

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Seventy-Fourth Session
February 19, 2007**

The Committee on Health and Human Services was called to order by Chair Sheila Leslie at 1:30 p.m., on Monday, February 19, 2007, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775-684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie, Chair
Assemblywoman Susan Gerhardt, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Bob Beers
Assemblywoman Ellen Koivisto
Assemblywoman Kathy McClain
Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell
Assemblywoman Peggy Pierce
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart
Assemblywoman Valerie E. Weber
Assemblywoman RoseMary Womack

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Assemblyman Joseph P. (Joe) Hardy (Excused)



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sarah J. Lutter, Committee Policy Analyst
Bonnie Borda Hoffecker, Committee Manager
Patricia Evans, Committee Secretary
Katrina Zach, Committee Secretary
Olivia Lloyd, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michael Stoops, Nevada Coalition for the Homeless, Washington, D.C.
Shannon West, Regional Homeless Services Coordinator, Sierra Nevada
Regional Planning Coalition, Las Vegas, Nevada
Darryl Martin, Committee on Homelessness, Las Vegas, Nevada
James Walker, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Nicolas C. Anthony, Office of the City Manager, Reno, Nevada
Brad Goetsch, Churchill County, Nevada
Richard Bartholet, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Nevada
Small Business Development Center, College of Business
Administration, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada
Frederick Steinmann, Nevada Small Business Development Center, Reno,
Nevada
Officer Patrick O'Bryan, Reno Police Department, Reno, Nevada
Kathleen Sandoval, Children's Cabinet, Reno, Nevada
Andrea Rojas, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Ashley Benson, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Kathleen Boutin, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Las Vegas,
Nevada
Callyce Carroll, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Michael Flores, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Terry Ruth Lindemann, Family Promise, Las Vegas, Nevada
Elizabeth Dorway, Family Promise, Reno, Nevada
Charles Holthauser, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Sue Meuschke, Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence, Reno,
Nevada
Chuck Fulkerson, Veteran's Advocate, Reno, Nevada

Chair Leslie:

[Meeting called to order.] We will dispense with roll today, mark members here as they arrive. Dr. Hardy is excused. BDR S-525 was introduced on the floor today; it is now Assembly Bill 126. [Meeting was turned over to Vice Chair Gerhardt.]

Assembly Bill 126: Makes an appropriation for transitional housing and supportive services for persons who are homeless. (BDR S-525)

Assemblywoman Leslie:

I would like to commend Travis Rice, intern from University of Nevada, Reno, for his efforts on this PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit C](#)). A.B. 126 will be referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means as it is an appropriations bill. This Committee should have an understanding of the policy concerns behind this bill. Section 1 is a one-time appropriation for \$10 million in each of the next two fiscal years. A subcommittee will be appointed to consider applications from local governments for these funds. Section 2 includes standard revision language and will be effective upon passage and approval.

Assemblywoman Weber:

Will community non-profits and the faith community be able to compete for some of these appropriation dollars?

Assemblywoman Leslie:

Absolutely. I would like the flexibility of local governments to engage and work together. The priority setting and accountability should remain at the local level.

Assemblyman Beers:

Have there been any thoughts or impressions on what the potential benefits to the community will be?

Assemblywoman Leslie:

How would this benefit be continued or evaluated? This would be funded on a one-time basis this time and will require reports back to the Interim Finance Committee over the next two years. We hope this will be included in the Governor's base budget.

Assemblyman Beers:

I do not see this as a one-time Band-Aid and I like the idea of looking at this bill as a multi-faceted approach.

[Assemblywoman Leslie returns to Chair]

Michael Stoops, Acting Executive Director, National Coalition for the Homeless, Regional Homeless Services Coordinator, Washington, D.C.:

The factors of life are not only soup, soap, sleep, and salvation. The four leading causes of homelessness are lack of affordable housing, lack of universal health care, poor-paying jobs, and domestic violence. Homelessness continues due to cuts in the federal housing budget. The handout submitted is a summary of our program. ([Exhibit D](#))

Shannon E. West, Chair, Nevada Inter-Agency Council on Homeless, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Nevada is ranked second in homelessness per capita. Two years ago, the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development directed that in order to receive housing funds, each jurisdiction must implement a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). [Reference PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit E](#)).]

Darryl Martin, Chair, Southern Nevada Coalition Committee on Homelessness, Assistant Manager, Clark County, Nevada:

[Continuation of PowerPoint presentation previously submitted. A video on homeless demographics was also submitted, ([Exhibit E](#)).] According to Housing and Urban Development (HUD), southern Nevada is estimated to have a shortage of approximately 4,200 beds in transitional, permanent, and supportive housing and emergency shelters. Two years ago, the Coalition received a \$4 million grant through A.B. No. 580 of the 73rd Session. These funds were used to provide a continuum of care for the homeless in the form of grants to the non-profit community. The Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition Committee on Homelessness decided that the homeless issue had to be addressed on a regional basis and not as individual jurisdictions. Clark County will fund this program on an ongoing basis effective July 2007.

Chair Leslie:

I recognize the success of the grant and continuance of the program through Clark County.

Darryl Martin:

We have implemented the Southern Nevada Homeless Trust Fund, which is supported by United Way and both private and non-profit sectors. There is a website called HelpHopeHome.org through which donations are accepted. In addition to the website, there are a number of brief public service announcements sponsored by Brown and Partners and Clark County.

James Walker, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I would like to introduce my daughter, Amy Walker, who is an honor roll student. Most of Amy's life has been in a homeless family. I was a drug addict, unemployed, disabled, had emotional and psychological issues, and was a single father trying to survive. I was afraid of losing custody of Amy to Child Protective Services.

Darryl Martin:

[A public service presentation video on homelessness was submitted.] Millions of Americans are one pay check, one lost job, one rent increase, one serious illness away from homelessness. Go to HelpHopeHome.org. and help change a life.

Nicolas C. Anthony, Legislative Relations Program Manager, Office of the City Manager, Reno, Nevada:

We welcome the support from Chair Leslie and the Committee for A.B. 126. We recently finished the 2007 Point-In-Time count. A coalition counted all homeless individuals, citywide. [A PowerPoint presentation was submitted on a statewide report from HMIS, ([Exhibit F](#)).] We found that 90 per cent of people living in weekly motels were area residents when they became homeless. The HMIS reports show that 20 percent of our homeless are under 18 years old. Three major challenges in Nevada are an increase in homeless families, a lack of affordable housing, and stagnant or reduced service funding. A ten-year plan was submitted.

Assemblywoman Parnell:

Is there a plan in place for those people who are being evicted? Is there a model, an example somewhere that could be accessed?

Darryl Martin:

I do not know of a plan that has been successful. If A.B. 126 is successful, the entire focus will be on affordable housing.

Nicolas Anthony:

We are attempting to meet the needs on transitional and long-term housing.

Assemblywoman Womack:

One of the areas often overlooked is fathers with children. What are we doing in southern and northern Nevada for this?

Darryl Martin:

What we have done, particularly with the funds we received from A.B. No. 580 of the 73rd Session, is create a Housing First model, using some of those funds to house people in an apartment as quickly as possible.

Brad Goetsch, County Manager, Churchill County, Nevada:

Churchill County has more homeless than any other rural county in Nevada. There has been a spike recently related to the change in the real estate market, the decline in construction and jobs for people working in part-time or transient jobs. Trailer courts are disappearing for people who are on the fringe. This is a workforce we are not utilizing, half of which has been homeless for less than six months. The slide presentation included demographics on the cross section of the homeless.

Shannon West:

The opportunities to move forward in addressing our homelessness issues are: support the establishment of an Inter-Agency council, coordinate a statewide plan over the next five to ten years, and track the progress of the plan.

Richard Bartholet, Director of Research Development, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Nevada Small Business Development Center, College of Business Administration, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada:

The study on the Cost of Homelessness and the Cost-Effectiveness of Permanent Supportive Housing ([Exhibit G](#)) was commissioned by Washoe County. Participating in the study were Ms. Chandeni Gill, Mr. Frederick Steinmann, Dr. Glen Atkinson, Dr. Mark Nichols, Dr. Ann Hubbert, and Dr. Tom Harris. The study involved three different phases: primary service providers, utilization patterns by individuals, and case study of the homeless.

Frederick Steinmann, Nevada Small Business Development Center, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada:

[PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit G](#)).] Essentially, two types of demand were identified: the demand caused by the homeless population directly, and the effects of homeless population services. Without ample transitional housing, individuals who have been court ordered are held longer in the Washoe County Sheriff's Office detention facility, waiting for a bed to become available. Those individuals released, but not court ordered, generally end up back on the street or in a weekly motel. This represents a continuing recycling of the population. Weekly motels have the largest number of 911 calls.

Chair Leslie:

We are paying for homeless services, but funds are not being used effectively. Is there another way that makes more sense?

Richard Bartholet:

Funds are being spent on inappropriate services because there are no other ways to provide those services.

Frederick Steinmann:

Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) responses, evictions, and 911 calls are reactive. The problem has already occurred. They are not proactive in reducing the actual demand on the various service providers, especially first responders.

Chair Leslie:

Please forward a copy of the case study to our Committee staff when it is available.

Officer Patrick O'Bryan, Reno Police Department, Reno, Nevada:

[A video segment from Reno Channel 4, narrated by reporter Vicki Campbell, was presented.] Officer O'Bryan was responsible for the box camera project in Reno, which included providing the homeless with disposable cameras and small notebooks to document life on the street. The police department must not be used for crises management for people who have been victimized by illness, social situations, or circumstances beyond their control. What do children see? Are we preparing them to be homeless adults? Jacqueline O'Malley, with the Reno Gazette-Journal, has a blog on the homeless in Reno and is tracking an individual who has had 73 arrests since 1991 and alcohol is the problem. This means we have missed 73 opportunities to remedy this situation. We may be more successful solving the homeless problem than managing it. Law enforcement is not a tool for helping the homeless who may be victims of chance.

Chair Leslie:

This Committee would like to see the study when it becomes available.

Assemblywoman Parnell:

I would like to acknowledge efforts of Elizabeth and Allan Dorway, who opened the Presbyterian Church and provided meals for the tent city camp-out and coordinated the tent city event. Cactus Jack's donated all the food for the dinner.

Chair Leslie:

The Methodist Church hosted an inter-faith service.

**Kathleen Sandoval, Program Director for the Family and Youth Department,
Children's Cabinet:**

One of the programs implemented focuses specifically on runaway and homeless youth. This population does what is called "couch surfing", which makes an accurate count difficult. Seventy-three percent of runaway youth are abused and neglected.

Andrea Rojas, Private Citizen:

I came from an abusive home, was a runaway, and homeless, I went from an abusive home to Child Protective Services.

Ashley Benson, Private Citizen:

Most of the time kids run away due to mental and physical abuse, alcoholism, and domestic violence.

**Kathleen Boutin, Director, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Las Vegas,
Nevada:**

"Throw-away youth" are what we call repudiated youth. Most have parents who are substance-abuse addicts. Most of these youths become homeless adults. We manage the HMIS project for Clark County. We must manage the adult population by first addressing homeless youth. In addition to intervention services, we must look at prevention services. This agency emphasizes employment and education.

Curtis Robinson, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

This repudiated youth has been accepted to George Washington University. Referrals are the services and options most needed by homeless youth. I finally found the Partnership for Youth.

Callyce Carroll, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I have been homeless since age 14. I thought I was the only homeless youth in the world. We need referrals for assistance in obtaining a Social Security card, job, shelter, and life skills.

Michael Flores, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I attend the Community College of Southern Nevada. I first became aware of youth homelessness at age ten when I visited a park with my grandmother. Many times youth feel powerless.

Terry Ruth Lindemann, Executive Director, Family Promise, Las Vegas, Nevada:

In Las Vegas, we work with 1,000 volunteers who assist in implementing this program. This program works specifically with homeless families, also serving homeless fathers with children. [A handout and pictures of a family living in their care were submitted ([Exhibit H](#)).] Family Promise struggles to keep families in their homes.

Elizabeth Dorway, Executive Director, Family Promise, Reno/Sparks, Nevada:

The high cost of housing, and families who cannot afford that housing, is a scenario seen on a daily basis. Transitional housing affords people time in which to develop living and coping skills.

Charles Holthouser, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I live in a homeless shelter and feel like a faceless statistic. Through Family Promise, my family is in a safe and stable environment. Transitional programs can work, but many more are needed.

Susan Meuschke, Executive Director, Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence, Reno, Nevada:

Domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness, particularly among families, which is a fast-growing segment of the homeless population. Without access to housing resources, many battered women are forced to choose between staying with an abuser or living in inadequate, unsafe conditions. Transitional housing is designed to bridge the gap between crisis shelter and permanent housing. ([Exhibit I](#))

Chuck Fulkerson, Veteran's Advocate, Reno, Nevada:

[Read from prepared text ([Exhibit J](#))] I am a proponent of transitional housing for homeless veterans, most of whom are single. Current funding covers only about 25 percent of the need. Veterans suffer from mental and emotional issues and nightmares. One out of three homeless persons is a veteran. A large number of veterans live with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, with substance-abuse, and a lack of family and social support networks. We owe veterans more than we are providing.

Assemblywoman Womack:

Senior citizens are homeless because they have lost their spouses and Social Security benefits. Without adequate senior housing, we are seeing more seniors on the streets.

Chair Leslie:

Thank you, all who came today to speak on this extremely important issue.
Meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Patricia Evans
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Health and Human Services

Date: February 19, 2007

Time of Meeting: 1:30 p.m.

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
***	A	*****	Agenda
***	B	*****	Sign-in Sheet
AB 126	C	Assemblywoman Leslie PowerPoint presentation	PowerPoint presentation
AB 126	D	Michael Stoops	National Coalition for the Homeless
AB 126	E	Shannon E. West	Committee On Homelessness
AB 126	F	Nicolas C. Anthony	Homelessness in Nevada
AB 126	G	Richard Bartholet	Cost of Homelessness
AB 126	H	Terry Ruth Lindemann	Family Promise of Nevada
AB 126	I	Susan Meuschke	Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence
AB 126	J	Chuck Fulkerson	Homeless Veterans