliability and validity. This is why redistricting and reapportionment happened immediately following the release of data from the decennial U.S. Census. This principle was recognized by the Legislature when the pandemic delayed the release of the

2020 census data and prevented it from redistricting during the first biennial session following the census. Instead of moving the process to the next regular session, the 33rd Special Session was convened on November 12, 2021, as the LCB stated, "to ensure equal representation for voters as district population shifts over time."

Even the American Community Survey (ACS) data, traditionally used to augment and inform census data for drawing electoral districts, is unreliable. The Census Bureau questioned the validity of that data quality, resulting in the Bureau taking the extraordinary step of not releasing the standard ACS data products and one-year updates because these data "may not meet all our quality standards."

COVID-19 has also had a tremendous impact on interstate population migration. Using migratory data from United Van Lines, the Federal Reserve concluded the largest increase in outbound population shares during the pandemic compared to before the pandemic were in Washington and Nevada. The population displacement created by the pandemic raises additional concerns.

Generally, granular redistricting to protect the voting interest of minority communities is challenging in southern Nevada. Based upon the dissimilarity index, southern Nevada is one of the most racially and ethnically integrated metropolitan regions in the Country.

JORDAN ANDERSON:

I am a small business owner and longtime resident of North Las Vegas. Senate Bill 184 will not help the City. The City does not need to increase its local government which will cost millions. Local government must continue investing in services for its residents and businesses.

Diversity enforcement is unnecessary in North Las Vegas because citizens, business owners and government officials are already diverse. This action could be more divisive than inclusive and will cost taxpayers more.

The restriction on government employees, depending upon where they live, is a bad idea. It puts an unnecessary limit on the talent pool of possible candidates. We want the most-qualified individuals for North Las Vegas government employees no matter where they live. These restrictions on certain positions can also hinder diversity and inclusion efforts. Individuals from diverse

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backgrounds, including those from other states, may be deterred from applying for jobs due to residency restrictions leading to a less diverse and less culturally enriched workforce.

North Las Vegas has made great strides in recent years. This bill will make it more difficult to continue the City's momentum. I urge the Committee to vote no on S.B. 184.

BRIAN KNUDSEN (Councilman, Ward 1; Mayor Pro Tempore, City Council, City of Las Vegas):

I oppose S.B. 184. Changes in the city charter should be initiated at the local level by the people or their elected city council representatives. The issues outlined in this bill are, fundamentally, matters of local concern and should therefore be undertaken through the standard process for city charter changes which empowers local communities to address local issues.

KATHY HENDRICK:

I am a resident of North Las Vegas. I oppose S.B. 184. It seems unjustified since a charter is already in place.

JOSIAH JENSEN (President, North Las Vegas Firefighters, International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1607):

I have submitted a letter ([Exhibit O](#)) to the Committee opposing S.B. 184.

ELIZABETH KARAZ:

I am a student at Rancho High School and a resident of the City of North Las Vegas. I oppose S.B. 184.

UNIDENTIFIED TESTIFIER:

I am a resident of North Las Vegas and a student at Rancho High School. I oppose S.B. 184 because it was introduced with no input from City government, residents or stakeholders.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

The comments by the Charter Committee members are valid. The Committee wanted to convene again to discuss how large the City of North Las Vegas is becoming. It did not.

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I do not know if the fiscal note includes the attorney the City hired to fight this bill. Is it also part of the fiscal note to have someone working for the City out of state? An article in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* exposed the fact that a City senior staff member lived in South Carolina. That person's salary was more than \$200,000 a year.

Senate District 1 is in North Las Vegas. Several of my constituents have spoken to me about this. Unfortunately, they do not have the money to hire an attorney at \$500 an hour. They cannot gather important people with titles from the City. The only thing they have is those they elected.

What should the City have done with the Charter Committee? One of the reasons I voted for the Charter Committee was because I thought everyone would take this opportunity to put a committee together and engage in a robust conversation about what is going on in the City.

There has been much discussion about local control and that the Legislature should not be making decisions about things that affect people locally. In a few weeks, the Legislature will pass a budget that affects people locally. Speed limits affect people locally. Where and how cannabis dispensaries are located are local issues. Part of the Legislature's job is to make sure everything in the State is evaluated. Sometimes, something rises to the top. The Legislature must act because the local community or local elected officials do not.

Last week, a Catholic bishop said the opening prayer for the Senate. He was the senior bishop. There was another bishop sitting with someone in the Senate Chamber. I asked him why two bishops. He said there are more than 500,000 Catholics in Clark County. Whenever there are more than 500,000, the Pontiff assigns another bishop to make sure all parishioners are served.

I asked somebody who was a firefighter, what would happen if you needed 15 firefighters, would you hire them or would you wait? If you need more, you get more.

After the U.S. Census, some members of Congress leave one state and go to another. Nevada experienced that in 2011 when Congressional District 4 was created because the population had grown. We are talking about prudence.

I do not know why this bill did not go through the City Council. For 7 months in 2021 and 12 months in 2022, it did not meet because this was not important enough. The City has one-quarter of a million people, but it did not see the need to meet.

How does the City pay for an attorney to fight this legislation, but it cannot afford to pay for the effects of this bill? I do not know. The people of North Las Vegas should ask that question and get an answer.

Someone indicated that if there is a residency requirement, three women would be affected. I do not know who those three women are, but I was hoping someone in the Committee would ask the question, where do they live?

If the people of North Las Vegas are paying salaries, they should get something for it. If someone is living out of state, the City does not get gas taxes, does not get funds from utilities, does not get anything. Nothing is contributed to the City from someone living out of state unless one pays tithes to the local church. I do not know what that is about.

Do not forget the testimony of the members of the Charter Committee. The Committee would have asked questions and recommended changes, but it did not meet. When it did, the topic of conversation was about something to which the City of North Las Vegas was sued.

Ms. ROMERO:

Since the June 27 meeting, numerous Charter Committee members have requested another meeting. There has been no response. The only agenda item the Committee was allowed to discuss regarded unelected hearing masters who have no term limits but essentially the same authority of a municipal court judge, an elected position. That was unanimously voted down.

The Charter Committee suggested to expand the municipal court. No other topic was allowed to be discussed at that meeting. I urge this Committee to watch the hearing. It was posted online, but I have been unable to find it. Any time members asked for a new topic, they were told they could not because it was not on the agenda and would violate the Open Meeting Law. However, the agenda item did not specifically say what section of the charter needed to be amended. It was only what was presented by City officials.

When the City does not meet the needs of the citizens, the only way they can be heard is to come to the State Legislature.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

The following cities have seven city council members: Gilbert, Arizona; Mesa, Arizona; Scottsdale, Arizona; Lubbock, Texas; Glendale, Arizona; Chandler, Arizona; Durham, North Carolina; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Reno.

Cities with nine council members are: Jersey City, New Jersey; Buffalo, New York; Chesapeake, Virginia; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Garland, Texas; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Tacoma, Washington; and Cincinnati, Ohio. Plano, Texas, has eight council members including the mayor. This is not something unusual. What the North Las Vegas City Charter Committee members said is important. The Charter Committee should review issues affecting the City and make recommendations, but it only met one time.

One of the arguments to create another municipal court or hearing master was because the City had grown. If the City has grown enough to appoint a hearing master, which is constitutionally unlawful, why is the Charter Committee not allowed to meet to discuss the need for additional City Council members?

If the Legislature does not act on this bill, nothing will happen in North Las Vegas. I say that with veracity because there were people who wanted to testify but were afraid to because they did not want to face retribution.

I represent a large portion of North Las Vegas. Believe it or not, my constituents talk to me. The reason the diversity study and the supply diversity program are in the bill is because I often asked Ryann Juden, City Manager, "How many of the people you work with who are getting large salaries are North Las Vegas business people? How many of those are minority business people?"

I asked members of the labor community if they had been asked to talk about bids on public projects. It might have happened since I talked to them a couple of months ago, but when I asked them, they said, no.

A woman who is 82 years old and lives in Windsor Park contacted my office. She said she lives in a cul-de-sac and the streetlight in the cul-de-sac was off more than it was on. I told her it is a city problem; she said she knows that, but



she got no response. I had Constituent Services investigate it and make sure it got fixed.

I am speaking for the people. I am not getting \$500 an hour. I was elected by the people to represent them. If the Charter Committee or the City Council were going to do their job, they would have already done it. There was no reason not to meet in 2021; no reason not to meet in 2022. The Charter Committee members said they kept asking to meet, but they were denied.

This bill is not about me. It is the citizens of North Las Vegas. That is why it was brought. The Legislature passes laws all the time that affect people at the local government level. Some of those laws are passed because local governments have not done anything. This is not an obtuse argument.

We keep hearing that the City of North Las Vegas dug itself out of financial difficulties. However, those of you who were here in 2011 and 2013 probably remember legislation passed to rein in some of the things North Las Vegas was doing and set the City on a path of spending to manage or match its budget. I am glad the City is no longer insolvent. But we must be truthful about the record. For those who do not think the Legislature should be involved with local government, it was this Legislature that helped pull North Las Vegas out of financial insolvency.

People want government representation and are not getting it. There could have been meetings. Nothing prohibited that. No one opposed to this bill asked, why the Charter Committee did not meet? I urge you to pass this legislation.

SENATOR DALY:

After listening to those who were on the Charter Committee, I understand why they are frustrated. They are lay people. They are not the government. They must be supported by staff. If they say they want to have another meeting and they are told it is a violation of the Open Meeting Law, staff is supposed to facilitate that. Staff should put out the notice so issues the Charter Committee wants to discuss can be properly agendaized.

It was interesting to hear some of the comments from those in opposition to the bill. I was not here in 2021, so I do not know if North Las Vegas resisted or not, but every city advised by the Legislature to create a charter review committee

resisted. It is interesting that they all love charter committees now. None is afraid of their charter committee.

Charter committees should be autonomous and able to bring community issues forward. Without the support of staff, the North Las Vegas Charter Committee was not able to meet. I give North Las Vegas the benefit of the doubt because the Committee is new.

North Las Vegas former Mayor John Lee unilaterally brought a bill on behalf of the City in 2015. It proposed that the city council be able to change the charter at any time it wanted to without legislative oversight or input. I was a lobbyist in that Session. I testified in opposition in that bill. I am trying to make the point that charter committees should be able to do what they are supposed to. They must have support from local government; otherwise, it is not going to work. Local governments should not be telling charter committee members what to do and should let them do their work. Because that did not happen after two years, it is obvious there are issues.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

I agree with you, Senator Daly.

Senator Goicoechea, I agree with you. If the local government is not going to act, the Legislature has the responsibility to do that. Most citizens want that.

CHAIR FLORES:

I trust while we may not necessarily find agreement, we will continue to work together with members of the Charter Committee and the City of North Las Vegas to find common ground. I look forward to that dialogue. I do not pretend it is going to be easy or clean, but we have a responsibility to do that.

I also had an opportunity, via email and over the phone, to have brief conversations with some Charter Committee members. It is my understanding that the chair had resigned. I am not sure if there is a chair now. That may be incorrect or maybe someone resigned. Maybe seats have been vacated. Obviously, the chair can call meetings. Someone can be appointed if a vacancy remains.

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I appreciate the dialogue from all of you. This is your city. It is important that you provide testimony whether in support or opposition. We appreciate your participation.

I have received nine letters ([Exhibit P](#)) opposing S.B. 184.

I will close the hearing on S.B. 184 and adjourn this meeting of the Committee on Government Affairs at 7:19 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Suzanne Efford,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Edgar Flores, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>EXHIBIT SUMMARY</b>				
<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit Letter</b>	<b>Introduced on Minute Report Page No.</b>	<b>Witness / Entity</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
S.B. 331	C	9	Brittany Benesi / American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	Letter of Support
S.B. 331	D	9	Brittany Benesi / American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	Fact Sheet
S.B. 331	E	10	Rebecca Goff / Humane Society of the United States	Letter of Support
S.B. 210	F	16	Steven Cohen	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 210	G	16	Christine Saunders / Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada	Letter of Support
S.B. 184	H	19	Senator Pat Spearman	Lawsuits in North Las Vegas
S.B. 184	I	31	Timothy C. Smith	Letter of Support
S.B. 184	J	35	Marla Turner	Letter of Support
S.B. 184	K	37	Emily Persuad-Zamora	Letter of Support
S.B. 184	L	37	Leo Benavides	Written Testimony
S.B. 184	M	38	Pamela Goynes-Brown / North Las Vegas	Written Testimony
S.B. 184	N	39	Stephen Wood / Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities	Mayors of Nevada, Letter of Opposition

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S.B. 184	O	45	Josiah Jensen / North Las Vegas Firefighters	Letter of Opposition
S.B. 184	P	51	Senator Edgar Flores	Nine Letters of Opposition