(Reprinted with amendments adopted on May 3, 2007)

SECOND REPRINT **S.B. 247**

SENATE BILL NO. 247–SENATORS WIENER, HORSFORD, WOODHOUSE, TITUS, SCHNEIDER, AMODEI, CEGAVSKE, HECK, LEE, MATHEWS AND WASHINGTON

MARCH 12, 2007

JOINT SPONSOR: ASSEMBLYWOMAN PARNELL

Referred to Committee on Human Resources and Education

SUMMARY—Creates the Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum. (BDR 34-52)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.
Effect on the State: No.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in ***bolded italics*** is new; matter between brackets [~~omitted material~~] is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to education; creating the Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum; prescribing the membership, powers and duties of the Forum; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Sections 3-5 of this bill create the Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum, consisting of 21 members who are enrolled in grades 9-12 in public schools or otherwise eligible for enrollment in public schools but enrolled in a homeschool or private school. Each Senator appoints a member to the Forum. **Sections 6-10** of this bill set forth the powers and duties of the Forum. The Forum must hold at least two public hearings each school year, review issues of importance to the youth in this State and submit an annual report of the activities of the Forum. In addition, the Forum may, within the limits of available money, hold meetings during a regular session of the Legislature to advise the Legislature on proposed legislation concerning the youth in this State. The Forum may also conduct seminars for the benefit of its members relating to leadership, government and the legislative process. Finally, the Forum may submit a request for the drafting of one legislative measure which relates to matters within the scope of the Forum.

WHEREAS, The United States is facing a population of youth that is disengaged and lacks the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to participate in and carry out civic duties; and

WHEREAS, In the 2004 presidential election, 53.1 percent of Nevadans over 25 years of age voted, compared with 38.4 percent among Nevadans 18 to 24 years of age; and

WHEREAS, The lack of voter turnout for citizens who are 18 to 24 years of age is often attributed to cynicism toward the political process, disillusionment with politics, voter apathy and a lack of acknowledgment by the media and politicians of issues involving youth; and

WHEREAS, Most governmental services are designed with input and participation from the people being served; however, young people under the age of 18 are not allowed to vote and are often left out of the democratic process; and

WHEREAS, Several issues are important to the youth in the nation as well as the youth in this State, including, without limitation, education, employment opportunities, participation in state and local government, a safe environment, the prevention of substance abuse, emotional and physical well-being, foster care and access to state and local services; and

WHEREAS, Research shows that the programs designed for youth which are most effective at promoting positive outcomes are framed in terms of the constructive assets the programs seek to build rather than the negative behaviors the programs seek to avoid; and

WHEREAS, There is a growing need to reverse the trend of apathy by engaging our youth directly with policymakers in a manner that will provide genuine opportunities for our youth to acquire civic knowledge and develop the skills necessary to participate fully in a democratic society; and

WHEREAS, Within the past 5 years, Maine, New Mexico, Washington and New Hampshire have enacted bills that create a Youth Issues Forum, which institutionalizes the participation of youth in the policy-making process in those states; and

WHEREAS, The creation of a Youth Issues Forum offers policymakers an opportunity to learn from youth as well as provides a meaningful opportunity for youth to learn about the policy-making process; and

WHEREAS, By providing an avenue for participation, this State will provide our youth with an opportunity to understand the ideals of citizenship and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in effective government and appreciate the value of American democracy; now, therefore,

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Chapter 385 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto the provisions set forth as sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act.

Sec. 2. ***As used in sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act, "Forum" means the Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum created by section 3 of this act.***

Sec. 3. ***1. The Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum is hereby created, consisting of 21 members.***

2. Each member of the Senate shall appoint a person who submits an application and meets the qualifications for appointment set forth in section 4 of this act.

3. After the initial terms:

(a) Appointments to the Forum must be made by each member of the Senate before June 30 of each year.

(b) The term of each member of the Forum begins July 1 of the year of appointment.

4. Each member of the Forum serves a term of 1 year and may be reappointed if the member continues to meet the qualifications for appointment set forth in section 4 of this act.

Sec. 4. ***1. To be eligible for appointment to the Forum, a person must be a resident of the senatorial district of the Senator who appoints him and must be:***

(a) Enrolled in a public school in this State in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 for the school year in which he serves; or

(b) Exempt from compulsory attendance pursuant to NRS 392.070, but otherwise eligible to enroll in a public school in this State in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 for the school year in which he serves.

2. A person who is eligible for appointment to the Forum may submit an application on the form prescribed pursuant to subsection 3 to the Senator of the senatorial district in which the person resides for appointment or reappointment to the Forum.

3. The Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau shall prescribe a form for applications submitted pursuant to this section, which must require the signature of the principal of the school in which the applicant is enrolled or, if the applicant is exempt from compulsory attendance pursuant to NRS 392.070, the signature of a member of the community in which the applicant resides other than a relative of the applicant.

Sec. 5. ***1. A position on the Forum becomes vacant upon:***

(a) The death or resignation of a member.

(b) The absence of a member for any reason from two consecutive meetings of the Forum, unless excused by the Chairman of the Forum.

(c) A change of residency of a member which renders that member ineligible under his original appointment.

2. A vacancy on the Forum must be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.

Sec. 6. ***1. The Forum shall elect from among its members, to serve a term of 1 year beginning on July 1 of each year:***

(a) A Chairman, who shall conduct the meetings and oversee the formation of committees as necessary to accomplish the business of the Forum. The Chairman must be:

(1) Enrolled in a public school in this State in grade 9, 10 or 11 for the school year in which he serves; or

(2) Exempt from compulsory attendance pursuant to NRS 392.070, but otherwise eligible to enroll in a public school in this State in grade 9, 10 or 11 for the school year in which he serves.

(b) A Vice Chairman, who shall assist the Chairman and conduct the meetings of the Forum if the Chairman is absent or otherwise unable to perform his duties.

2. The Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau:

(a) Shall provide meeting rooms and teleconference and videoconference facilities for the Forum.

(b) Shall, in the event of a vacancy on the Forum, notify the appropriate appointing authority of such vacancy.

(c) May accept gifts, grants and donations from any source for the support of the Forum in carrying out the provisions of sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act.

Sec. 7. ***1. The Forum shall:***

(a) Hold at least two public hearings in this State each school year.

(b) Simultaneously teleconference or videoconference each public hearing to two or more prominent locations throughout this State.

(c) Evaluate, review and comment upon issues of importance to the youth in this State, including, without limitation:

(1) Education;

(2) Employment opportunities;

(3) Participation of youth in state and local government;

(4) A safe learning environment;

(5) The prevention of substance abuse;

(6) Emotional and physical well-being;

(7) Foster care; and

(8) Access to state and local services.

(d) Conduct a public awareness campaign to raise awareness about the Forum and to enhance outreach to the youth in this State.

2. The Forum may, within the limits of available money:

(a) During the period in which the Legislature is in a regular session, meet as often as necessary to conduct the business of the Forum and to advise the Legislature on proposed legislation relating to the youth in this State.

(b) Form committees, which may meet as often as necessary to assist with the business of the Forum.

(c) Conduct periodic seminars for its members regarding leadership, government and the legislative process.

(d) Employ a person to provide administrative support for the Forum or pay the costs incurred by one or more volunteers to provide any required administrative support.

3. The Forum and its committees shall comply with the provisions of chapter 241 of NRS.

4. On or before June 30 of each year, the Forum shall submit a written report to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and to the Governor describing the activities of the Forum during the immediately preceding school year and any recommendations for legislation. The Director shall transmit the written report to the Legislative Committee on Education and to the next regular session of the Legislature.

Sec. 8. ***The Forum may:***

1. Request the drafting of not more than one legislative measure which relates to matters within the scope of the Forum. A request must be submitted to the Legislative Counsel on or before July 1 preceding the commencement of a regular session of the Legislature unless the Legislative Commission authorizes submitting a request after that date.

2. Adopt procedures to conduct meetings of the Forum and any committees thereof. Those procedures may be changed upon approval of a majority vote of all members of the Forum who are present and voting.

3. Advise the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau regarding the administration of any appropriations, gifts, grants or donations received for the support of the Forum.

Sec. 9. ***The members of the Forum serve without compensation. To the extent that money is available, including, without limitation, money from gifts, grants and donations, the members of the Forum may receive the per diem allowance and travel expenses provided for state officers and employees generally for attending a meeting of the Forum or a seminar conducted by the Forum.***

Sec. 10. 1. Each Senator shall appoint a member to the Nevada Youth Legislative Issues Forum created by section 3 of this act to an initial term commencing on July 1, 2008, and expiring on June 30, 2009.

2. The Forum shall hold its first meeting not later than October 1, 2008. At the first meeting of the Forum, the members of the Forum shall elect a Chairman and a Vice Chairman who hold those positions until June 30, 2009.

3. After the initial terms of office, sections 3 and 6 of this act govern the terms of office of the members of the Forum.

Sec. 11. This act becomes effective upon passage and approval.

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