

NEVADA YOUTH LEGISLATURE: ANNUAL REPORT 2017–2018



OVERVIEW

The current two-year term of the Nevada Youth Legislature (NYL) began on June 1, 2017, and expires on May 31, 2019. The 2017–2018 year of the NYL included a wide range of hands-on experiences that engaged the new youth legislators at very high levels.

The first year of their two-year term was dedicated to interactive learning opportunities that prepare youth legislators to carry out their duties of representing the youth in their senatorial districts with the utmost efficiency and effectiveness. This included the requirement that each youth legislator form a District Youth Advisory Council (DYAC), as well as prepare a plan for at least one DYAC meeting and conduct that meeting. Up to two students from each high school in the district can engage in the DYACs. Youth legislators also prepared a Town Hall Meeting Plan and conducted that meeting with their constituents.

The main focus of the 2017–2018 year was to train and educate youth legislators in communication skills, constituent engagement, and leadership, which will also benefit them during the second year of their term. Through these trainings, youth legislators obtained valuable education that will help them make reasoned decisions when they process their bill draft request (BDR) for the 2019 Legislative Session.

In conclusion, the 2017–2018 year was marked by the rapid growth of the NYL program and the individuals who have participated. Youth legislators learned, through training and interactive experiences, how the government is deeply integrated into their daily lives. They also learned to give the youth of Nevada a voice in the legislative process and other levels of representative government.

Submitted by:

Senator Valerie Wiener (Ret.), Chair
Board of Directors for Corporation for
Public Benefit to Administer the Nevada Youth Legislature

2017 SUMMER TRAINING

August 3–4, 2017

On August 3, 2017, youth legislators from southern Nevada were flown to Reno to participate in a two-day training session in Carson City, Nevada, led by Senator Valerie Wiener (Ret.), Chair, Board of Directors for Corporation for Public Benefit to Administer the Nevada Youth Legislature (*Nevada Revised Statutes* [NRS] 219A.300). The training educated youth legislators on how to perform the duties of their appointment to the NYL. After gathering at the Plaza Hotel, youth legislators were escorted to the Legislative Building by Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) personnel. At that time, youth legislators received photo IDs and training binders.

While getting to know each other in the Senate Caucus Room, youth legislators were assigned roles that they would complete throughout the two-day training, ranging from giving mock testimony on bills, chairing mock committees, speaking on the Senate floor, to participating in telephonic media interviews. Accompanied by Grant Gabriel and Zhan Okuda-Lim, Former NYL Chairs, the youth legislators then moved to the front of the Legislative Building to participate in icebreaker activities, which allowed them to get acquainted.

After this activity, youth legislators moved to the Senate Chamber for the official welcome, led by Senator Wiener, and their official swearing-in by Michael A. Cherry, Chief Justice*, Supreme Court of Nevada. Grant Gabriel and Madeleine Welch, Former Nevada Youth Legislator, informed youth legislators about their roles and responsibilities as representatives of the youth in their senatorial districts.

**Mr. Cherry became an Associate Justice on January 1, 2018.*

During lunch, panelists shared personal stories and experiences involving the role and impact of lobbyists during the legislative process. The three panelists were: (1) Jeanette K. Belz, J.K. Belz & Associates, Inc.; (2) Christiana Cabrera, Former Nevada Youth Legislator and 2017 Legislative Session lobbyist; and (3) Senator Wiener.

In the afternoon, youth legislators learned about decorum, how a bill becomes a law, and the requirements of Nevada's Open Meeting Law (OML).

Youth legislators then participated in their first experience of the legislative process with mock committee hearings. The mock committee membership included: Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Assemblywoman Amber Joiner, and Senator Wiener. The three bills heard in the mock committee were:

1. Senate Bill 237 (Chapter 244, *Statutes of Nevada 2011*);
2. Senate Bill 414 (Chapter 338, *Statutes of Nevada 2013*); and
3. Senate Bill 464 (Chapter 288, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*).

After the mock committee meeting, youth legislators returned to the Plaza Hotel. Shortly thereafter, the Legislative Police drove them to the Governor's Mansion, where they had dinner and lively discussions with Mark Gibbons, Associate Justice, Supreme Court of Nevada; Scott W. Anderson, Chief Deputy, Office of the Secretary of State; and Brian Krolicki, Former Lieutenant Governor. Following dinner, youth legislators had the opportunity to relax during a bowling and bonding activity at the Gold Dust West Bowling Center.

During the second day of training, youth legislators took the lead in their own mock committee meeting. They heard Senate Bill 249 (Chapter 456, *Statutes of Nevada 2017*) for which Evan Gong, Former Nevada Youth Legislator, testified by telephone from Germany. Mr. Gong proposed SB 249 as his BDR during his NYL experience. Youth Legislators also heard Senate Bill 108 (Chapter 103, *Statutes of Nevada 2017*), which was the NYL's 2017 Legislative Session bill. This measure was offered by then and current Youth Legislator Olivia Yamamoto, who testified on the measure during the mock committee meeting.

Later in the afternoon, youth legislators were briefed about the bill drafting process. In addition, they learned how to narrow down issues to determine particular bill draft ideas. They gathered as small groups to brainstorm issues and later presented their ideas to the entire group. In this second step of the issue-narrowing process, youth legislators determined their top ten issues.

Following the issue-narrowing exercise, youth legislators returned to the Senate Chamber to participate in a mock floor session. During this time, the five measures heard in the two mock committee meetings were debated and voted upon by all youth legislators, who voted at the desks of their appointing Senators. Former Lieutenant Governor Krolicki presided over the floor session.

Youth legislators then walked to Red's Old 395 Grill for lunch and an official presentation of their certificates of appointment and business cards. Following lunch, youth legislators returned to the Legislative Building, where three youth legislators participated in an interview with Senator Wiener for the NYL web page and three youth legislators participated in a telephonic newspaper interview with Meghan Delaney, reporter, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

Prior to departing the Legislative Building to return to their homes, youth legislators sent e-mail messages to their district's Senate and Assembly members, recorded personal reflections of their training on video, and enjoyed the traditional carrot cake celebration.

MEETINGS/TRAINING SESSIONS

September 12, 2017

After the meeting was called to order and public comment was made available, the youth legislators elected their 2017–2018 officers in compliance with the OML. After nominations and one-minute speeches by candidates, Youth Legislator Caramia Phillips was elected Chair, and Youth Legislator Rylee Cragun was elected Vice Chair. Senator Wiener provided comments and overview regarding the NYL for the 2017–2019 term. No one provided public comment at the beginning or conclusion of the meeting.

Following the meeting, youth legislators met for their monthly training. An important part of the NYL program involves Senators and Assembly members, who serve as group discussion leaders during each monthly training session. They talk about the particular training topics and answer questions developed by Senator Wiener, as well as other related questions raised by youth legislators during the group discussions. Following these group break-outs, a group reporter, sitting with the elected official at the witness table, presents a summary of what that group learned. The focus of September’s training was “Constituent Outreach and the Role of Advisory Groups in Legislative Districts.” Legislators who led discussion groups in the south were: Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro, Assemblyman John Hambrick, and Assemblyman James Oscarson. Grant Gabriel led the northern discussion group.

Participating by telephone and in writing, Emily Espinosa, Former Nevada Youth Legislator, and Katherine Krolicki, Former NYL Vice Chair, shared their experiences to highlight: effective ways to recruit DYAC members, how to operate a DYAC, the importance of making interconnections and helping each other, and the value of listening.

October 12, 2017

At the beginning of the training, youth legislators shared experiences about their DYAC recruitment efforts, and they were reminded about the deadlines for both appointing their DYAC members and holding their first DYAC meetings.

Senator Wiener provided instruction and insights about “Message Accountability Skills,” which was the focus of the training. Legislators who led discussion groups included: Assemblyman Chris Edwards, Assemblyman Al Kramer, and Assemblywoman Ellen B. Spiegel. Participating by telephone, Laurel Cavallo and Jonathan Oglesby, Former NYL Vice Chairs, shared their own experiences and perspectives about message accountability. All youth legislators then had the opportunity to engage in a paired interview activity. After this activity, six youth legislators (two in the north and four in the south) participated in three role-playing scenarios related to interacting with student advisers.

November 14, 2017

The NYL convened for a training session about “Effective Listening Skills.” At the beginning of the training, youth legislators introduced their DYAC members and discussed their progress with their DYAC appointments and meeting plans. Chair Phillips described her successful DYAC meeting.

Senator Wiener led the training on “Effective Listening Skills,” which was followed by discussion groups led by: Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Senator Becky Harris*, Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton, and Assemblyman Jim Wheeler. After this, each group reporter and legislator presented summaries of their discussions from the witness table.

Participating by telephone, Julie Borzage, Former Nevada Youth Legislator, and Mitchell Ragan, Former NYL Chair Pro Tempore, shared their ideas about effective listening skills. Then, youth legislators and guest DYAC members engaged in a paired activity about attending and questioning a speaker for deeper revelation, which was followed by three interactive listening scenarios (roles played by two youth legislators in the north and four youth legislators in the south).

**Ms. Harris resigned from the Senate on January 16, 2018.*

January 6, 2018

The NYL celebrated the 11th year of the program at gatherings of current and alumni members, as well as legislators, LCB staff, and training presenters. These celebrations were held at the Grant Sawyer Building in Las Vegas and the Legislative Building in Carson City. Senator Wiener, Zhan Okuda-Lim, and Vice Chair Rylee Cragun attended both events.

January 11, 2018

Following the convening of the training, youth legislators shared experiences about their DYAC meetings. Senator Wiener provided training, involving experiences and teaching moments, about delivering effective “Power Presentations.”

Presenting from the witness table in Las Vegas, Alex Bybee, Former NYL Chair, Emily Espinosa, and Evan Gong shared their experiences and suggestions about the importance of effective presentation skills. Following this, youth legislators participated in discussion groups led by: Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Assemblywoman Brittney Miller, Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, and Assemblywoman Jill Tolles. Group reporters, along with the legislators, summarized the group discussions at the witness table.

Youth legislators and guest DYAC members then participated in paired activities regarding vocal detours during presentation delivery, and two youth legislators provided mock presentations at the witness table.

February 13, 2018

The NYL convened a public meeting in compliance with OML to determine the appointment of a youth legislator to represent the NYL during the nomination process by the Nevada Association of Student Councils for the student member on the State Board of Education. Youth Legislator Spencer Abrams volunteered to represent the NYL, and youth legislators voted unanimously to support this. No one provided public comment at the beginning or conclusion of the meeting.

Following this meeting, youth legislators participated in a training session on how to organize and conduct effective town hall meetings. Senator Wiener led the training, which included instruction, experiences, and suggestions. Youth legislators then participated in discussion groups led by: Senator Aaron D. Ford, Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod, Assemblyman Jason Frierson, and Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner. Group reporters, along with legislators, summarized the group activity at the witness table. In addition, Kenneth Brooke, Former Nevada Youth Legislator (participating by telephone), and Zhan Okuda-Lim (at the witness table in Las Vegas) offered suggestions about how to prepare and conduct effective town hall meetings.

Youth legislators and guest DYAC members participated in paired activities regarding their town hall meeting plans. Then, three youth legislators (one in the north and two in the south), led mock town hall meetings.

March 14, 2018 (Optional Telephone Conference Call)

Though an optional activity, seven youth legislators participated in a telephonic conference call to discuss their DYAC and town hall meetings. Youth legislators, who participated in the conference call, shared how these meetings were helping them to understand what is important to youth in their districts and to formulate ideas for possible BDRs.

April 12, 2018

Jeanette K. Belz led the training on “Effective Negotiation Skills.” Group discussions were led by Senator Wiener, Assemblyman Steve Yeager, and Ms. Belz. Group reporters and the discussion leaders presented summaries at the witness table.

Participating by telephone, Ethan Foster and Miranda Rosen, Former NYL Chairs, shared their experiences and wisdom about effective negotiation skills.

At the conclusion of the training session, the NYL held a meeting, in compliance with OML, to elect the chair and vice chair for 2018–2019. Youth Legislator Olivia Yamamoto was elected NYL Chair and Youth Legislator Rachel Rush was elected NYL Vice Chair.

Senator Wiener discussed the content of the NYL Annual Report (to be prepared by the NYL Chair, pursuant to NRS 219A.210). Public comment was requested at the beginning and conclusion of the meeting; none was provided.

Additional Activities/Involvement by Youth Legislators

Chair Caramia Phillips represented the NYL on the Nevada Educator Code of Ethics Advisory Group (Assembly Bill 124 [Chapter 420, *Statutes of Nevada 2017*]).

Youth Legislator Olivia Yamamoto was on the list of potential members of the State Board of Education's subcommittee to study the manner in which to include certain instruction in criminal law in the Social Studies courses required for graduation from a public high school (Senate Bill 108 [Chapter 103, *Statutes of Nevada 2017*]).

Youth Legislator Spencer Abrams represented the NYL as a consulting member, to work with the Nevada Association of Student Councils to nominate a student member of the State Board of Education.

By May 30, 2018

The NYL Annual Report 2017–2018 is submitted to the Governor, the Board of Directors for Corporation for Public Benefit to Administer the Nevada Youth Legislature, the Legislative Committee on Education, and to the 2019 Session of the Nevada Legislature.