

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**Eighty-second Session  
March 3, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Judiciary was called to order by Chair Melanie Scheible at 1:01 p.m. on Friday, March 3, 2023, in Room 2135 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 Melanie Scheible, Chair  
Senator Dallas Harris, Vice Chair  
Senator James Ohrenschall  
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop  
Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen  
Senator Ira Hansen  
Senator Lisa Krasner  
Senator Jeff Stone

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Patrick Guinan, Policy Analyst  
Jan Brase, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Lilith Baran, American Civil Liberties Union, Nevada  
Nick Shepack, Return Strong  
Erica Roth, Washoe County Public Defenders' Office; Clark County Public Defenders' Office  
Lisa Shumway  
Serena Evans, Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence  
A'Esha Goins, NAACP, Las Vegas  
Margo Tello  
Anthony Lambert  
Madison Johnson

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Christine Saunders, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
Jim Hoffman, Nevada Attorneys for Criminal Justice  
Leisa Moseley  
Sean Navarro  
Mikey Kelly, Nevada Democratic Veterans and Military Families Caucus  
Maria-Teresa Liebermann-Parraga, Battle Born Progress  
Jonathan Espaca  
Warren Hardy, Nevada Urban Consortium  
Al Rojas  
Susan Proffitt, Nevada Republican Club  
Adrienne O'Reilly, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities  
Stephen Wood, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities  
Leonardo R. Benavides, City of North Las Vegas  
Paul Moradkhan, Vegas Chamber  
Jennifer Noble, Nevada District Attorneys Association  
Beth Schmidt, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department  
Pamela Del Porto, Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association  
Jason Walker, Washoe County Sheriff's Office  
Cyrus Hojjaty  
Lynn Chapman, Independent American Party of Nevada  
Bob Russo  
Cindy Martinez  
Jeff Rogan, Clark County  
Vinson Guthreau, Nevada Association of Counties  
William L. Brewer, Nevada Rural Housing Authority  
Unidentified Testifier

CHAIR SCHIEBLE:

We will begin the meeting with Senate Bill (S.B.) 142.

**SENATE BILL 142**: Enacts the Homeless Persons' Bill of Rights. (BDR 38-195)

SENATOR DALLAS HARRIS (Senatorial District No. 11):

Senate Bill 142 is a simple bill. It is designed to let the homeless people of Nevada know that here in this State, they are entitled to the same rights as every other resident of this State, no more and no less. I want to emphasize "no less," because in addition to facing homelessness, often these people are not treated with dignity and respect, not just by the State but by others. I will walk through section 3 and the proposed amendment to S.B. 142 ([Exhibit C](#)).

Section 3, subsection 1 states "a person experiencing homelessness is entitled to the same rights, privileges and benefits afforded to a resident of this State who is not experiencing homelessness." That is the bulk of this bill. It continues to list a few of those rights, benefits and privileges all of us enjoy today. I want to read them one by one and see where Committee members feel homeless individuals do not have any of these rights today.

Homeless individuals have the right to be treated with fairness and respect for their privacy and dignity. They have a right to be free from intimidation, harassment and abuse. They have a right to use public spaces in the same manner as any other person and without discrimination based on their housing status. They have a right to equal treatment by State or local government agencies. They have a right to access necessary emergency medical services free from discrimination based on their housing status. They have a right to register to vote in accordance with our election laws. They have a right to be free from discrimination by employers based on their housing status. They have a right to confidentiality of their personal records and information in accordance with all limitations in place under State and federal law.

I am not adding additional protections for persons experiencing homelessness, but I want to make sure that people know they do not have any fewer protections. For those worried about people who cannot consent to having their information shared, we have a statutory scheme for the issue. For those who are worried about people who are addicted and do not want to get help, we have a statutory scheme for the issue. Senate Bill 142 does not change existing statute.

Section 3, subsection 2 is important. Nothing in this bill will allow a person experiencing homelessness to engage in conduct that violates any State or local law, ordinance or regulation. That means a law on the books today requires every person and every resident of the State to follow all those laws.

Senate Bill 142 does not provide exceptions to the statutes of Nevada. This bill does not invalidate any existing laws. It does not prohibit localities from implementing new laws or ordinances. This bill must not be construed to include housing status as a protected class. Nothing in this bill is intended to give a homeless person more rights than any other resident. We are not adding homelessness to the list of discrimination actions that can be filed against

employers. Statutes covering the Nevada Equal Rights Commission outline actionable discrimination violations.

During my discussion of S.B. 142, I will define housing status and make it clear that a person experiencing homelessness is entitled to the same remedies that each of us is entitled to—no more, no less. I hope the Committee will agree that a right is not a right if you cannot enforce it. I do not want any confusion that anything in section 3 of S.B. 142 creates a new private right of action for those to whom it has not previously been available. I need to make it clear that rights must be enforceable.

SENATOR NGUYEN:

Quite a few people in my district have reached out with concerns about this bill, and I appreciate your having conversations with me. You have had conversations with others as I am sure everyone has received plenty of emails, especially regarding the private right of action originally included in S.B. 142. Can you explain the need for this legislation?

SENATOR HARRIS:

This is needed because of the language we have seen in emails. Not everyone understands that homeless individuals are people entitled to the same rights we all enjoy. Part of our job in the Legislature is to support declarations signaling our priorities and our society's beliefs. In Nevada, we should make it clear whether you have a home or not, your rights are the same as everyone. Though it is not simple, that is how simple it should be.

SENATOR OHRENSCHALL:

At least three states have passed a similar bill of rights for homeless individuals. Six or seven state legislatures are considering comparable legislation. If S.B. 142 passes, it could help bridge gaps to connection with services and access to housing. If the bill passes, those who find themselves without shelter know they have statutory protections.

SENATOR HARRIS:

I hope those who work to support homeless persons continue to assist people in accessing services. Until we do that, we will not solve this problem. I want to be sure that people feel comfortable accessing services, knowing their rights are intact and they will be treated with dignity.

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SENATOR OHRENSCHALL:

This will go a long way toward accomplishing your goals.

SENATOR KRASNER:

Does this bill create a new protected class?

SENATOR HARRIS:

It does not.

SENATOR KRASNER:

Does this this bill give homeless people any rights that others do not have or provide extra rights?

SENATOR HARRIS:

No, it does not.

SENATOR HANSEN:

The bill does not give any additional rights to homeless individuals. It does not remove existing rights of any Nevada citizen. It is a declaration. It does not do anything. It does not change any laws relating to protections for homeless individuals. You want dignity and respect. I do not know how it is possible to legally enforce dignity and respect. I understand the concept, but do we have existing laws denying dignity and respect to these individuals? You are saying the bill does not do anything. It does not change any laws. It is simply a declaration stating that homeless people should be treated like any other human being, which I am fine with, but the purpose of enacting law and modifying *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) is normally meant to change laws to protect citizens from discrimination. But you said we are not changing anything because there is nothing in law that discriminates against homeless individuals.

SENATOR HARRIS:

You are partially correct. I am not changing anything in law but proposing to add a new section, the Homeless Persons' Bill of Rights. It is different than other bills of rights. This is a statement; sometimes, statements are important. We cannot legislate dignity. We cannot legislate respect, but we can sure try. We can let people know we see them, and their concerns are worth our time. Homeless people do not have lobbyists in this building. Part of my job is to think about them as I bring bills to this building. I am 1 of 63, and this is my attempt to do what I can to get as close to that dignity and respect as possible.

SENATOR HANSEN:

There is a fundamental Christian concept in our society. We treat everybody equally. In fact, the people who care most about the homeless population are Catholic charity services and other religious organizations. No one on this panel or among the 63 members of the Legislature would disagree with you in any respect. Homeless people should be treated with complete dignity and respect. If nothing is being changed, S.B. 142 is simply a statement. I would support the bill as a statement of the rights of homeless people to be treated with dignity and respect, but that is normally not the concept behind changing law. The proposed amendment removes the most controversial aspect of S.B. 142 that allows a person experiencing homelessness to bring civil action for a violation of section 3, and I approve of this fine statement.

SENATOR HARRIS:

I am not changing anything in law. Some people are nervous about this bill because they may not be complying with some of the rights outlined in S.B. 142. That is concerning. I am worried that in violation of State and federal law, homeless individuals' information is being shared without their consent. If this is the case, this bill might prevent an infringement of rights. I am trying to address an existing problem, though it is not a perfect solution. Give me a billion dollars, and I will get to the root of the problem. Until we find a means of solving homelessness, we need to ensure we are delivering services in a respectful manner and homeless individuals' rights are not violated in the process of trying to help them.

SENATOR STONE:

I applaud you for your courage and your altruistic goal of ensuring that homeless people are treated with dignity, respect and empathy. One of the purposes of your bill is to give thousands of people a voice because many people are not listening to their needs. I come from a State that has a rampant homeless problem. Your bill is significantly amended from its original form. I, like many of my colleagues, received many emails and expressions of concern. The proposed amendment addresses all the concerns of many of my constituents. One of the most important facets of the original bill was a worry the bill would enable the homeless population rather than addressing their problems. I appreciate your bringing S.B. 142 forward. You clarified homeless individuals are not a protected class, but we all are protected class. It is my understanding the *Constitution of the United States* provides no private right of action. Homeless individuals are held to the same standards of law found in local ordinances.

Cities like Houston have reduced their homeless population by 54 percent over ten years, through a variety of interventions. While there are many nonprofit organizations in Nevada, it is our task to find the resources necessary to help every human soul without shelter, many of whom suffer from mental illness. Many of them have fallen on hard times. We have learned about kids living in cars with their parents who cannot afford high rents, not only in this State but also in other states. You are a champion for people who do not have a voice. I would appreciate the opportunity to work with you on bills to ensure homeless individuals have all the resources they need.

SENATOR HARRIS:

This bill has been a labor of love, and I have done my best to listen to the concerns of our municipalities, law enforcement and Nevada residents. The proposed amendment is the result of listening to those concerns. I cannot say with certainty the bill presented today with the proposed amendment does not create some of the risks those in opposition have questioned. I have made myself available to anyone who wants to talk about the subject, and conversations are still underway. This is not my solution to homelessness. A goal is to determine best practices across the Country addressing the issue. This is not a one-and-done type of legislation, but it is a start.

SENATOR NGUYEN:

Are you familiar with other bills of rights in NRS? It is my understanding NRS provides a bill of rights for mobile homeowners.

SENATOR HARRIS:

Some of these other bills of rights are not symbolic. They do create new rights. Other bills of rights in statute include rights for survivors of sexual assault and rights for police officers. This is not a unique legislative measure. This group of persons is not any less worthy of a statement of rights than any of the other groups.

LILITH BARAN (American Civil Liberties Union, Nevada):

Senate Bill 142 is a means of speaking for the people who are not here and not able to speak for themselves. It may seem symbolic to some, but it is not symbolic to homeless individuals. They need to know people are thinking about them and their humanity. I have placed a refrigerator in front of my house and stocked it with food for people who are unhoused. One day, I received a note, which read:

I just wanted to thank you and your family for allowing the homeless people, including myself, to come to your home and supplying us with food, water and Narcan as well. It has not been easy out here, and it is definitely a blessing to have people who actually and genuinely care. Thank you.

I want to tell this person we spoke about him or her today, and that each of them matter, and we can go much further with this. I look forward to building on some of the programs we have enacted in cities like Reno. Homelessness is a policy problem with a policy solution. It has been solved in many other places, and I am dedicated to solving it.

NICK SHEPACK (Return Strong):

We work with incarcerated individuals, formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. Far too many of the people we work with transition from incarceration directly into homelessness. When we talk to these individuals, they do not feel they are afforded dignity and respect from their neighbors, from their government or from law enforcement. There is an unhealthy distrust of these systems from those individuals. This creates a barrier for us and for people like Ms. Baran who work with homeless individuals every day. The words in this bill may not change the law, but we should take the opportunity anytime we can to help these people feel respected.

ERICA ROTH (Washoe County and Clark County Public Defenders' Offices):

Part of my job as a public defender is to give dignity to people whose dignity has been stripped from them. Bryan Stevenson is a civil rights attorney and author of *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. Mr. Stevenson says that "The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned." This Bill of Rights simply says that all people, including those who are unhoused, deserve dignity. I encourage anyone in opposition to point to a dignity or right unhoused individuals do not deserve.

LISA SHUMWAY:

I am here as a mother and a friend. This winter I was contacted by friends who implored me to provide them with sleeping bags. We are a family of modest means and were not able to offer a place to stay. We contacted our church and homeless shelters, but the family was determined to stay together, especially because they have various mental health and developmental challenges. They



have always been able to take care of each other. I gave them sleeping bags. They slept in their car and eventually drove to California where the weather is warmer. They are not the only homeless people I know. I have five children, some of whom have serious disabilities and mental health problems. Every night I pray for them and hope they will have resources they need after I am gone. We must do all we can to help homeless individuals.

SERENA EVANS (Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence):  
Every day, trauma and violence are transforming under-resourced and vulnerable individuals into homeless individuals. The immediate cause of homelessness for 57 percent of women is domestic violence. A person's housing status should not, under any circumstance, determine the way society decides their worthiness or the way our systems respond to them. The additional discrimination faced by those who are unhoused directly interferes with their ability to regain stable housing. Without protections to freely use public transportation, maintain and/or apply for employment, individuals without housing remain in unsafe situation without many viable options.

Our unhoused neighbors deserve opportunities, dignity and respect. While this bill cannot undo the trauma our unhoused neighbors have experienced, this is a hopeful step in allowing them to exist while limiting systemic abuse. I have submitted written testimony ([Exhibit D](#)).

A'ESHA GOINS (NAACP, Las Vegas):  
It seems reasonable to ensure the homeless population is treated with human dignity and respect; they are members of our community and should be treated as such. I live in downtown Las Vegas. Every day, I walk past houseless people. I make a point of speaking to my neighbors because I recognize that I have a house to go to and that it is a privilege. People without a house are no different, and I am not more important than they are. I urge the Committee to consider it is unfortunate we need to make a statement asserting the rights of houseless individuals, but it needs to be done.

MARGOTH TELLO:  
I am a member of this community. Individuals experiencing homelessness deserve the same rights the rest of us do. I started my career eight years ago helping homeless veterans find homes, and I have seen situations when these individuals who fought for our Country are treated unfairly and disrespectfully.

Nevadans need to demonstrate that we care about the dignity and respect for the unhoused, and we want to help address the bigger issue of homelessness.

ANTHONY LAMBERT:

I am a resident of North Las Vegas and a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, Las Vegas. I thank the Senate members who are sponsoring this bill to protect our at-risk neighbors. I support S.B. 142. During the last three years, the Las Vegas Democratic Socialists of America have been hosting monthly events to provide for houseless neighbors in our community. I talked to my neighbors about their experiences. I remember a complaint filed against a pregnant mother. The complainant was offended and wanted her removed from the street. The police responded by disposing of all her belongings, including her shelter and prenatal vitamins.

There are few groups as discriminated against as our houseless neighbors. Their privacy is regularly violated, their personal belongings taken from them, they face discrimination when applying for housing and employment. People sometimes complain to the police when someone who appears to be homeless is present in public spaces. Senate Bill 142 does not enable houseless people to commit crimes or violence. Opposing the bill would be enable others to continue to discriminate against this group. This Homeless Persons' Bill of Rights would help protect our neighbors against the dehumanizing treatment they endure. The bill will ensure they receive the same civil rights you and I enjoy. A society should be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable. This bill sends a clear message about the kind of society we want to live in.

MADISON JOHNSON:

I support S.B. 142. I am a second-year student at the William S. Boyd School of Law, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and I was a legislative intern during the Eightieth Session. Another student and I wrote a white paper concerning the homelessness crisis in Henderson and across the State. One of the solutions we suggested was drafting a homeless bill of rights. This bill is important for several reasons, most importantly because it provides dignity to unsheltered Nevadans and ensures they are treated equally with the same respect sheltered persons are afforded. Our State's housing crisis expands as the eviction moratorium and A.B. No. 486 of the 81st Session are ending. Those who cannot afford to pay rent may have nowhere to go but the street. Many unhoused individuals are forced to rely on support systems for critical medical care, food and shelter. While camping bans in Las Vegas and Henderson are not strictly enforced,

unhoused individuals are still being apprehended in parks and tunnels and other public spaces, yet they have no other place to go. When they are arrested, their shelters are thrown away. They return to the street empty-handed. Senate Bill 142 ensures that unsheltered Nevadans who are unable to access shelters and other wraparound services will have other resources.

CHRISTINE SAUNDERS (Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada):

We support S.B. 142 and echo the sentiments of previous speakers. The bill is a step in the right direction to ensure every Nevadan is treated with dignity and respect. We look forward to collaborating with the sponsor and others in the Legislature to find the additional solutions to homelessness in our State.

JIM HOFFMAN (Nevada Attorneys for Criminal Justice):

We support S.B. 142. As Senator Harris has said, homeless people are still human beings who are entitled to the same rights as every other human being.

LEISA MOSELEY:

Today, I am speaking as someone who has personally experienced homelessness. When many people look at me, they may not see a formerly homeless person. I have four small children and spent June 2009 through August 2009 without a home. I was fortunate enough to have two parents who were willing to take in my children. I did not want my children to experience the shame and lack of dignity that comes with homelessness. Many unhoused people do not have a choice. I commend Senator Harris for bringing this bill forward and leading the charge in demonstrating Nevada cares about its homeless population and is poised to do something about it. I agree with her when she said this is not the last step. This is a step, and I hope that this Committee will join her in passing S.B. 142. I ask those in opposition to search their hearts for aspects of the bill they disagree with and ask themselves whether they believe the unhoused deserve dignity and respect.

SEAN NAVARRO:

I live in Las Vegas and am a member of Democratic Socialists of America, Las Vegas. I support S.B. 142 and wonder how anyone could oppose the bill? The bill is common sense. Homeless persons' rights are violated daily. The policy is to sweep the problem literally and metaphorically under the rug. Issues are ignored as though they do not exist. Homeless persons are people, they are our family, they are our neighbors, they are part of our community, and they exist. There are many groups and individuals doing important, vital work, but it

is not enough. I am a member of an organization that works with the unhoused and has been doing so for years. We are not able to adequately deal with this complicated issue. With skyrocketing housing costs and stagnant low wages, this is a problem that will only worsen. During the past few years, more people are living with family, more people are forced to rent a room, and more are sleeping in their cars. Homelessness affects all of us. Few of us are going to be millionaires, almost none of us billionaires, but every single one of us is close to being unhoused. We do not realize that we are one bad illness or one job loss away. This is an issue that affects us all.

MIKEY KELLY (Nevada Democratic Veterans and Military Families Caucus):

I have been State Director of the Nevada Democratic Veterans and Military Families Caucus for the past several years. After the COVID-19 pandemic, I decided to work with the homeless population because it was an issue requiring attention. During the pandemic, I recognized there was an increase in homeless veterans, people in various stages of mental illness and substance abuse, sex trafficking victims and formerly incarcerated individuals. Some of these individuals are all of the above.

I urge you to support S.B. 142. I ask the Legislature to take the effort a step further by establishing a regional or Statewide agency that would take responsibility for overseeing homeless outreach. I urge the Legislature to establish standards of training for those who have committed our lives to working with the homeless population. Training should ensure volunteers understand mental health, suicide prevention and other education to better ensure the dignity of the unhoused.

I urge the Legislature to increase the number of mental health professionals and social workers, family therapists, behavioral health specialists and psychiatrists. Counties and cities should establish reasonable and actionable solutions to ensure dignity and respect for those who are unhoused. The State should develop a prisoner reentry program to ensure that those formerly incarcerated do not end up in the streets. In the past week, I have seen women who have been abused and families suffering from abuse. I am not aware of structure or collaboration between governments and nonprofits. I urge support of S.B. 142, and I ask the Legislature to take further measures in addressing this issue.

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MARIA-TERESA LIEBERMANN-PARRAGA (Battle Born Progress):

We support S.B. 142. We have worked on the issue of caring for the houseless population in Nevada for a long time. We support efforts to ensure unhoused individuals are recognized as people and part of a community deserving dignity and respect who should have the same rights as all Nevadans. A bill of rights should be enacted for other communities which need recognition of civil liberties.

JONATHAN ESPACA:

I support S.B. 142.

WARREN HARDY (Nevada Urban Consortium):

The Nevada Urban Consortium is made up of the cities of Las Vegas, Henderson, Reno and Sparks. We are here in humble opposition to S.B. 142. Under our organization's rules, we speak in opposition to bills in the forms they are presented. Our members are reviewing the proposed amendment and hope to have clarification soon. The members of the Consortium support improving the lives of homeless individuals and ensuring they are extended the constitutional rights to which they are entitled. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with Senator Harris to resolve the details and the definitional issues that remain on this bill. We appreciate Senator Harris's efforts on this issue.

AL ROJAS:

Senate Bill 142 does not address the root of the homeless problem. People are homeless for varied reasons. We are not thoroughly considering health or economic issues involved. As a resident of Assembly District 21 and a person who frequently visits Senate Districts 2 and 10, I am aware of a growing homeless population. I have proposed building homeless solar shelters in collaboration with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This bill needs to be further considered, and people who want to be productive members of society need to be recognized. Some people want to live unhoused and rob people. My car was stolen. The sheriff retrieved it within a day and a half. I will need to talk to the FBI because my wallet and credit cards are still missing. I am more than willing to provide the case number.

SUSAN PROFITT (Nevada Republican Club):

I thank Senator Harris for bringing S.B. 142 and addressing the needs of homeless individuals. The issue has reached epidemic proportions. While

I appreciate that we are all concerned and approach the homeless population with compassion, I must oppose this in its present form. I look forward to learning more information regarding the proposed amendment. I ask the Committee to consider all the variables involved in finding an appropriate solution and consider what is best for the entire community before making it into law. On the surface, S.B. 142 appears to resolve an issue, but it presents far more problems and will create more costly issues in the future.

Senate Bill 142 may be unworkable unless we consider previous laws that affected the homeless population and how they were implemented before moving forward. Property rights are often at the core of most issues, including medical freedoms and rape. When considering the homeless community, we need to consider equal rights under law. Government should not deny equal protection or encroach on the property and civil rights of one person to provide for another. We are breaking our own laws. We need to find other solutions such as mental health treatment and safe places for care and rehabilitation. We could benefit from additional volunteer case management which would target individual needs. It is not kindness to leave people on the streets and ignore them, nor is it a kindness to allow homeless people to destroy communities and businesses because we cannot find a workable solution.

ADRIENNE O'REILLY (Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities):

I respectfully oppose S.B. 142 as written. I have spent over seven years on the streets volunteering with our homeless neighbors and have served as volunteer case manager for a young homeless man suffering with heroin addiction for over two years. Homelessness is a nonpolitical humanitarian issue. Treating our homeless neighbors with compassion is an essential part of egalitarian society. Every homeless individual in Nevada is our neighbor. They are homeless, not hopeless. Treating them with equanimity should be self-evident in our society, and legislation such as the Homeless Persons' Bill of Rights should not be needed. Unhoused individuals have the same rights as others.

I respectfully disagree with proposed section 3, subsection 1, paragraph (g) in the bill. The section should be amended to only apply when a homeless individual is on private property or on public property in transit, meaning following the intended use of that piece of public property. It would not apply to illegally establishing a place of business or residence on public property. Personal property illegally established on legal properties, business, residence, or public properties should not have the same rights to privacy as personal

belongings on privately owned property. In my understanding, the bill as proposed would establish the same rights in those two distinct situations. Among many things, this is a public safety issue. Our homeless neighbors need our support and respect. Allowing them to live and do business on public property is not the most helpful approach or the best situation for all communities. We can help uplift them by personally working with them individually through volunteer case management.

STEPHEN WOOD (Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities):

We are in opposition to S.B. 142. We agree with points discussed by the Urban Consortium and some of our members. We are appreciative of the intent of this legislation, and we thank the sponsor for all the challenging work with stakeholders from across the State. We look forward to the continuation of the discussions and are hopeful that consensus can be reached.

LEONARDO R. BENAVIDES (City of North Las Vegas):

I want to echo the sentiments of the Urban Consortium and the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities and thank Senator Harris for her continuing to work with stakeholders on this bill. We appreciate the proposed amendment and look forward to continuing to have conversations with the sponsor.

PAUL MORADKHAN (Vegas Chamber):

We thank the bill sponsor and the proponents of S.B. 142 for their willingness to meet with the business community. We appreciate the intent and respect the desire to help those who are homeless. The Chamber's concerns are specific to section 3, subsection 1, paragraph (h), subparagraph (1) and section 4. The proposed amendment addresses those concerns; if adopted by this Committee, we anticipate removal of our opposition.

JENNIFER NOBLE (Nevada District Attorneys Association):

Pursuant to committee rules of the Nevada District Attorneys Association, we are in opposition to S.B. 142. We have concerns with the language of the conceptual amendment, but I thank Senator Harris for continuing to collaborate with us with the candor, the transparency and the respect for which she is known. I am confident that we can come to agreement. We are working to propose language that will bring us to a position of support.

BETH SCHMIDT (Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department):

Pursuant to committee rules of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, we are in opposition to S.B. 142 as written. I want to be clear that we at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department are committed to addressing homelessness. Our policy states that we will protect the rights, dignity and personal property of unhoused individuals while providing appropriate law enforcement services. We created a homeless outreach team; since its inception five years ago, we have taken over 1,600 individuals out of homelessness. We appreciate Senator Harris. We appreciate our spirited conversations and discussions, and we look forward to additional conversations concerning the proposed amendment. We are confident we will come together.

PAMELA DEL PORTO (Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association):

Pursuant to the committee rules of the Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association, I am testifying in opposition to S.B. 142 today. I thank Senator Harris for collaborating with us. We look forward to continuing to work with her and the stakeholders and moving to a position of support.

JASON WALKER (Washoe County Sheriff's Office):

We oppose S.B. 142. We are hopeful that Senator Harris will continue the discussion, and we get to a position of agreement. The Washoe County Sheriff's office motto is commitment to community. We understand that we have a homeless problem. Like my Metropolitan Police Department counterparts, we have a homeless outreach program known as the HOPE—Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement—team, which is not only for the Washoe Sheriff's Office but also the Reno Police Department and Sparks Police Department. We engage with homeless individuals to provide as many resources as possible.

CYRUS HOJJATY:

I appreciate this bill coming forward to address this issue. However, it does not solve the horror of the problem. Most of these homeless people have addictions. They need help. They need rehabilitation. I suggest you watch the documentary *Seattle is Dying*. In San Francisco where they let people stay in the streets, it has become utter chaos. If you think they are doing an excellent job, maybe you should all move there. City leaders invest money in homeless initiatives, but this only makes the problems worse. The behavior of homeless individuals interferes in the public right-of-way, and many people are scared.



LYNN CHAPMAN (Independent American Party of Nevada):

There are good people in the world, and there are bad people in the world. Over the years I have purchased and donated socks, underwear, blankets and food. My church, Grace Church of Reno, has built many hope houses in Reno that are helping people to get off drugs and drink, and reunite their families. My church has raised more than \$6 million to help families reunite. We are not the only church in the State working to support homeless individuals. The people of Nevada do not deserve terrible treatment from anyone. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, but that does not always happen. That is real life. Please remember, we the taxpayers have been paying for treatments, shelter and food for homeless people in our State. Everyone should be treated equal under the law. People are already helping in our communities. We do not need a law or a bill of rights. We should help others out of the goodness of our hearts.

BOB RUSSO:

I oppose S.B. 142. This bill is an invitation to turn Nevada's cities and communities into the Bay Area. There are homeless camps for people who are sleeping anywhere they wish and doing their business anywhere they please. I grew up in the Bay Area, and the changes I have witnessed over the years have been sad and depressing. This bill will contribute to the degradation of our communities, turning them into undesirable places to live and visit. I suspect it will hurt tourism as in San Francisco. With homelessness comes increased drug use and violent crime, jeopardizing the health and safety of law-abiding citizens and visitors to our State. According to an article in *Law Enforcement Today*, April 4, 2022, the National Institutes of Health claims the rate of violent crimes was 40 times higher and the rate of nonviolent crimes 27 times higher in the homeless population. Homeless defendants are significantly more likely to have been charged with victimizing strangers. This bill is unfair to both the homeless population and residents living and paying taxes in those communities. It does nothing to address the problem of homelessness. Our aim should be to help those with the will and desire to turn their lives around, not turn Nevada into a sanctuary state for the homeless population. This bill will only serve to attract more homelessness to our State and aesthetically and financially burden our cities and communities. Endangering the health and safety of citizens could also place greater strain on law enforcement.

CINDY MARTINEZ:

I oppose S.B. 142 for the reasons articulated by Senators Hansen and Krasner. I also am opposed to language establishing extra constitutional rights. I am a retired Nevada State Peace Officer whose duties brought me in direct contact with homeless people in the casino environment. I arrested cage cashiers and slot employees who embezzled because they were one paycheck or two payday loans away from losing their housing, their children and their vehicles. I always endeavored to treat those I encountered with dignity and respect, even as I restricted their freedom in a lawfully administered detention or arrest. Awareness of the application of controlled force on the force continuum is in response to the level of resistance presented by people encountered by law enforcement. I worry that a statute with no real enforcement parameters would infringe on property owner rights and impose further regulatory and policy burdens on law enforcement and regulatory agencies that respond to homeless incidents. Nevada Cares Campus in Washoe County works compassionately and diligently to help stand up our homeless population. Local governments are best positioned to address these challenges. At the end of my law enforcement career, I watched as Jacobs Entertainment, Inc., bought the Gold Dust West and Sands Regency and demolished everything between the two casinos. This action not only contributed to but accelerated the loss of affordable housing for displaced residents in Washoe County. Please vote no on S.B. 142.

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

We have 14 documents opposing S.B. 142 ([Exhibit E](#)).

JEFF ROGAN (Clark County):

Clark County is a major provider of services to our unhoused population as well as to our nearly unhoused population. This bill is important to us because it expresses the concerns that homeless people have the same rights as everyone else. However, we had several concerns with the original draft of S.B. 142; specifically, it would impact our ability to continue to provide the services provided in the past. It may impinge upon our ability to maintain the public spaces for equal use by all our citizens in Clark County. However, the proposed amendment presented today, and the testimony placed on the record addresses many of those concerns. We thank Senator Harris for taking our concerns into consideration. We see [Exhibit C](#) as a statement of equal rights and a statement alone, which is why we are testifying in neutral, pending the final version of this amendment. We understand the position that our fellow cities and counties have taken today, given the language submitted yesterday.

We hope we can continue to work with those cities and counties as well as the bill sponsor to make certain the final version of S.B. 142 expresses the sentiments and beliefs of Clark County as well as the other counties and cities.

VINSON GUTHREAU (Nevada Association of Counties):

Most of our concerns on collective issues relate to the ability to deliver services. We appreciate Senator Harris's efforts on this bill and her work getting us to a more comfortable place, especially given the testimony today. We look forward to the adoption of the proposed amendment. We are neutral on S.B. 142.

WILLIAM L. BREWER (Nevada Rural Housing Authority):

I appreciate this opportunity to visit with you today concerning S.B. 142. We are here in a neutral position on the bill. While we support the intent of this legislation, we were concerned about the method of enforcement the bill prescribed. We are not aware of the proposed amendment we learned about today. Enforcement should be given to existing State agencies such as the Nevada Equal Rights Commission (NERC). The NERC is responsible for the enforcement of civil rights and equal rights laws in Nevada, providing appropriate enforcement of the new law while eliminating any profiteering that could occur if the only remedy to the law was a lawsuit.

UNIDENTIFIED TESTIFIER:

I am neutral on S.B. 142, though I am leaning toward opposition. There are many reasons for the number of homeless people, one of which is drug addiction. Some people do not want to utilize care centers. I have a family member who chooses to be homeless and has lived out of his car for years with his girlfriend. I saw them last year, and I told them I hated to see them live like this. They did not want to go to care centers because drugs are everywhere. For anyone trying to stay away from drugs, a care center is the worst place to be. Employees sell drugs there, knowing there is an easily accessed clientele. I would rather see rehabilitation programs for homeless individuals, which provide chances to return to society.

SENATOR HARRIS:

Despite testimony in all positions, we heard a lot of consensus today. I heard everyone agree homeless persons should be entitled to these rights. No one disagrees about that. There might be disagreement about whether S.B. 142 is needed to ensure homeless persons' rights. I would submit the answer is yes. It will go a long way. We heard a lot of commitment from our constituents and

from everybody in this room that it is time for us to get to work addressing the root of this problem, and I agree. Senate Bill 142 is just one part of the solution. I am asking the Committee to take this one step with me today and to continue to provide services to the homeless population. Our streets need to be clean so businesses can provide unobstructed entrances, but I am going to be asking a lot from businesses. Businesses can ask a lot of me. Together we can do this. In the meantime, let us send the message to homeless persons they will be treated with dignity just like every other resident of the State.

MR. ROJAS:

We all need to get together and have a committee to consider homeless issues. According to John Lee, former Mayor of North Las Vegas, many homeless individuals do not want to work. Many of them are healthy, though some have mental health problems or have experienced a health catastrophe. There is a percentage of people who commit crimes. We ought to identify that part of the homeless population. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with Senators Harris, Flores and Doñate regarding this topic.

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CHAIR SCHEIBLE:

Having nothing further to come before the Senate Committee on Judiciary, we are adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Jan Brase,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Melanie Scheible, 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. 142	C	2	Senator Dallas Harris	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 142	D	9	Serena Evans / Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence	Written Testimony in Support
S.B. 142	E	18	Senator Melanie Scheible	Letters in Opposition