

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, LABOR AND ENERGY**

**Seventy-ninth Session  
April 19, 2017**

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Labor and Energy was called to order by Chair Kelvin Atkinson at 9:01 a.m. on Wednesday, April 19, 2017, in Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator Kelvin Atkinson, Chair  
Senator Pat Spearman, Vice Chair  
Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro  
Senator Yvanna D. Cancela  
Senator Joseph P. Hardy  
Senator James A. Settelmeyer  
Senator Heidi S. Gansert

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Assembly District No. 28  
Assemblywoman Teresa Benitez-Thompson, Assembly District No. 27

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Marji Paslov Thomas, Policy Analyst  
Bryan Fernley, Counsel  
Lynn Hendricks, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Paula Berkley, Board of Examiners for Social Workers  
Brad Keating, Clark County School District; Washoe County School District

CHAIR ATKINSON:

I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 162.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 162**: Requires a business that accepts a driver's license as proof of identity to also accept a permanent resident card for that purpose. (BDR 52-734)

ASSEMBLYMAN EDGAR FLORES (Assembly District No. 28):  
First, I would like to say to my constituents: This bill is for you.

A constituent of mine told me there were businesses in my district that did not accept a legal permanent resident card, also known as a Green Card, as identification. My constituent went to an adults-only venue, showed a legal permanent resident card for proof of age, and was told that the business did not accept it. I investigated the matter, and the results were unfavorable to those with permanent resident cards. When you pay with a credit card and show a permanent resident card as identification, some businesses will not accept it. That is not acceptable to me, and I requested A.B. 162 to address that concern.

The bill makes two simple changes throughout the *Nevada Revised Statutes*. First, it authorizes state and local governmental entities to accept a legal permanent resident card for the purpose of identifying a person. Second, it requires that if a business accepts a Nevada driver's license as a form of identification, it must accept a legal permanent resident card.

Let me anticipate some of your questions. How difficult is it to get a permanent resident card? Right now, it takes about eight months to get a permanent resident card from the moment of filing an application to the receipt of the document. The applicant files two forms, an I-130 and an I-485, with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The process costs approximately \$2,500, and more if the applicant uses an attorney. When those forms have been accepted, the applicant goes to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for a background check and a photo. The permanent resident card includes the person's photo and date of birth and the expiration date of the card. It can be taken away if the person does not meet certain criteria for the life of the card, which is ten years. It is ten times more difficult to get a permanent resident card than it is to get a driver's license and a hundred times more expensive, and the vetting process is very rigorous.

Another question is how difficult is it to falsify a permanent resident card? I would argue that it is as difficult as falsifying any other type of identification. There is no real reason why we do not have parity at a State and federal level

with the two forms of identification. The problem is many people do not know what a permanent resident card is or what it looks like, and that may be why those businesses did not accept it.

SENATOR HARDY:

Can a permanent resident card be used when you fly, now or after 2020?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLORES:

Yes. A permanent resident card abides by all the rules of Real ID.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Why does it cost so much to get a permanent resident card?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLORES:

It costs \$525 to file the I-130 form and \$1,100 to file the I-485 form. It is a very expensive process. This is one of the reasons why, when we had the federal government shut-down, the DHS was able to continue to operate. It runs on these fees.

SENATOR SETTELMAYER:

It seems crazy to me that these cards are not being accepted as identification. They are a federally-issued and recognized form of identification. If a business feels an identification card has been tampered with or falsified, they have the right to refuse it if they have a reasonable suspicion that it is not valid. Is that right?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLORES:

Yes. If a business has any reason to suspect a card is not valid or something looks odd about it, they can always say no to it.

SENATOR SETTELMAYER:

Also, as the bill says, it only applies to U.S. cards. If someone comes in with a card from Canada or any other country, they do not have to accept it.

SENATOR HARDY:

If someone refuses a suspicious card, are they then obligated to call someone and report it? Might they pretend to have a concern and refuse a card for no reason?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLORES:

The business has the same obligation as when someone presents a suspicious driver's license. The procedure would be the same for any suspicious identification, whether that is informing a supervisor or calling law enforcement. They should follow the procedural mechanism that is already in place for that situation.

CHAIR ATKINSON:

When a minor tries to get into a nightclub and staff suspect the identification is not valid, they keep the identification card. The same process would apply with a permanent resident card.

SENATOR HARDY MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 162.

SENATOR SPEARMAN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR ATKINSON:

I will open the hearing on A.B. 387.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 387**: Revises provisions relating to social workers. (BDR 54-540)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TERESA BENITEZ-THOMPSON (Assembly District No. 27):

As you can see, there are just two sections to A.B. 387. Section 1, subsection 2 adds a requirement that licensed social workers receive two hours of training on suicide prevention and awareness every two years. Section 2 sunsets the requirement in 2026.

Let me supply some of the history of this bill. Last Session, I sponsored Assembly Bill No. 218 of the 78th Session to say that the behavioral health boards must require their licensees to get continuing education units (CEUs) in evidence-based suicide prevention and awareness. That applies to marriage and family therapists, social workers, drug and alcohol counselors, and other professions. That requirement has been quite successful in the two years it has been in place, but we did have one unintended consequence within the Board of

Examiners for Social Workers. All the other boards had their CEU and licensing cycles in synch; that is, licensees renew their licenses every two years and also file CEUs every two years. That was not true for the Board of Examiners for Social Workers, which requires licensees to renew their licenses annually but audits CEUs on a two-year cycle. The intent of A.B. No. 93 of the 78th Session was that licensees should take a suicide prevention and awareness class every two years. However, it was interpreted as meaning that it should be done annually, which was out of synch with every other CEU requirement.

This bill seeks to fix that unintended consequence and state clearly that the suicide prevention and awareness training for social workers should be done every two years rather than annually.

SENATOR GANSERT:

Thank you for bringing this bill forward. The suicide prevention training that you put in last Session is very important. I also want to thank you for cosponsoring Senate Bill (S.B.) 212, which extends planning within school districts around suicide prevention, not just crises and emergencies.

**SENATE BILL 212**: Revises provisions governing the welfare of pupils. (BDR 34-674)

We have had a rash of suicides in Washoe County, and this training is critically important.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BENITEZ-THOMPSON:

Thank you. As a person who happens to work on one of the behavioral health boards, I focused on a lot of different things during my education. When I worked with the hospice population, I realized I was woefully unprepared to handle the issue of suicide and needed to seek training. The training has been amazingly beneficial, and I believe it will make a difference in the long run when all behavioral health professionals have this skill set.

SENATOR SETTELMAYER:

I strongly support this bill. It is very important, especially if it gives social workers more confidence in dealing with these matters. Have we seen any reduction in the number of suicides?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BENITEZ-THOMPSON:

It is probably too soon to see a definitive change. The reason for the sunset provision in section 2 of the bill was to set a time, July 2026, for everyone involved—Legislators, licensing boards and the Office of Suicide Prevention—to come back to the table to look at trends and see if the training has been effective, if there have been statistical changes in the cohort. I anticipate that we will see a difference, but if I am wrong, there can be a conversation about what is not working and what needs to change. If it has not helped, perhaps the 2027 Legislature can do better problem-solving than we did.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Have social workers been doing this training every year?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BENITEZ-THOMPSON:

The Board worked hand-in-hand with us last Session to pass the original bill, and we were all surprised when the legal interpretation came back that it had to be an annual requirement. The Board notified the licensees and then provided a schedule by which those licensees would need to present their certificates of suicide prevention and awareness training. I have had continuing conversations with the Board that we needed to correct this, and that it was an unfair burden on the licensees. The intent was never to put people in danger of losing their licenses because they did not have the training annually when all the other training is every two years. We will continue the conversation of how to inform licensees about the change.

PAULA BERKLEY (Board of Examiners for Social Workers):

We support A.B. 387 and appreciate the change. It will definitely help out both licensees and the Board.

BRAD KEATING (Clark County School District; Washoe County School District):

We echo the sentiments the previous speakers and are in strong support of A.B. 387. With the increased number of social workers working in the schools, this training is sorely needed. We appreciate Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson bringing it forward.

CHAIR ATKINSON:

We have received written testimony ([Exhibit C](#)) and a conceptual amendment ([Exhibit D](#)) from Steven Cohen, who does not appear to be present. Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson, have you seen this amendment?

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN BENITEZ-THOMPSON:

No. After looking at it, I think there is merit to the concept, but I have not done any research on this topic or had any conversation with the author regarding the logistics of implementation. I will reach out to Mr. Cohen to discuss the idea, but at this time I do not consider [Exhibit D](#) a friendly amendment.

SENATOR GANSERT MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 387.

SENATOR HARDY SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR ATKINSON:

Is there any further public comment? Hearing none, I will adjourn the meeting at 9:23 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Lynn Hendricks,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Kelvin Atkinson, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit / # of pages		Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	2		Attendance Roster
A.B. 387	C	1	Senator Kelvin Atkinson	Written Testimony from Steven Cohen
A.B. 387	D	1	Senator Kelvin Atkinson	Conceptual Amendment from Steven Cohen