

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OPERATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

**Seventy-Eighth Session
March 24, 2015**

The Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections was called to order by Chair Lynn D. Stewart at 4:01 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2015, in Room 3142 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/App/NELIS/REL/78th2015. In addition, copies of the audio or video of the meeting may be purchased, for personal use only, through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775-684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart, Chair
Assemblywoman Shelly M. Shelton, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson
Assemblywoman Michele Fiore
Assemblyman John Moore
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford
Assemblyman James Ohrenschall
Assemblywoman Victoria Seaman
Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson
Assemblyman Glenn E. Trowbridge

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Pat Hickey, Assembly District No. 25
Assemblyman Nelson Araujo, Assembly District No. 3
Assemblyman John Hambrick, Assembly District No. 2



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carol M. Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst
Kevin Powers, Committee Counsel
Patricia Hartman, Committee Secretary
Olivia Lloyd, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Wagner, State Chairman, Independent American Party
George A. Ross, representing Hospital Corporation of America, Inc.
Victoria Carreón, Director of Education Policy, Guinn Center for Policy
Priorities, Las Vegas, Nevada
Robert Durette, Consultant, Healthy Minds, Las Vegas, Nevada
Joseph P. Iser, Chief Health Officer, Southern Nevada Health District
Sheila Leslie, Behavioral Health Program Coordinator, Department of
Social Services, Washoe County
Joseph R. Haas, Psychologist/Administrator, Department of Juvenile
Services, Washoe County
Dan Musgrove, representing Southern Nevada Health District
Sarah McCrea, representing Las Vegas Fire and Rescue
John Burke, Chief Executive Officer, Instep Recovery Services,
Las Vegas, Nevada
Lesley Dickson, Executive Director and State Legislative Representative,
Nevada Psychiatric Association
Katie Roe Ryan, Director, Communications and Public Policy St. Rose
Dominican Hospitals, Henderson, Nevada
Justin Harrison, Director, Government Affairs, Las Vegas Metro Chamber
of Commerce
Steve Yeager, representing Office of the Public Defender, Clark County
Tom Grady, representing the City of Fallon
Richard M. Baldo, representing Nevada Psychological Association
Daniel Stewart, Policy Analyst, Assembly Leadership
Maureen Karas, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Eric Roberts, Executive Director, Clark County Republican Party
Janine Hansen, representing Nevada Families
Jim DeGraffenreid, Vice Chairman, Nevada Republican Party
Joseph P. Gloria, Registrar of Voters, Clark County
Carol Howell, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada

Chair Stewart:

[Roll was taken.] Today we will have a work session ([Exhibit C](#)) on Assembly Joint Resolution 4, which is the daylight saving time resolution. If it passes, we will send a letter to the Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and members of the congressional delegation urging them to establish daylight saving time year-round.

Assembly Joint Resolution 4: Urges Congress to enact legislation allowing states to establish daylight saving time as the standard time throughout the calendar year. (BDR R-583)

ASSEMBLYMAN ELLIOT T. ANDERSON MOVED TO DO PASS
ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 4.

ASSEMBLYMAN OHRENSCHALL SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEN FIORE, SEAMAN AND
STEWART VOTED NO.)

We will give the floor statement to Assemblyman Edwards. We will now open the hearing on Assembly Bill 273. Assemblyman Hickey, please come forward with your presentation.

Assembly Bill 273: Requires a cooling-off period before a former State Legislator may act as a paid lobbyist before the Legislature. (BDR 17-760)

Assemblyman Pat Hickey, Assembly District No. 25:

I am here to present Assembly Bill 273 that requires a so-called cooling off period before a former state lawmaker may act as a paid lobbyist before the Legislature, providing an exception and a penalty. Assembly Bill 273 proposes to enact a cooling-off period before a legislator can return to lobby in the Legislature. The bill does not close the so-called revolving door, which means going from legislator to lobbyist, which many of our colleagues have chosen to do. This bill does provide that when a person leaves the Legislature in November, if he is either term-limited, retires, or is defeated in an election, he would be prohibited from lobbying for only the next regular legislative session. An obvious question is why do this? Usually reform measures such as this are preceded by scandals involving powerful people, which has happened in the U.S. Congress and other places. There is no scandal to speak of here in Nevada; however, I am here to argue that it is still the right thing for us to do.

Our wise forefathers built checks and balances into our system. We have separate and independent powers that bring about a balance and counterbalance to the ambitions and power of individuals in politics.

The other noble idea is that of self-government and that is what we are discussing. We, as a body, and this Committee especially, are the first line of being charged with regulating ourselves as lawmakers. Since we are subject to the will of the voters at elections and to term limits as instituted in the *Nevada Constitution*, I expect we may all have contemplated what we will do after we leave this legislative body. One question to ask might be is it right or wrong for a legislator to become a lobbyist? I think that raises ethical questions, especially regarding public trust. For example, if I thought I was going to be a lobbyist next session after retiring from the Legislature and I had someone in mind who might be a potential client, or I would be employed by them, would it influence how I voted on bills this legislative session? Speaking for myself and knowing human nature, I would have to say it probably would have an impact. It is not my intention to interfere with or to ruin people's economic futures. The bill is about restricting our activity and self-government, even if it costs our colleagues or ourselves a monetary delay in obtaining a possible future career. It is about the revolving door. It is not about capitalizing on relationships built through shared experiences of serving together in this body.

The proposal in A.B. 273 is not new. I submitted a similar bill in the last legislative session. It passed the Assembly and later was left dangling in the Senate. Briefly, these are the provisions. A former legislator shall not receive compensation or other consideration to act as a lobbyist for the period beginning on the date on which the former legislator leaves office and ending at the final adjournment of the next regular session. I think that is important because it means that once a legislator leaves office, he must sit out the following regular legislative session. If most of us held our offices until the election in November, we would only miss the next session.

Here is a case where it would not apply. It would not apply to a former legislator who is required as a full-time employee to lobby for that one employer. If you only worked for the county where you resided, it would not apply on the condition that the former legislator does not act as a lobbyist for any other employer, client, or client of his employer. In other words, it would not apply if you only worked for one client and did not work for a number of people. It also would not apply to a former legislator whose employment responsibilities include significant duties other than lobbying. You might be working for the county with consulting, in local government, or in other affairs of that organization, but have other conditions as part of your employment.

The bill defines the term "consideration" which includes gifts, salary, payments, loans, or anything of value, such as promises for something in return for lobbying. It covers standard areas that are a consideration of things that imply you have a certain financial relationship with a client.

The bill prohibits the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) from accepting a registration form from any former legislator who receives compensation and who was a member of the immediately preceding regular session. It would not allow you to register. The exception is that the Director may accept your registration form if the former legislator fits one of the conditions as outlined in section 1 of the bill.

Section 3 of the bill provides that the violation is a misdemeanor. Someone asked today if we should put people in jail if they were in violation? It is standard language for violation. I think if this bill is passed, it will be clear enough that I doubt there will be confusion from any member of this body about signing up as a lobbyist at an inappropriate time, and the Director of LCB would know that as well.

Section 4 makes these provisions applicable to a person who is elected to the Legislature for a term commencing on or after November 8, 2016. This is an important date. This was part of the discussion and turned into an amendment last session where we said there may already be members that have made future plans beyond this legislative session. You may have already had discussions or plans to retire or are term-limited. This bill is not retroactive, so it would not affect anyone in this existing legislative session. If passed, it would go into effect on November 8 or the date when the next legislators are elected. People at that time would know going in that this prohibition or law is in place. It would not affect anyone who is currently sitting as a legislator.

I have included on the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS) a 50-state summary from the National Conference of State Legislatures ([Exhibit D](#)). There are 33 other states that have enacted similar prohibitions regarding the revolving door. Most require either a one- or two-year prohibition. Many of them ask for a two-year prohibition, and that is why I have that time period in the bill because we only meet every two years. We are a part-time legislature and are not retiring from a highly paid job, but the same ethical considerations apply, and that is why I think this bill is worthy of your consideration.

In conclusion, yes, we are a small state and no, there is not a scandal that this bill is addressing. I am not trying to cast aspersions on the lobbying profession. They are important to each of us and we, as members of the Legislature, appreciate them. We know their value and a former legislator can be very valuable to an organization because of knowing the process, the people, and so forth.

I do not want this to prohibit people from gainful employment, but it would delay that ability for one session. The bill would not preclude one of our members from working for firms and influencing policy or working with some of the clients of a firm or organization who wish to influence policy. This bill would simply limit a former legislator from being a formal lobbyist during the legislative session, except under the conditions that are outlined.

I hope you will look favorably on this bill. Are there any questions?

Chair Stewart:

Thank you, Assemblyman Hickey. If a former legislator were to work for one company and part of his job was to lobby, he could do that, but he could not become a lobbyist for several different clients, correct?

Assemblyman Hickey:

No, he could not be what we commonly refer to as a contract lobbyist and represent a number of clients. It would require other duties of that person than just being a lobbyist. In the case of working for a municipal or county form of government, there would likely be other duties.

Assemblywoman Fiore:

I like the bill. My question is because we are a right-to-work state, once this bill passes, could the state be sued? If a former legislator works for a large advertising firm as a lobbyist and this bill passes, then what happens?

Assemblyman Hickey:

I assume that because similar variations of this bill are in place in 33 other states, many of which are right-to-work states, that it has not been a legal problem. I think it also exists on the federal level. The U.S. Congress has certain prohibitions as well. It is legislation that we are enacting on ourselves. We are proposing to pass a law to do this, and I do not think it would be reversed or challenged.

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:

I think I voted for this in the last session, and I do not have a problem with it. I need to make the point that Nevada operates on the appearance of conflict of interest already. We are a part-time legislature and currently you can be on someone's payroll without problems. Traditionally, it is recognized that we value experience inside of the process. I think this bill is fine, but we have bigger problems when it comes to making the public feel comfortable with ethical conflicts because the citizen legislature works at least on the appearance of conflicts.

Chair Stewart:

All those in favor of the bill, please come forward to testify.

John Wagner, State Chairman, Independent American Party:

I favor this bill with the exception of the penalties. I think that being banned from the building would be enough to take care of the problem.

Chair Stewart:

Is there anyone else in favor of this bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone opposed to this bill? [There was no one.] Is anyone neutral on the bill? [There was no one.] The hearing is closed on Assembly Bill 273. [[Exhibit E](#) was submitted on NELIS but not discussed and will become part of the record.]

I will now open the hearing on Assembly Bill 289.

Assembly Bill 289: Directs the Legislative Commission to appoint a committee to conduct an interim study concerning issues related to the provision of mental health services. (BDR S-693)

Assemblyman Nelson Araujo, Assembly District No. 3:

I represent District No. 3, which is located in the northwest part of the Las Vegas Valley. I am here to discuss Assembly Bill 289, which would direct the Legislative Commission to appoint a committee to conduct an interim study concerning issues related to the provision of mental health services. Joining me today is George Ross from Porter Gordon Silver and Victoria Carreón from the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities. Additionally, you will hear from other critical partners in the health and human services industry.

Mental and behavioral health is a serious issue in our state. Over the past several years, various stakeholders have come together to identify ways to improve our existing mental health and behavioral health system. In the

upcoming testimony from George Ross and other stakeholders, you will learn of the various collaborations that have taken place in our state, and I am proud to say that A.B. 289 is a direct result of such collaborations.

Before I go through the bill, there will be a friendly amendment that states that the chair of the interim study will appoint two specific subcommittees to advise the interim committee on mental health.

Under section 1, the bill states that the Legislative Commission shall appoint a committee to conduct an interim study concerning whether the responsibility for the provision of mental and other behavioral health services should be moved to a regionalized structure. Subsection 2 outlines the manner in which the transition to such a regionalized structure may occur, including the time period during which the transition may occur. Subsection 3 defines the manner in which services may be paid for under such a regionalized structure as well as the sources and revenue available to each region including gifts and grants. Subsection 4 outlines methods to address communication among the regions, and accountability standards for each region.

Under section 2, subsection 1, the bill states that "The committee appointed by the Legislative Commission to conduct an interim study pursuant to section 1 of this act must be composed of 15 members." The breakdown of these members is shown under section 2, subsection 1, paragraphs (a) through (l). Subsections 2 through 8 outline how appointing authorities will handle the appointment process, how the chairperson of the interim committee will be elected, how vacant seat replacements will be managed, voting privileges of committee members, appointment of subcommittees or technical advisory groups, and the compensation of certain committee members. Under subsection 9 of section 2, it states "The interim committee shall submit a report of its findings, including, without limitation, any recommendations for legislation, to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmittal to the 79th Session of the Nevada Legislature." Under subsection 10 of section 2, the interim committee may request the drafting of legislative measures.

Under section 3, the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) shall provide administrative and technical assistance to the interim committee appointed pursuant to section 1. Under section 4, this act becomes effective upon passage and approval for the purpose of performing any preparatory administrative tasks that are necessary to carry out the provisions of this act and on July 1, 2015, for all other purposes.

I have George Ross with me today because I think you will find value in his testimony as he has been involved in the trenches of this work that has been taking place for several years.

George A. Ross, representing Hospital Corporation of America, Inc.:

My presence here today stems from my having been the coordinator of the Healthcare Subcommittee of the Southern Nevada Forum, which met throughout last year and was the descendant of the Southern Nevada Legislative Caucus that met during the session. The legislative leadership of both parties felt that this would be a valuable continuation, opening it up to business communities and other interested parties in southern Nevada who cared about the particular issues.

I was asked to coordinate the Healthcare Subcommittee. Looking at the health care issues, we said, what are the major issues facing southern Nevada and our state? One was graduate medical education. We realized there was a large group of key stakeholders which morphed itself into the Governor's Graduate Medical Education Task Force, which made recommendations that are contained in the budget. We said we are not going to do that because of duplication of people who can already make decisions. We knew there were influential people, both in government and outside of the government, working on the medical school issue. We went through what we thought at the time, and still believe, was the most significant health care issue facing southern Nevada and throughout the state. It is the hidden issue of behavioral or mental health. We were in the middle of a crisis because at that time we had newspaper articles about people being bused away but they never covered the ones who were bused to us. We were reading stories about emergency rooms being packed with folks who were there because of a "Legal 2000" and required to go to the emergency room for evaluation to determine if there was anything physically or medically wrong with them. They were held in the mental health facilities until there was a place to put them if they needed hospitalization due to an insufficient number of beds, particularly for the uninsured.

We had an amazing group of 25 to 30 people come together from all aspects of the mental health field at very high levels. The members included the district health executive director, heads of various professional organizations, vice chancellors of universities, health care professionals, owners of sobering and triage centers, and lobbyists. There were legislators who regularly participated such as Speaker Hambrick, Senator Hardy, Assemblywoman Spiegel, and others.

At the same time we started moving forward, the Governor signed an executive order creating the Governor's Behavioral Health and Wellness Council. We worked closely together, and when the Council realized they needed to make short-term recommendations to the interim committee, we made several recommendations designed to intercept and help people before they got to the point of needing the Legal 2000 hospitalization and the emergency room. We made that presentation in late March and many of those recommendations were those that the Governor's Council adopted.

We began to realize that this state has regional cultures relating to the problems in behavioral and mental health such as identifying the extent of the illness, how to deal with it, and how the patients are different by region. It became clear to us that the most important thing we could recommend was to have a regional structure so that those who worked and practiced in the behavioral health field in the area had a better understanding of that region's specific needs. When collectively working together, they can more accurately and effectively set policy and allocate resources in areas of greatest need.

This is not a criticism of Nevada's Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), who do a phenomenal job, but they are limited because they have statewide policies and responsibilities. This way you get governance and structure closest to the people who are impacted. We recommended the development of a regional mental health authority which would determine policy, resource allocation, contracts, planning, operational and financial management, and oversight. It would identify the program priorities with regard to how the region's revenue would be allocated for mental health problems. Our issue is not how we structure the regional organizations, it is how we effectively organize the study group.

In our last meeting, we realized that we would set up an interim legislative committee needing legislative oversight because this is either a governmental or quasi-governmental or nonprofit group supervised by the government. Responsibility and accountability are necessary. This group will be spending public funds. The majority of the money spent will be Medicaid money sent from the state to the region. Many of the people who are not covered under their regular insurance are those who were going to the emergency rooms, to the triage centers and are single adults with little or no income. Who did Medicaid expansion cover? The answer is single adults with little or no income. We now have a source of revenue to cover the treatment of those people who need it most. We can take advantage of that opportunity by setting up a structure that is closest to the people.

The responsibilities of the interim committee are to manage the structure, its responsibility, its authority, to determine accurate policies, and DPBH regulatory and fiscal oversight. It would need a staff to perform an analysis making sure the allocations are sufficient and efficient. The chairman of the Governor's Council said he is doing this in other states by taking advantage of Medicaid expansion because the funds are available to take care of these people. One of the major problems that needs to be addressed is having responsible people who will be held accountable. Also, they have to make their recommendations and decisions based on expertise and most of them are practitioners. You cannot have people making decisions to make money just for themselves; you need an ethical and effective way of having this accomplished. I think the structure and the approach is excellent. I agree with Assemblyman Araujo's proposed amendment. One of its purposes is to ensure children's behavioral health care receives adequate attention. It does not specifically call for a committee member who does children's work, but it is important because children are a critical subset. These are some of the most helpless people who can become productive members of our society, which is our objective.

The director of the Council said this was the best single study of regionalization he has experienced. Ms. Carreón prepared the study for the Governor's Council and former Senator Randolph J. Townsend is a member of the Governor's Council.

Assemblyman Moore:

My understanding of this committee is that there are 15 members, correct? Are five of them directly answerable to the electorate, and do they have interest in the mental health industry?

Assemblyman Araujo:

This is correct. Four legislative members would be appointed to the council, one each from the Speaker of the Assembly, Senate Majority Leader, Senate Minority Leader, and Assembly Minority Leader: two representatives from each party.

Assemblyman Moore:

The bulk of them are people with a vested interest, correct?

Assemblyman Araujo:

Yes, the majority of them would be community people who we felt had been invested in this work and we wanted to ensure we had representation from each party, both north and south, with different levels of expertise.

George Ross:

With one exception, no one else on the committee is a private sector individual making a profit from treating behavioral-challenged people. Nearly all of them are working for a government entity or nonprofit organization.

Chair Stewart:

As one who has introduced a bill on mental health, I know how passionate these people are who help the mentally challenged.

Assemblyman Trowbridge:

As I read the bill, is this interim study committee intended to replace the Behavioral Health and Wellness Council?

George Ross:

Not to my knowledge. I think the Behavioral Health and Wellness Council is an outstanding organization. The regionalization proposal will have to be implemented legislatively.

Assemblyman Trowbridge:

Is this a duplication?

George Ross:

I would say it is more of a parallel.

Assemblyman Trowbridge:

What would be the expense to run this interim committee?

Assemblyman Araujo:

I would defer to our LCB team to answer that question. I met with the Governor and his team, and this has been a collaborative effort from those I have approached. This was seen as a next step to help move forward a lot of ideas on the agenda for other groups that had been convening including the Southern Nevada Forum and the DPBH. This was the next logical step for us to move forward with the intended plan.

Assemblyman Trowbridge:

I assume that the existing DPBH is doing a great job but needs this committee's help, correct? If the focus of this group is to coordinate existing programs and services, funding, expertise, facilities, and to eliminate duplications and territorial disputes that normally happen, then I am 100 percent in support. But if it is going to become a lobbying group for more money, then that is a different story.

Assemblyman Araujo:

The purpose of this study is for them to determine if this is feasible. One of the biggest questions is to decide if this is realistic in Nevada. This is the reason Mr. Ross decided that he did not want to automatically propose a regionalized health system. We are attempting to understand if this is the appropriate next step for our state. It is not intended to be any type of a lobbying tool, although I will admit the bill does cite that recommendations are to come out of the interim study committee as I feel they should, but then it is up to the 79th Session legislators to make that final decision.

Chair Stewart:

Assemblyman Trowbridge, to partly answer your question, Rick Combs, the Director of LCB, has given us a fiscal note of roughly \$13,000 for this study. This is an interim study and the expense would be minimal. These people are volunteers who work together, correct?

Assemblyman Araujo:

Yes, that is correct.

George Ross:

Nearly every state addresses these problems regionally one way or another. They are all different and we have our own unique culture and constitution, so it has to be uniquely Nevadan.

Assemblyman Araujo:

I believe Ms. Carreón from the Guinn Policy Center may be able to answer some of these questions.

Assemblyman Trowbridge:

I just wanted to add that \$13,000 does not scare me.

Assemblywoman Seaman:

Have we had any studies done by the DPBH regarding what we are trying to do here?

Assemblyman Araujo:

When I recently met with LCB staff, I did not find that information, but I will ask them when their last study was conducted. We did find interim studies and specifically looked to determine if there had ever been a study on the feasibility of a regionalized health system.

Chair Stewart:

Is there anyone wishing to testify in favor of A.B. 289?

**Victoria Carreón, Director of Education Policy, Guinn Center for Policy Priorities,
Las Vegas, Nevada:**

We conducted a seven-state, cross-state analysis of mental health governance models that we presented to the DPBH in December, 2014. That was meant to kick-start the process of discussing how to decentralize Nevada's mental health system. We think this new interim study would be a positive next step because it is quite complicated and other states have also had challenges with their mental health governance systems. So in that sense, Nevada is not alone.

Our testimony ([Exhibit G](#)) is a colored map that answers one of the questions that was asked as to whether Nevada is different from other states. Since 2013, there are only four states that are also centrally providing all of the mental health services. Nevada directly operates all of its community programs. It is far more common for states to contract directly with the community programs, as is being done in 31 states, with 15 states contracting with county or city authorities to operate their programs.

In our study, we looked at Arizona, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington, and found there were a variety of different factors going on in those states. Some of them were doing Medicaid expansion, some of them were in a state of transition, while others were stable. In each of those states, we looked at the overall structure of both behavioral and mental health, the structure of the governing boards' coordination across agencies, local funding, and incentives in evaluation and information technology.

One issue we found in other states is the Affordable Care Act, which has had a great impact across the nation. Also, integration of physical and behavioral health care has become a major issue and will have to be discussed by this proposed interim study committee. We found the amount of local control varies. We came into this thinking that all of the other states had local control, but we found that was not the case. In many instances, there is a regional structure but the state is in direct control of it. There are different models for the governing board structure, some of them have more than others. It is complex and there are many questions that the interim study committee will need to answer as outlined in our testimony.

Chair Stewart:

Is anyone else in favor of this bill?

Robert Durette, Consultant, Healthy Minds, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am in favor of this bill. I represent Healthy Minds, a large children's mental health provider. One size fits all does not allow for efficiency, nor is it the best way to spend funds. Our Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) partner

in children's care has been fantastic. Giving them local partners can only shape policy and provide funding to better meet our state's needs. For example, Washoe County may need more of X, and Clark County may need more of Y, while the rural areas might need more of both. Regional mental health authorities can focus their efforts accordingly, realizing better clinical outcomes and possible cost-savings. Having a regional health authority can allow for accountability at the local level. As a provider here in Clark County, I could drive down the street and talk to my regional mental authority or my representatives and efficiently deal with my patients' needs.

Joseph P. Iser, Chief Health Officer, Southern Nevada Health District:

I take very seriously my role as the community physician for over two million residents and 40 million visitors who pass through our region each year. I have been involved in these meetings as indicated by Mr. Ross. I appreciate the inclusive nature of the decisions we have had over the interim and the investigations into the viability of transitioning the provision of mental and behavioral health services to a regionalized structure. We had many conversations about what that could look like, but I think this interim study will give us a better idea of what it should look like. It is important to keep this momentum going and to continue the dialogue so that we can strategize on our next steps. I feel this measure contains the needed provisions to keep this issue moving forward, and I am here to support A.B. 289.

I have worked in a state that has county-level behavioral and mental health services, and I have found those to be very responsible to the local needs that vary greatly between counties. One of my counties was Yolo County, California, which is a rural county next to Sacramento, and our needs were quite different from those of Sacramento.

Sheila Leslie, Behavioral Health Program Coordinator, Department of Social Services, Washoe County:

We are in support of this bill. Regionalization will be a major shift in how our mental health system operates, and I commend the Guinn Center report. It answers all of the questions that have been brought up. They have done an excellent study, particularly on what other states do and how Nevada functions.

We cannot undertake a shift of this magnitude without an interim study as outlined in this bill. I worked in the court system for many years with mentally ill people, and I cannot tell you how many people come into the system because they have a difficult time switching from the juvenile mental health system to the adult mental health system. This study is also needed to help us

develop a seamless transition between those two systems. Juvenile mental health is located in DCFS and adult mental health is located in the Division of Public and Behavioral Health, which are two different divisions of Nevada's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). You might want to consider adding to the committee or replacing one of the existing members with a mental health expert from DCFS. My colleague from Washoe County Department of Juvenile Services will explain the need for this. This should be a priority, and I know we have made progress in the mental health area in the last few years. Mental health has become a huge priority across the state, not just in Clark County, and I hope you will support this bill.

Joseph R. Haas, Psychologist/Administrator, Department of Juvenile Services, Washoe County:

I want to echo Ms. Leslie's support of this bill and reiterate the distinct differences between children's mental health needs and the needs of adults in our system. I am also here to advocate for an addition to the committee or subcommittee representing children's mental health needs, a representative of the juvenile justice area, which would stress the importance of the distinct needs of our kids as opposed to the adults. I want to make sure the seamless transition from child to adult services is enacted and that the service delivery model for our most challenged children and families is protected.

Dan Musgrove, representing Southern Nevada Health District:

This is in reference to Assemblyman Moore's question about how people reacted if they put on a pecuniary hat and looked at it from the best interest of what their business was versus the best interest of the system in serving the clients that are a part of the system. It was great to watch the Southern Nevada Forum members work together collaboratively trying to figure out what was in the best interest of serving the clients. I want to echo Ms. Leslie's comment about putting a full-time member on the board representing children's mental health. I suggested to the sponsor of the bill to include in this legislation the definition of the two subcommittees; one focused on children and the other focusing on the providers and the payers. That is the other group we have been struggling with since the introduction of Medicaid expansion. We need to determine how to pay for it and to ensure we have providers who can do what is needed in our community, whether it is triage centers, sobering centers, or looking at new models. In 2008, Ms. Leslie convened a committee in Clark County that came up with a unique model of how to handle mental health. I am hoping to work with the sponsor of this bill to introduce an amendment that would put those two subcommittees into statute. I think that would give people comfort knowing those issues would be addressed going forward with the study.

Sarah McCrea, representing Las Vegas Fire and Rescue:

I have been a firefighter paramedic in Las Vegas for over 16 years, and my position is the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Quality Improvement Coordinator. During those years of services, I has responded to many emergencies within this community and often have been an integral part of navigating the mental health patients through our system. It is well known that our community has limited resources and has experienced emergency department overcrowding, which is impacting the efficiencies and response capabilities of the EMS system. As the EMS system is also regionally managed in our state, I think the mental health services would benefit from a more global impact on how we manage the resources needed for our mental health patients within communities. I support A.B. 289.

John Burke, Chief Executive Officer, Instep Recovery Services, Las Vegas, Nevada:

My experience is working on the front lines with families and individuals seeking help with addictions. It affects everyone. When we see the news, we do not realize situations are connected to addictions. When we look at an icecap or glacier, we see what sits on top of the water, but we do not see what is below. I am also a recovering addict and have been clean for over 15 years. I have been in Nevada for 2 years and spent 14 years recovering from my addiction in South Florida. I have experience working with families and those in the families who are experiencing addiction. An ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure. I was taught to look at things on a scale from 1 to 10 and I would give A.B. 289 a 9.5 on that scale.

I participated with the southern Nevada subcommittee, and it was a great team of people who care and want to step up to the plate to address this issue. This is not an individual issue and is affecting our community in a multitude of ways. It would be a great asset and allow us to take the needed steps to the next level in the process.

Lesley Dickson, Executive Director and State Legislative Representative, Nevada Psychiatric Association:

I want to express the psychiatric community's support for the goal of this interim committee. If this legislation passes and the committee is formed, we want to be able to play an active part in the work of this committee.

Katie Roe Ryan, Director, Communications and Public Policy, St. Rose Dominican Hospitals, Henderson Nevada:

Me too.

Justin Harrison, Director, Government Affairs, Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce:

We are here in support of A.B. 289. The concept of this bill was derived from 18 months of conversation with the Southern Nevada Forum's Healthcare Subcommittee. Mental health was discussed in detail as it is a critical issue in our state. We believe the interim committee created through the bill will allow for a beneficial study to regionalize the management policymaking of mental health services.

Steve Yeager, representing Office of the Public Defender, Clark County:

We are in support of Assembly Bill 289. I was privileged to participate in those meetings, and I thank Mr. Ross for reaching out to me. The perspective I gave was the intersection between our criminal justice system and mental health. We tend to have clients who have mental illnesses committing crimes, and I think moving toward a regionalized approach would help address some of the unique problems we have in southern Nevada. Because of that, I am in support of the bill.

Tom Grady, representing the City of Fallon:

I thank the sponsor of this bill and Mr. Ross for what they are doing, but if you look at the proposed makeup of the 15 members of the committee, only one person would be from rural Nevada. As the doctor from Las Vegas pointed out, when he was living in California, rural communities have mental health issues too. I had the privilege of serving with this body for 12 years and worked closely on a number of issues with Ms. Leslie. She was one of our champions from the rural areas making sure we had representation. I am asking you to consider the rural communities with this committee, which we fully support.

Chair Stewart:

Maybe one or two of those four elected officials would be from the rural communities.

Richard M. Baldo, representing Nevada Psychological Association:

On behalf of the Nevada Psychological Association, we unequivocally support Assembly Bill 289.

Chair Stewart:

Is anyone else in support of A.B. 289? [There was no one.] Is anyone opposed to this bill? [There was no one.] Is anyone neutral on this bill? [There was no one.]

Assemblyman Trowbridge

From the testimony today, I heard that there needs to be a juvenile mental health specialist involved in the committee. Would it make a difference in the mental health problems for children who are not involved in the justice system and would it be beneficial to have someone experienced in the mental health field with those that are involved in the justice system?

Joseph Haas:

I want to make sure I understand your question as to whether there would be unique needs for youth in the juvenile justice system, and I think to a point there would be. We are at our baseline arguing for the inclusion of someone with experience in children's mental health, perhaps someone from DCFS, if that were the need. The juvenile justice system is a de facto mental health system for the youth in our community and for children in detention centers who have to wait for placement in treatment centers inside and outside of this state. That particular issue and the strong need for children in the juvenile justice system, and the over-representation of children with mental health problems in the juvenile justice system would substantiate your point that there are distinct differences.

Sheila Leslie:

I agree.

Chair Stewart:

Assemblyman Araujo, do you have a final statement?

Assemblyman Araujo:

I want to reiterate the point that this an incredible next step for what is to come in our state. We acknowledge that mental health is a serious issue that needs to be addressed, and this is the next step forward for us to get to the point where we can give these folks the services they need to live a long and healthy life. I am willing to work with anyone who has additional suggestions as my door is always open. I am happy to answer any questions, and I urge your support of A.B. 289.

[A proposed amendment from Clark County ([Exhibit F](#)) was submitted but not discussed.]

Chair Stewart:

The hearing is closed on Assembly Bill 289, and we will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 302.

Assembly Bill 302: Makes various changes relating to statewide primary elections. (BDR 24-801)

Assemblyman John Hambrick, Assembly District No. 2:

The bill before you gets a little complicated, so that is why I brought the "A-Team" with me to help go through the bill. Basically, it deals with the presidential preference primary. We are trying to change the law so that Nevada will have a presidential preference primary earlier than what we have now. I will have Daniel Stewart from our staff, who has an intimate knowledge of this law, further comment on this bill.

Daniel Stewart, Policy Analyst, Assembly Leadership:

To ease any concerns of those who may be in opposition of Assembly Bill 302, very little of it will be going forward. I want to commend the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) staff because this bill was up against a firm deadline to get the language in, and they offered to help.

There was conversation about a bill that was introduced in 2011 that may have attempted to accomplish what we are trying to accomplish here. I did not look at it and did not know exactly what we were trying to do here until we received a call from national news personnel wondering why we were trying to usurp Iowa, New Hampshire, and others in the presidential process. This bill attempts to do one thing only and that is to allow for a presidential preference poll or a primary election rather than a caucus.

We are not intending to change the dates by moving it into January but rather to keep the dates as they are in February. We do not want to move all the primaries up to the same day as the presidential primary. That was another concern about the bill. What was normally a June primary became a January primary for all elected offices. The goal with this is to continue to keep all of the other office elections in June and the presidential process separate, as it is currently. Those are the main differences, which are essentially the meat of the bill. It allows that in February, when the parties normally caucus, that there be a presidential primary.

One of the immediate concerns is the fiscal impact if we are going to have a primary with voting machines in various locations statewide. We understand the fiscal impact, and I promised Mr. Gloria, Registrar of Voters in Clark County, that we have no intention of creating an unfunded mandate. Working with the Office of the Secretary of State and the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means, if they can find a way to fund this, then so be it. There are other bills coming through that might save some money on election processes. Assemblyman Ohrenschall introduced a bill that would move city elections to

the general calendar. That would possibly save the Secretary of State's Office some money to conduct the presidential primary, but we understand this would cost money and there are concerns that the parties should pay for it themselves, and we are willing to discuss those issues.

The goal is that on a single day in February, rather than going to the caucus as the parties are doing now, there could be a primary where voters could select their candidate. The votes would then be instantaneously tabulated and recorded.

In conjunction with Mr. Gloria's office, we do not expect there would need to be coverage like election day coverage, where there is a location for every six precincts. Chances are that the type of coverage in Clark County on a traditional day of early voting, including Mesquite and Laughlin, would be good enough. These are the fiscal questions and this bill would go to the Ways and Means Committee for budgetary issues assuming this Committee agrees with the policy aspect of it.

We have a lot of constituents who have had concerns that the caucus system has a low turnout and that caucus systems lead to potential confusion in the nomination cycle. The Republican caucus process in 2012, which was binding, had a preference for candidate Mitt Romney. Delegates at the convention were supposed to be bound by their vote and chose to cast their votes for another candidate. There is some belief that a primary would keep those types of things from happening and increase turnout. Rather than being asked to attend a caucus at a specific time on a specific day, you will be allowed to go throughout the day during whatever hours are set, cast your vote, and be done.

Chair Stewart:

If I understand you correctly, we are keeping everything the same except instead of having a caucus in February, we will have a presidential primary election. All of the other elections will be at the same time. I will not have to campaign during Christmas, correct?

Daniel Stewart:

No, that was initially our goal and you will not have to campaign during Christmas. In your district, your race is generally over by Christmas anyway.

Chair Stewart:

I have had a lot of my constituents who were confused by the presidential caucus system. They felt that they did not get the opportunity, missed the two or three hours, and had to work that morning. I think they would be pleased to go to a presidential primary.

Assemblywoman Seaman:

I really like this idea because I think there is confusion with the caucus. In surrounding states, they have their presidential primary at the same time as their other elections and we would be doing it in February, correct?

Daniel Stewart:

I do not know if we are alone in having our presidential race separate. If I had to guess, I would say we are not alone because when you have things so early in the year, everyone wants to be first. Nevada wants to be first in the West and the presidential selection process goes from January to June and is not final until the convention takes place.

I cannot imagine that all the states, like New Hampshire, would be holding their primaries for all their races in January, but I would have to check.

Assemblywoman Seaman:

In that case, it would save the cost because they would just add the presidential primary.

Daniel Stewart:

Yes, if we want to get away from the cost aspect, it would make sense to put the presidential primary with the rest of the elections. One option is to give up our being one of the first states to have the presidential primary and schedule it in June with the other elections. The other option is moving the other elections up to the same time as the presidential race. That is the only way to escape the cost issue. There are pros and cons with either situation. There is national attention with our being the first state in the west to hold a presidential primary. Nevada has been viewed as a swing state, and we get presidential attention anyway, so we may not need the added attention, but the purpose of having the caucus was to make Nevada the first state in the West. If you look at New Hampshire and Iowa, these states do not represent the diversity of America, but there is some feeling that Nevada was a state that represented the twenty-first century with the emerging Nevada population, and it should have a say early on in selecting presidential candidates.

Assemblywoman Seaman:

Thank you for bringing this forward. I think it is a great idea.

Chair Stewart:

I think we should keep it the same time as the caucuses but just have the primaries instead of the caucuses. I think that would be great.

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:

I want to talk about the concerns I have moving to a presidential preference primary. From the Democratic Party standpoint, we said we need a caucus state out West, and so they made us an early state. The Republican Party followed suit and the calendars were aligned for both parties. We now have delegate selection plans that have already been approved, and I am uneasy about what this could do to our current process because I think we may be risking losing our early state status. I do not know if your bill states that the parties have the option to move to a presidential preference primary, but if one of the parties agrees and we move from the calendar, I worry about losing our early state status, which would hurt Nevada's political power because currently we can get early commitments on the issues that we care about. For a small state, to get the presidential attention is a big deal. What safeguards do we have in this bill that would ensure that we do not lose our early state status? I believe what the Democratic Party is thinking is that if we are not a caucus state, we would lose our calendar spot.

Daniel Stewart:

There are constitutional concerns whenever states get involved with telling parties how things should be done. The parties have had successful lawsuits in multiple states when they have tried an open primary or something similar. The parties stated that they are private organizations and would set their own rules. States also have a vested interest in the election process, so there has been tension for a long time between who the parties select and how they become official nominees on a ballot. This is the parties' decision, and I do not know what would happen if we passed a law and the parties decided to keep the caucus process. I do not know how we would be able to force anyone to have a primary at that point, but these issues have to be worked out with the parties themselves.

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:

It makes me nervous not knowing what is going to happen because I do not want to tinker with our caucus. I understand that primaries generally would draw more voter turnout, but there is no reason we cannot work hard and not burden the state and the state's dollars to do the work of our parties. I think we should organize people to get engaged. There are people who do not want their tax dollars spent on a presidential primary.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

While I see merit in what you are trying to do, I share some of my colleague's concerns. In my first presidential election in 1992, I worked on a national presidential campaign here in Nevada, and I met people from New Hampshire. We were not first in the West or third in the nation back then, but we were still

early enough to receive a lot of attention. It was a hotly contested primary for the Democratic presidential nomination, and the people I met with talked about how when you work on a presidential campaign in New Hampshire or Iowa, you get to meet the Bob Kerreys and the Jerry Browns. You would get to see them every day, and I thought that was so exciting. I did not think we would ever see that happen in Nevada but thanks to Senator Harry Reid and our party leadership on both sides, we have been first in the West and third in the nation and have become like New Hampshire and Iowa. That has helped our young people become interested in and excited about politics. If we tinker with the third in the nation status, if it has to be a caucus and not a primary, and the Republican National Committee (RNC) and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) come to an agreement, I am worried about losing the enthusiasm of our young people. I remember 1992 being an exciting year for me and getting bit by the political bug, so I share Assemblyman Anderson's concerns and want to tread carefully with this bill. I see the merits in what is proposed with the primary, but I am concerned about the status Nevada presently enjoys. I would like to see an amendment.

Daniel Stewart:

We will get those amendments to you.

Assemblyman Trowbridge:

Would Assembly Bill 302 as written apply to all parties on an optional basis?

Daniel Stewart:

The initial intent of the bill was to allow the parties to decide for themselves whether they would have a primary or a caucus. This bill would facilitate that if we were going to have a primary that there would be a state process. I do not know if that is in the present language of the bill as drafted, but it is part of the amendment.

Assemblyman Trowbridge:

I heard two of my colleagues mention a significant item. We would not want to do anything that would cost us our early position in the presidential races, but if both primary parties could get together and pursue it, it might give us more significant exposure and additional weight in getting our issues to the forefront of the campaigns and get some early commitments. An honest to God primary means more than just a caucus. As Nevadans, we could get our act together.

Assemblyman Thompson:

Mr. Stewart, have you had a chance to look at the proposed amendment from Clark County ([Exhibit H](#)) and if so, is that similar to your conceptual amendment?

Daniel Stewart:

I had email correspondence with Mr. Gloria today. Is this from someone else in Clark County?

Assemblyman Thompson:

It is from Alex Ortiz with Clark County.

Daniel Stewart:

We spoke with Mr. Ortiz yesterday and today. I want them to sign off on this if we cannot find funding and if not, then it does not go anywhere. We are not going to put that burden on them.

Assemblywoman Seaman:

Have you considered a specific party doing a mail ballot? I think it was something they did in the 1996 primary, and they did not have any problems. Are you familiar with it?

Daniel Stewart:

No, I am not. Regardless of what we say, as a state there still has to be a buy-in by the parties. I do not think there is anything stopping the parties from establishing new rules as long as they do not violate Nevada law and they meet national goals; there is flexibility.

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:

Oregon votes by mail already. Is that feasible for Nevada?

Daniel Stewart:

I would have to research it. I think Colorado does as well.

Chair Stewart:

Is anyone in favor of this bill?

Maureen Karas, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here to support this bill which would change Nevada from a caucus to a primary state. I want to talk about voter turnout. I can give you information on the Republican Party for 2012 and 2014.

In 2012, we had precinct meetings and our voter turnout was 7.4 percent, which was 17,000 voters. In the primary in June of that year, we had 22.6 percent. In the gubernatorial year, when we did not have a presidential caucus in our precinct meetings, voter turnout participation was 40 percent. The primary in that year was a 24.8 percent turnout. The main

thing I want to point out is that in the current *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS), there is no separate statute for a caucus and secondly the word "caucus" does not exist in the statutes. There are two sentences in a statute pertaining to central committees that states the party will have a presidential candidate process.

There have been numerous newspaper articles across Nevada about the fact that many Nevadans are disenfranchised from this process. There is a small window of time to attend your precinct meeting so the chances of attending are minimal. Nevada is a three-shift state. If you have child care or religious issues, you cannot vote. That has been a big issue across the state for both parties.

When John Edwards was a presidential candidate for the Democratic Party in 2008, he wrote on his blog after the caucus that most Nevadans were disenfranchised.

We have three proposed amendments. One is that currently the county parties are required to refresh their membership every two years in the year of a general election. We propose they are allowed to "may refresh" every two or four years, but that they are required to refresh in every presidential election year. This would allow them to continue their central committee in a gubernatorial year. Most of our county parties have rules based on rolling attendance, and they refresh their membership at every meeting. We want language to allow state parties to digitize their administrative forms and processes. There are references to paper forms and this is the twenty-first century. We want county parties to be able to have more flexibility determining their delegates by having a self-nomination process based on rules of the party. This would negate the need for a precinct meeting, but would be a "may-ish" wording so that parties could continue with their process or they could have a self-nomination process. With most of the projects and titles in the county parties, people have to self-nominate anyway. We would like to make the result of the election for the national delegates to be bound to the results of the election, either proportional or winner-take-all, which the state parties would determine.

Chair Stewart:

Is there anyone else in Las Vegas in favor of this bill?

Eric Roberts, Executive Director, Clark County Republican Party:

I am speaking in favor of this bill. The biggest issue in NRS Chapter 293 is that the law creates a lack of flexibility for the individual parties. We would like to see minor changes in the language that would allow precinct meetings to only

be required in presidential election years and not in gubernatorial years. Last year I was involved in organizing and conducting our party's precinct meetings. Our turnout was less than 0.5 percent. For the amount of work involved, it could have been handled with us continuing our membership, not resetting, and going with the rolling month-to-month membership requirements we have. You are not preventing anyone from becoming members of the central committee if you do not have this precinct meeting. We have over 5,000 positions available, and we rarely fill more than 1,000 of them. If smaller counties wanted to have their precinct meeting in the gubernatorial election years, the language could be created so that was possible.

We want to emphasize that if in the presidential years we could have the flexibility to do our delegates-at-large versus on a precinct-by-precinct basis, this would help also eliminate the process. The number of self-nominations for delegates oftentimes is below the number of allowed delegates that can be used, and those positions could take place without a precinct meeting by the self-nomination process and allowing those people to automatically become delegates since they are unchallenged.

Chair Stewart:

Is anyone else in favor of this bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone opposed to this bill?

Janine Hansen, representing Nevada Families:

I serve as the Western Area Chairman for the Constitution Party and also served several presidential years as the national Constitution Party ballot access coordinator.

We oppose this bill as written and have no position on what the Republican and Democratic Parties elect to do in their primary. We believe they ought to make that decision. We oppose moving the primary to January which will be a hardship on minor parties. One of the problems with moving the primary to January is that there are court decisions regarding presidential ballot access for independent or minor party candidates. This would be so restrictive that it would violate those court cases. We are hoping to see new language that would not move the entire primary up to January as stated in the bill. We do not want the primary moved from June.

I remember Senator William J. Raggio being upset that it was going to be so early that people would be sick of campaigns. If it is moved and we start campaigning in October of the previous year, we would have our nominating conventions in August and September of the preceding year. We would all probably want to drop out of the political process.

John Wagner, State Chairman, Independent American Party:

I am the state chairman of the third largest party in Nevada, which is the Independent American Party. We have a tough enough time now because we have to file our candidates for office in the first two weeks in March. We do not favor having the filings in October. Everyone wants to be the first in the nation to have their caucus. It is like a bunch of children. You get to be number one and you elect Joe. By the time you get to number six, Joe is out of the picture and you wished that you had not wasted your votes on number one. I think it is better to be number six, seven, or even last because you might make a decision and pick a winner, otherwise, you could pick a loser. That is my personal opinion on early primaries.

Jim DeGraffenreid, Vice Chairman, Nevada Republican Party:

I am the Vice Chairman of the Nevada Republican Party. You have my prepared testimony ([Exhibit I](#)) as well as the rules of the Republican Party ([Exhibit J](#)). Most of that testimony does not apply because this bill apparently no longer exists. Out of that testimony, the one thing that does still apply is that the Republican and Democratic Parties believe that these processes should remain with the parties as opposed to being operated by the state of Nevada. These are used as fundraising and party-building mechanisms. Many people do not know that when we vote in a presidential primary election, we are not voting directly for a nominee, we are voting to bind our delegates to the national convention.

As mentioned earlier, there was confusion out of the caucus process and there can be, but it had nothing to do with what happened in Tampa, Florida. What happened in Tampa with the last national convention was a deliberate move by the delegates there to break the rules. That has been corrected by rules of the state and at the national level. We would continue to believe that the parties would like to have these processes handled by the party as opposed to being handled by the state, which would eliminate any cost to the state. There are ways in which the parties can run a process that eliminates any confusion and allows for full participation.

Our party will be meeting this Saturday and will be discussing caucus versus primary. Both of those could be run within the party and do not need to be taken over by the state. Beyond that, I do not know of anything else I can tell you about a bill that we do not have language on, but we will have comments and are available to work with anyone as that language is developed.

Assemblywoman Fiore:

Are you testifying that the Nevada Republican Party opposes this bill?

Jim DeGraffenreid:

Yes, that is my testimony that the party opposes this bill as is.

Chair Stewart:

Is anyone else opposed to this bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in the neutral position?

Joseph P. Gloria, Registrar of Voters, Clark County:

I am here to testify in neutral to this bill. Everything Mr. Stewart said in relation to our conversation is correct. The major concern we had was moving the primary date from June to January, which would pose many issues for election officials across the state.

Assemblywoman Seaman was referring to the mail ballot election we conducted in 1996, but that is the most expensive way to support this type of an election. You would have to send a ballot to everyone who is eligible to vote in that election, and it is much cheaper to use the electronic machines.

We are neutral and will continue to look for the amendments and follow the bill as it progresses.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

I assume in this type of presidential preference primary there would not be early or mail voting, it would be in-person voting. Is that correct and do you have any idea what it might cost you to put on a presidential preference primary?

Joe Gloria:

I do not have the numbers related to the cost, but it depends on how they decide to do the election. It could be electronic machines or a mail ballot. As currently written, I do not believe early voting or the absentee ballot has been addressed. I assume as the bill moves along, they would want to provide some type of avenue to vote on an absentee ballot. I have not heard that from the sponsor of the bill.

Carol Howell, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

I have been an active supporter and volunteer with our party for years. I have managed everything from headquarters to planning the last three precinct meetings and the last caucus here in Carson City. So I have experience with the planning and the process.

The woman who testified in Las Vegas reported a low turnout for 2012. We do not know what the turnout in the caucus and precincts were in 2012 because no one knows for sure how many people attended and who was elected.

The records in Carson City are unclear. Statewide in 2012, we had a 7 percent turnout and in Carson City we had a 15 percent turnout. The reason for the difference is because in the rules, Carson City was able to set up our voting from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. and not insist on people coming in and sitting through a three-hour precinct meeting to allow them to vote. It was a well-run meeting. What I think we are forgetting is this is the first step in the process of selecting the most important candidate for both parties in our government.

Our entire election cycle for presidents begins with the precinct meeting which is important. When you see turnout rates of 6 percent statewide, that means there are 94 percent of the people who are not involved and not having a voice. They are disenfranchised when they have to make it to the meeting in one day. There is no early voting and no absentee voting if they are out-of-state. The absentee voters, early voters, those who are ill, or those who work are eliminated. One day gave us 15 percent. Are you willing to tell the voters in this state that 85 percent of them are not going to get to vote? This is a whole process. Nevada is first in the West, so what? Eighty-five percent of the people do not care. I am hoping either this bill or a future bill combines the primaries so that the voters of this state will have their voices heard.

Chair Stewart:

Will the sponsors of the bill please come forward.

Assemblyman Hambrick:

We have heard some interesting testimony, and I sincerely hope that when the amendments come through prior to the work session, you will look at this bill and give it favorable consideration. I think we need to make some changes in the timing of the presidential preference primary whether we are the first or last in the universe. We need to address this issue and make changes and should you have questions, let me know. Mr. Stewart will also provide the needed information for making your decisions.

Chair Stewart:

We will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 302. Is there any public comment?
[There was none.] The meeting is adjourned [at 5:56 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Patricia Hartman
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Lynn Stewart, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections

Date: March 24, 2015

Time of Meeting: 4:01 p.m.

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
A.J.R. 4	C	Carol M. Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session Document
A.B. 273	D	Assemblyman Pat Hickey	State Rules Governing Lobbyists
A.B. 273	E	Assemblyman Pat Hickey	Lobbyist Registration Overviews
A.B. 289	F	Alex Ortiz, representing Clark County	Proposed Amendment
A.B. 289	G	Victoria Carreón, Guinn Center for Policy Priorities	Testimony
A.B. 302	H	Alex Ortiz, representing Clark County	Proposed Amendment
A.B. 302	I	Jim DeGraffenreid, Nevada Republican Party	Testimony
A.B. 302	J	Jim DeGraffenreid, Nevada Republican Party	The Rules of the Republican National Convention