

Annual Report

Nevada Youth Legislature

2012-2013

Overview

The 2012-2013 year marked a period of growth and development for the Nevada Youth Legislature. Starting the year with 15 new members out of a body of 21, the Youth Legislature immediately devoted itself to initiating its new members to the group and the legislation (Senate Joint Resolution 6) it would sponsor during the 2013 Legislative Session. Throughout the course of the year, the Youth Legislature dedicated substantial effort to expanding outreach and communication to its constituents (those under the age of 18) and past youth legislators alike. 2013 saw the Nevada Youth Legislature's first ever reunion and the resulting development of an alumni Facebook group to facilitate it. Similarly, the Youth Legislature approved the creation of advisory panels for each youth legislator to help broaden the range of voices that reach the ears of its members. Moreover, for the first time in its history, the Nevada Youth Legislature saw two of the Bill Draft Requests created by its members presented as bills during the legislative session with one, Senate Bill 305, passing both houses unanimously. Although the Youth Legislature's endeavors did not always meet with success—SJR 6 failed to meet the April 12 first house committee passage deadline—the vast majority of the body's efforts helped advance the group forward. Overall, the 2012-2013 year represented a unique training experience for 21 of Nevada's politically inclined students, who gained the opportunity to learn public speaking skills from Senators, engage in debate with radio hosts, host a delegation from Bosnia, testify before the Legislature, and learn from one another. The year's culmination with "Youth Legislature Day" in the Legislature represented a fitting and flattering conclusion to a productive year.

Respectfully submitted by:

Grant W. Gabriel

Chair

Nevada Youth Legislature

2012-2013

2012 Summer Training

The Nevada Youth Legislators arrived at the Grant Sawyer State Office Building at 9:00am on Saturday, September 8th, 2012 to start their training for their upcoming term. The day started off with a family orientation and was followed by introductions of the Youth Legislators, both from the North and South. During this time, Youth Legislators also received their training binders and drew roles for the mock hearings and to serve as guests on the “Observations” radio program.

Following the welcome, Youth Legislators were introduced to and sworn in by Justice Kristina Pickering of the Nevada Supreme Court. Local news stations set up video cameras and recorded the swearing in of the new Youth Legislators.

Senator Valerie Wiener oversaw the discussion of protocols for the upcoming year, and David Byerman, Secretary of the Senate, gave a comprehensive overview of the Nevada Youth Legislature.

After a short break, a luncheon took place in a panel discussion fashion regarding the roles of lobbyists in the legislative process. Guests included Former Senator Terry Care, Liane Lee, and Russell Rowe. Senator Valerie Weiner served as a moderator for this portion of the training. While most Youth Legislators were eating sandwiches, learning, and asking questions, a few Youth Legislators were interviewed by the local news.

Directly after lunch, Brenda Erdoes, Legislative Counsel, introduced the Youth Legislators to the process by which a bill becomes a law. Using the binders they received at the beginning of the training session, Youth Legislators were able to follow along with the presentation.

Some continuing Youth Legislators attended this training session as well. A roundtable discussion took place with those present. New Youth Legislators were able to ask questions ranging from the general to the specific.

Also in attendance were former Youth Legislators Alex Bybee, Daniel Waqar, and Hannah Dey. Along with introducing themselves, the former Youth Legislators fielded questions from new Youth Legislators.

Shortly afterwards, Ms. Dey presented the 2011 Nevada Youth Legislature's Senate Joint Resolution (C—47) relating to the funding of the Millennium Scholarship. Ms. Dey was the primary sponsor.

Those who drew the role of serving as guests on "Observations" assumed their positions and spoke with Mr. Bob Fisher, the President and CEO of Nevada Broadcasters Association. A total of six Nevada Youth Legislators spoke with Mr. Bob Fisher on topics including local, state, and national events as well as their own personal goals.

Following the radio program, Alex Bybee, former NYL Chair, and Daniel Waqar, former NYL Vice-Chair, gave their closing remarks.

The training session ended with carrot cake (a Nevada Youth Legislature tradition) and adjournment.

2012-2013 NYL Meetings

October 8, 2012

At the October 8th meeting of the Nevada Youth Legislature, the first order of business was the election of a chair and vice chair. One round of voting selected Youth Legislator Grant Gabriel as the 2012-2013 chair; Youth Legislator Torrey Barber was similarly elected to the position of vice chair after two voting rounds. At this meeting the youth legislators also received presentations on the Open Meeting Law, given by Ms. Brenda Erdoes, and “Building Connections with Constituents through Effective Town Hall Meetings,” presented by then-Senator Valerie Wiener. Following the training, six youth legislators, in pairs, practiced holding mock town halls and fielding questions regarding various state issues from the rest of the youth legislature. In preparation for the town hall meetings all youth legislators were required to hold by November 16, Mr. Byerman and Senator Wiener offered the mock hosts and the rest of the legislature critiques to improve their presentation styles.

November 1, 2012

At their November 1st meeting, the Youth Legislators devoted their time to a mock hearing, in which Senator Wiener, Senator Kieckhefer, Senator Mo Denis, Senator David Parks, Assemblyman Kelvin Atkinson, and Assemblywoman Bustamante-Adams heard testimony from selected members of the public on SB 276, SB 237, and the Youth Legislature’s own BDR C-47. Through this exercise, the youth legislators gained valuable insight regarding the upcoming presentation of their bill before the real legislature in March. After the panel, Senator Wiener gave the youth legislators pointers on conducting hearings effectively and maintaining decorum during legislative proceedings. Additionally, the youth legislature discussed the planning and execution of their upcoming town hall meetings.

December 5, 2012

On December 5th, the Nevada Youth Legislature held a conference call to discuss town hall meetings and brainstorm new ways to reach out to the youth of the legislators’ respective districts. During this dialogue, the youth legislators developed proposals for an Advisory Council of youth in each senate district and possible outreach through social networking.

January 8, 2013

The January 8th meeting of the Nevada Youth Legislature was devoted to the last work session on BDR C-47 before finalization. During the meeting, the Youth Legislature debated potential amendments to the legislation. Ms. Brenda Erdoes assisted the youth legislators on legal matters. A motion to remove then Section 7, which capped administrative costs for the scholarship at three percent of annual revenue, carried. A secondary amendment to add language to the BDR failed. The Youth Legislature then voted to pre-file BDR C-47. Following the work session, the Youth Legislature discussed a proposal to create advisory panels comprised of students outside of the Youth Legislature to assist with outreach and communication. The Youth Legislature then passed a proposal to allow each youth legislator the ability to appoint up to two students from every school within his or her district to comprise his or her panel. A proposal to create a Youth Legislature Facebook page to assist further in outreach failed to gain support.

February 13, 2013

During its February 13th meeting, the Nevada Youth Legislature held a mock committee hearing on SB 14 and SB 277 of the 2011 Legislative Session. Youth Legislators Keith, Tucci, and Patmavanu testified in support, neutrality, and opposition, respectively, on SB 14. Youth Legislators Borzage, Cabrera, and Moen assumed the same respective positions for SB 277. Youth Legislators Barber and Lim served as co-chairs for the hearing. The remaining youth legislators acted as committee members, posing questions to the testifiers. During and after testimony on both bills, Mr. David Byerman and Senator Valerie Wiener provided constructive criticism on the responses to questions. Following the hearing, the Youth Legislature discussed plans for Youth Legislature Day, scheduled for March 26 at the Legislature.

March 6, 2013

On the March 6th meeting of the Nevada Youth Legislature, the final mandatory meeting of the 2012-2013 year, Senator Valerie Wiener instructed the youth legislators on effective public speaking. During this traditional training exercise, which she presents to every Youth Legislature, Senator Wiener utilized examples from her own experience and the lives of the youth legislators to convey the finer points of public speaking and presenting. Emphasizing the

need for preparation and confidence, Senator Wiener involved each youth legislator in the meeting. Following the training session, Youth Legislator Greene applied the skills taught during the presentation, giving a mock recruitment speech, which summed up her experience with the Youth Legislature.

Inaugural NYL Reunion

The Nevada Youth Legislature hosted its first alumni gathering on Saturday, January 5th, 2013. The event was promoted by the newly formed Facebook group titled “Nevada Youth Legislature Alumni.” Largely due to Secretary of the Senate Byerman’s efforts to promote the reunion, many registered beforehand. The event was hosted in both Carson City at the Nevada State Capitol and in Las Vegas at the Grant Sawyer Building in order to make attending the event more logistically feasible for those in both the northern and southern portions of the state. The event was successful mainly due to the amount of attendees. At the Las Vegas reception, Senator Wiener gave a brief introduction and every attendee gave a short synopsis of what the program meant to him or her personally. Current Youth Legislators had the opportunity to meet other Youth Legislators who served previously, and many exchanged contact information.

NYL Legislation

During the 2013 Legislative Session, for the first time in its six-year history, the Nevada Youth Legislature saw two of its proposed pieces of legislation submitted as bills. SJR 6, the constitutional amendment selected by the body at its February 9, 2012 meeting, and SB 305, the runner-up bill, sponsored by Senator James Settelmeyer. Over the course of the year, the majority of the Youth Legislature's efforts in regards to legislation were focused on SJR 6; this bill was a central topic at the start of year training for replacement Youth Legislators, and the January 8th, 2013 meeting was devoted to a work session on the measure.

Introduced in the Senate on February 13th, 2013, SJR 6 sought to amend the Nevada Constitution with the creation of the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship Trust Fund. The bill designated, in the Constitution, that at least 40% of all income from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, and all future settlements with tobacco manufacturers, would go to the Millennium Scholarship. In addition, it required all other funds deposited in the account to be spent upon the Millennium Scholarship. The intent of the legislation was to ensure that all funds designated for the Millennium Scholarship were spent on the advancement of Nevada's most talented students through higher education. In large measure, the amendment was prompted in response to concern following the potential in 2010 of \$10 million being taken from the scholarship program to fill a budget gap.

On March 26th, 2013, SJR 6 was heard before a joint session of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committees. Former Youth Legislature Chairman Alex Bybee (2011-2012), present Chairman Grant Gabriel (2012-2013), and bill author, Former Youth Legislator Hannah Dey introduced and testified in support of the measure. Youth Legislators Miranda Rosen and Tierra Patmavanu also voiced support. Questions from legislators covered topics ranging from the lack of a long-term funding source for the scholarship (the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement revenue is trending down) to potential problems with constitutionality in existing NRS. No action was taken at the conclusion of the approximately two hour-long meeting.

Following the meeting, discussions between committee and Youth Legislature members revealed that significant alterations to the legislation were required for progression out of committee. As a result, Fmr. Youth Legislator Bybee and Youth Legislator Gabriel scheduled meetings with Senate Majority Leader Mo Denis and Assemblyman David Bobzien.

Following meetings with Senator Denis on Tuesday, April 2 and Senator Debbie Smith on Friday, April 5th, an amendment emerged to alter SJR 6 to allow for the establishment of a state lottery and require proceeds from the lottery to fund the proposed Millennium Scholarship Trust Fund. SJR 6 was scheduled for work session on Wednesday, April 10th; however, on the night prior to the meeting, the Legislative Council Bureau decided that the proposed amendment to the legislation was not germane. As a result, the legislation was pulled from work session and missed the April 12th deadline for passage through committee in the first house.

On April 10th, however, SB 305, a bill for the establishment of a statewide internship program focused on agriculture, construction, and manufacturing passed the Senate Education Committee unanimously, following re-referral from the Senate Revenue and Economic Development Committee after the removal of a proposed tax incentive from the legislation. At the hearing, Senator James Settlemeyer and Youth Legislator Gabriel, the author of the bill, introduced the legislation, which gained support from the Manufacturers Association, represented by Ray Bacon, and ACE Charter School, represented by Jeanette Belz. SB 305 then went on to pass the Senate unanimously on April 18th. Recommendation of “amend, do pass” from the Assembly Education Committee followed on May 17th. The bill was passed unanimously as amended by the Assembly on May 22nd and the amendment concurred in by the Senate on May 24th.