

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

**Eightieth Session
May 30, 2019**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Edgar Flores at 9:40 a.m. on Thursday, May 30, 2019, in Room 4100 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/80th2019.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair
Assemblyman William McCurdy II, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Alex Assefa
Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod
Assemblyman Richard Carrillo
Assemblywoman Bea Duran
Assemblyman John Ellison
Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow
Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II
Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy
Assemblyman Glen Leavitt
Assemblywoman Susie Martinez
Assemblywoman Connie Munk
Assemblyman Greg Smith

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Pat Spearman, Senate District No. 1

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Committee Counsel
Mark Peckham, Recording Secretary
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

William R. Burks, Brigadier General, The Adjutant General of Nevada, Nevada
National Guard, Office of the Military
Grace Nichols, Co-Chair, Coalition for Nevada National Guard Youth Challenge

Chair Flores:

[Roll was called. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] I appreciate everyone in the audience, especially those who have served our country. Thank you. To let everyone know how we intend to proceed, after the conclusion of this hearing, we will likely recess. We could capture more bills but, more likely than not, we will be meeting tomorrow morning—that is the actual intent. For the sake of clarity, I will say recess in case we have to handle something of the last minute, but it is not the intent for us to do anything other than what we are doing now. We will open the hearing on Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint).

Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint): Creates the Nevada National Guard Youth Challenge Program. (BDR 34-566)

Senator Pat Spearman, Senate District No. 1:

Thank you, Chair Flores and members of the Committee. I appreciate your being here for this hearing because I believe it is a very important bill, and it is something for our state to be able to do. I think it speaks to our commitment to making sure that all of our students are successful. Some are successful one way; some are successful another way, and we recognize that no one size fits all.

I represent Senate District No. 1 in Clark County, and I am here to present Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint), which creates the Nevada National Guard Youth Challenge Program. The challenge program was established by the United States National Guard in 1993 to turn around the lives of adolescents between the ages of 16 and 18 who are experiencing difficulty in completing traditional high school programs. The challenge program is a voluntary 17-month dropout recovery program that assists at-risk youth in earning a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma (GED). In addition, the challenge program continues to work with participants after graduation to help them enroll in postsecondary education programs, in trade schools, start a career, or join the military. The challenge program currently operates 40 programs in 28 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of

Columbia. The program uses a very disciplined and structured format based on the military model. To date, more than 145,000 students have graduated from the program. According to the multiuse study of the program, the key findings of the program are as follows: GED or diploma attainment increased by almost 29 percent; college attendance increased by 86 percent; and annual earnings increased by 20 percent. This is what the bill does.

Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint) lays out the structure for the challenge program in Nevada. Section 11 creates the program within the Office of the Military and provides that the goal of the program is to educate, train, and mentor youth who have dropped out of high school or who are at risk of dropping out so that they become productive, employed, and law-abiding citizens. A person who wishes to apply to participate in the program must submit an application to the Office of the Military. An applicant must be a Nevada resident, and the measure provides that a child in foster care or going through the process of adoption is also eligible to participate in the program.

The guidelines for the review of applications must give special consideration to eligibility for a child of a military family. The program is established within a school district and must include two primary components: a residential component that lasts at least 22 weeks and a nonresidential component that lasts at least 12 months following the residential portion of the program. The program components are outlined under section 11 of the bill and include a course of study, case management, and mentoring. Because this program is part of our K-12 education, I can speak this morning. Section 13 of the bill requires the Office of the Military to enter into an agreement with the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the board of trustees of a school district to establish a challenge school.

Section 15 requires the superintendent to adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of the bill. Although the challenge school is a public school, it may be operated differently than a traditional school. Section 4 of the bill exempts a challenge school from a pupil-teacher ratio requirement. Section 5 exempts the school from the 180-school-day minimum and the school year. Section 13 provides that the school day may be shorter or longer than the traditional school, and Section 14 of the bill provides that a challenge school is exempt from the provisions of *Nevada Revised Statutes* Chapter 389, which relates to academic standards, instructions, and course of study.

Instead of a traditional course of study, section 16 requires the Office of the Military to develop a curriculum for a challenge school based on the needs of the participant. In addition, section 18 of the measure requires the office to adopt written rules of behavior for students enrolled in the challenge school. Sections 2, 3, 13, and 20 of the measure provide that the challenge school is deemed a public school and receives school funding just as any other public school. Section 21 requires the Office of the Military to designate a person to draw all orders for payment of money to a challenge school and complete and sign cumulative voucher sheets.

For the purpose of accountability and transparency, section 19 requires each school district in which a challenge school is located to submit to the Nevada Department of Education any information requested by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Finally, the remaining sections not previously discussed include definitions and make conforming changes.

Mr. Chair, I am going to stop right here and ask General Burks if he will continue. Before he does, I would like to say in this Committee, as I have said on the other side, General Burks will be retiring in August after serving our country 40 years. Thank you, General Burks, for your service. This is one of his key signature bills, if you will, on his way out. The fact that he is doing this so that it provides a lasting legacy for our youth and for our students is commendable. With that, I will hand it over to General Burks.

William R. Burks, Brigadier General, The Adjutant General of Nevada, Nevada National Guard, Office of the Military:

I am the director of the Office of the Military for the State of Nevada. This latest journey has been ongoing since August. However, I can tell you this, and I think Assemblyman Ellison can confirm this, when we purchased the Fire Science Academy in Carlin roughly ten years ago, the main purpose of that, in addition to keeping the facility in a caretaker status in case the university wanted to continue classes there, was to establish a youth challenge program. That was many, many years ago. However, this is the first time the state could actually afford the state portion of that program. When we submitted our budget request in August last year, our knowledge of the National Guard's youth program was in its infancy. We are still learning today as we go along this journey—and it has definitely been a journey.

First, the project challenge that we used to have about eight years ago is no longer. It is now only youth challenge, and that follows the project challenge. As Senator Spearman said, it is a three-phase, eight-step process, and it has a 75 percent success rate nationwide. However, the program we are trying to emulate, which is the Discovery Challenge Academy in Stockton, California, has a 95 percent success rate. If you look at it from a return on investment—and I always have to go here because I was a certified public accountant in a former life—first and foremost, it is designed to put the desired minimum of 200 at-risk youth into an environment where they can be given the tool sets to be successful the rest of their lives, and that is 100 students every six months.

Why have an in-state program in Nevada? First, the \$500,000 that is in the Governor's budget will have the ability to get a 3-for-1 match for every state dollar invested up to 1.4 million state dollars. Initially, we thought we needed an additional \$350,000 to get to the \$850,000 minimum. However, when we finally sat down and scrubbed the numbers, we realized we were already spending that amount, plus some, at the site of the youth challenge program, so we modified our original request in S.B. 295 (R1) to reflect our discovery of that. Now it is just the Governor's amount, the \$500,000. If we only allowed the \$500,000 to be used to send kids to other challenge programs, then instead of potentially saving the lives

of 200 youth in Nevada, we would probably only be able to send 15 to 20 kids because then we would have to spend the full cost of each child, and that cost is roughly \$20,000 per child, with the administrative costs of having our recruiting staff, if we could find a program, which we cannot because there are none available. They all have waiting lists on the West Coast.

Second, we would have to find a program. When you look at the states on the West Coast, California, Oregon, Washington have a program; Idaho has a program up in the panhandle; and Montana and Wyoming; but none of the other western states do. That limits the amount, and they all have waiting lists, too, which I learned when I talked to the Adjutant General recently in Boise, Idaho.

What we also learned about three weeks ago is if you have a viable youth challenge program within your state, then you are eligible for other federally funded programs at the rate of 100 percent. The first one that we would probably pursue would be the job challenge program. The job challenge program is a program that is 100 percent federally funded, and it teaches job skills, such as trades, heating, air conditioning, automotive, electrical, contracting, construction. With the advent of the opening of the Speedway Readiness Center in Las Vegas on our piece of property north of Nellis Air Force Base, that would free up some of the space we have at the Henderson Armory and we could open a job challenge program there almost immediately, as soon as we pass the accreditation period with the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

If you look at it, this is an ongoing program, and it is not just for the biennium. It will also create 48 new full-time jobs for the state of Nevada, as well as additional positions for the Elko County School District. The other thing is that as long as the state funding is there and can meet the minimums, the federal funding will be there. As a matter of fact, there is currently a bill in Congress that adds another \$20 million to that program. As soon as July 1 hits, if this bill passes, we would get an instant \$1.5 million to match, and we would use that to start construction and renovations on the two buildings we feel we would need. When the Office of the Secretary of Defense personnel and the person from the National Guard Bureau came out to look at the facility, they already said that we were overthinking things, which we have a tendency to do in the military. We could eventually grow the size of that program to 200 students every six months with a little more modification. Taking their input, the \$1.8 million we thought we were going to need to do modifications has dropped dramatically by several hundred thousand dollars to the improvements to make a dormitory for both men and women.

When you look at the return on investment, it is putting roughly 200 kids a year back into the economy and also back into the school district. When you look at the kids we would be recruiting, we know there are programs for really bad kids. We know there are programs for really good kids. These are the disenfranchised kids who are right in the middle—the ones who are not attending class for whatever reason. The ones who got behind, for whatever reason. This is a way to help them get caught up, not only in the credits they have, but also

when they graduate from the five- or six-month program and then go into the mentorship program. They also become active members in the schools. These are the kids that used to give teachers problems. Now they are possibly the best-behaved kids in the school for a lot of teachers.

The Discovery Youth Challenge Program thought they would have a problem with teachers wanting to teach at the academy in Stockton, California. However, what they find is now the teachers are fighting to teach at the academy because what you have are well-disciplined, well-behaved, motivated students who want to learn and make their lives better. With that, the last thing I would like to say is that when we, hopefully, get the approval not only by this Committee but the final vote and the Governor signs the bill, in addition to modifying the bill, we would want to hire some key staff members, which would be the director of the program, the head of recruiting—probably one of the most critical people—and also the budget officer to make sure we can work things through the Master Cooperative Agreement that the money flows through from the federal government. I am happy to take any questions.

Senator Spearman:

I want to add that a few years ago, when I served as president of the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District, one of the things I noticed was that many of the children, the students who were sent to the principal's office, were not bad—they were bored. Most of the students today are not bad—they are bored. The curriculum we have, and as much as we are changing it, still does not accommodate every learning style. I do not like to say that people have difficulty with learning. I think that what happens is they have different learning styles. What this program does is help to fill out further opportunities for our young people here in Nevada. With the opportunity to access another \$1.5 million or so with the jobs program, I think that is going to be huge, because what that will mean is that we have not only trained them at the high school level, but they have also acquired a skill set and they will want to stay in Nevada and contribute and bring back the same type of discipline and mentorship that they received in the program. So this is a really good bill, and I know you hear that a lot, but it is a really good bill. It is my hope that it can sail through not only this Committee, but the money committee as well. With that, we will both stand for questions.

Chair Flores:

I know your stakeholders did an amazing job reaching out very early on. In fact, I think everybody remembers talking about this within the first week of session, which is a testament to how the military operates. You take care of business very quickly, early on, and then you wait. I appreciate that.

Assemblyman Carrillo:

Thank you to all the veterans who are in this room. I know this is something that was a work in progress, as General Burks had stated. This is going to be in Elko, so it is not going to be the same as if it were in southern Nevada, where you have all these people looking for employers to put them in the trades—for instance, plumbers and pipefitters becoming welders. There is a drastic shortage of welders, so I am excited about the whole aspect.

Everybody likes to get away from the trades. Everybody thinks they are going to college and they should start doing precollege classes. I never went to college. I went into a trade and it has served me well. The only concern I have is about money from the state showing up regularly. If you become solid, will you worry about it ever going away? That is my biggest concern.

General Burks:

The way the youth challenge program is financed, it is a portion of state funding and then a 3-for-1 match from the federal funding. Once we get a full program, it runs through what we call a Master Cooperative Agreement that is run through our property and fiscal officer, who is a Title 10 officer who is assigned to the State of Nevada. Technically, the officer works for the Department of Defense because he is the only Title 10 officer that the Nevada National Guard has on staff. In the realm of the military, you have Title 10, which is normally your active-duty folks. When I was in the Pentagon working in the Air Force strategic planning section, I was a Title 10 officer, even though I was still a Nevada National Guardsman, because you have to be associated with a state. All Nevada National Guardsmen are Title 32, unless they are called to active duty and sent overseas. Anytime you go overseas, you have to be put on Title 10 orders because of the status of forces agreement protections if something were to happen to you. Other than that, the other category that you can be put on is state active duty if you are a guardsman, and that is to do such things as every year we help Sheriff Lombardo and Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department do the New Year's Eve mission. That ranges anywhere from having 200 to, after the shooting, 400 people in Las Vegas to assist them.

Getting back to your original question on the Master Cooperative Agreement, when you look at our state budget in totality, this year it will be about \$5 million. That does not run the military for a force of 4,400—that takes about \$200 million. So the other \$195 million is run through Master Cooperative Agreements, and that is what this would be run through. As long as there is the state portion for the youth challenge program, we have already established the Master Cooperative Agreement to funnel the funds through in anticipation of passage. I signed those documents last week when I was in the office. That is how this would be taken care of. That is how a job challenge program would be taken care of in the future. I think the other part of the question that you did not quite ask is the kids would be recruited throughout the entire state of Nevada. It is probably based on a percentage of each county. When you look at the various counties, I do not have the percentages in front of me, but I would say 75 percent of the kids would come from Clark County, and the next biggest chunk would be Washoe County, and so on and so forth.

Assemblyman Carrillo:

The whole thing with the trades, as long as they know about it and know that all these individuals—not all of them but some of them—want to hit the trades, that they would be able to access the facility and invite them in. We have the same trades in the south as there are in northern Nevada. It might be a bit of a trip for some, but I think it would definitely be worth that trip.

Senator Spearman:

The beauty about this is that it is not just the learning to receive the high school diploma or the GED. Remember, on the back end we talked about having a jobs program as well. And for those opportunities, most apprenticeships require a high school diploma, GED, or something comparable to that. I think what that does is actually increase the pool from which you can draw. Yes, this would certainly enhance that as well. I might also say that some people have thought about this like it is Job Corps—it is not. Some people have asked, Is this something that people are forced to go to? It is not. It is all voluntary.

Assemblyman Smith:

I do not have a question; more of a statement. Thank you, Senator Spearman, for bringing this forward, and thank you, General Burks, and congratulations on your retirement. This is a fantastic program. It is long overdue. I am glad to see it finally coming together, and I want to compliment your supporters as well for the job they have done. They gave a presentation to me that was very impressive. I would like to thank your whole organization for doing this.

Assemblyman Ellison:

This is a fantastic facility [outside Carlin], and anybody who has never seen it has to go look at it. Right now, the Air National Guard is there, and I guess they are still going to keep part of that, is that correct? So this facility was used for the Fire Science Academy—that is what it was built for. We had some problems in the past with the state education system. It sat there empty, other than the Nevada National Guard. It has training classes, a cafeteria, it has everything in the world that would be perfect for this. If I had to pick anything in the world to put in there, other than the Guard going full scale there, I still think this is the best thing for it. It is a great idea. I cannot say how much I appreciate your bringing this. I am glad they are doing this with this facility. It is 20 miles outside of Elko, right outside Carlin, Nevada. It is a beautiful location, and I think it would be great for the kids. I think for these kids who need it, if they wanted to, the Great Basin has the community colleges—great for electrical, diesel, all the trades they want to go to if they want to leave that and go to the community college. It is all right there. I hope the Nevada National Guard is going to stay there and still operate the front—that is really important.

Assemblyman Leavitt:

What is this school classified as? Is it a public, private, or charter school?

General Burks:

It is considered to be a public school, even though it is a nomination program whereby the students have to nominate themselves to go, but it will be run by the Elko County School District, and all the accreditation and all the requirements of a school are met by Elko County School District.

Assemblyman Leavitt:

Regarding removal from the school [section 18], does it seem to align with the public school removal process, in that the public schools are trying to keep kids in the school, even trying to do away with suspension outside of the school? If it warrants a suspension of some sort, it is done inside the school so the student does not get a vacation for three days if he or she is suspended. How would that work in this realm? It looks as though there is a removal process, and then if the student is removed from the school, what happens to him or her then? Do you say, Okay, you have to go back to traditional school? I am trying to look for unintended consequences of the policy written here.

General Burks:

It is actually a two-step process. It depends what the offense was. If the offense was a school-related offense, then they would go through the Elko County School District for that. Remember, there are eight components, only one of which is education. There are seven others. If they have offended one of the other components, then it would be up to the director and his staff to determine whether the child continues on or not.

Senator Spearman:

Keep in mind, this is a voluntary piece, and, to a certain extent, competitive. I do not know if anyone has ever sat on a selection committee for service academies, but it is much like that. So the people who are selected to go are usually pretty convinced that this is the way they will be able to acquire knowledge and skill sets to be successful in life. It is not that it will never happen, but I think the possibility is a lot lower than if it was not this type of structure.

Assemblyman Leavitt:

That is great. I think it is awesome, and I have no issue with the school, the program, and the desire for it. When a student is admitted, is the child required to sign some sort of contract in accordance with those guidelines? Is that something where they might say, Okay, I applied for this school. I see the value in the program. When I am admitted—and I assume it is an admission process—do I sign a contract saying I will follow these guidelines and, if I do not, I can be removed from the school? Is that something that happens? Or the parents or whoever it is who is eligible to negotiate the acceptance of that. It would be a contract. They are applying for a program so they would have to have somebody who is a steward over them. I would imagine most of them are under the age of 18 and cannot sign a contract, legally, on their own. Is that something that you are doing?

Senator Spearman:

I think what you are describing is like a code of conduct. In some iteration, yes, that would be present. Again, one of the benefits is that it is voluntary and they know that it is competitive, so the students who will be there are pretty much like, as an example, West Point. You go because you know you are going to get a good education, but you are also going to get a skill set. I think what you are looking at, Assemblyman Leavitt, is a code of conduct. One of the benefits of having the military involved in this is that the discipline that you learn in the military, the self-respect that you learn in the military, and the self-awareness helps you to make better choices. Some of the students who may be coming

here may be coming as a result of some choices they made, and maybe they did not have the type of mentorship that could have shown them a different way. I think what you are talking about is a code of conduct, but that is embedded in the program.

General Burks:

There is exactly that. When you look at the application process, it is not just a one- or two-page application. It is a 15-page application that the student has to fill out—not their parents—the student has to fill it out, so they are well aware of what they are getting themselves into. When you look at the way the curriculum is, as I said, only one component is academic excellence. Then you have health and hygiene; you have job skills; we have talked about leadership and followership and life coping skills; physical fitness is obviously a big one, especially in the first two weeks, which is the first phase of the program; responsible citizenship; and the last one is service to the community. When you look at all of those, the program is really designed to have these kids succeed—they want them to succeed. I had the opportunity to talk to a lot of the kids when I was in Washington, D.C., and I got the passion for this program. A lot of these kids view this program as their last chance. A lot of them have been abused, either mentally or physically, or they are running with the wrong people. This is a way to get them out of that environment, to give them some self-respect and the tool sets they need to go forward. Most of them, if they are going to wash out, are going to wash out in that first two weeks. That first two-week period is designed for them to understand—because they have always been an individual unto themselves, and they do not think they can rely on anybody else—that first two weeks is to instill in them the concept of teamwork, of working together to achieve a goal. Once they get past that first two weeks, then they get right into a routine of what the day is going to entail, and they do not go home on the weekends. They do not go home through the whole program. They stay there the entire five months they are in this program. We have a cadre of people who are there to help them succeed and to get them through the program—not to wash them out. The design is to get them through the program.

Assemblywoman Hardy:

As you said, we want to give kids every opportunity to be successful in school, and not everyone learns the same way. We have different life experiences, so I think this is great. I wanted to know how would a kid find out about the program? Is it through their high school? Their parent? How do they know about this so they can apply?

General Burks:

Once we get the program, one of the key people we have to hire first is the recruiter because the recruiter goes out and pounds the pavement to talk to the school counselors to send out the fliers. Twenty-six hundred and fifty-two Nevada families clicked on the California Youth Challenge Academy website from December 17 through March 2019. The demand is there. After the program is up and running, your best recruiters are the previous students, because they go back, talk to their friends, and say, This made a world of difference. The kids see a world of difference in the students who come back. We want that. It becomes a word-of-mouth program. Most of the kids I talked to in Washington, D.C., who were brought in from around the country for a gala they used to have there, all said the

same thing. They normally found out about it because they either had a family member or a friend go through the program or it was their parent's last hope, and they heard about it through the media, but there would be a full media campaign to get the word out.

Chair Flores:

It sounds as if the Committee is very excited about what this bill portends to do, so thank you. I would like to invite forward those wishing to speak in support.

Grace Nichols, Co-Chair, Coalition for Nevada National Guard Youth Challenge:

Chair Flores and members of the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs, thank you for letting me address you today. My name is Grace Nichols, and I am the co-chair of the Coalition for the Nevada National Guard Youth Challenge program. Over the past few months, you have heard many compelling reasons from me and my co-chair, Heather Goulding, to support [Senate Bill 295 \(1st Reprint\)](#):

- Youth Challenge changes lives.
- It is fiscally responsible.
- It helps solve our workforce shortage.

I know that my co-chair, Heather Goulding, and I have visited every one of you. We visited 62 of the 63 legislators. We believe in this very passionately. If you think we wore out the carpeting in your hallways, as we have been accused of, we also have met with union member representatives, we have met with K-12 education, we have met with families of at-risk teens. We have met with hiring managers, with law enforcement, with economic development. Yes, we have been busy, but we wanted to get the word out. Assemblywoman Hardy asked how we are getting the word out—through community leaders. I believe our budget is for four or five full-time recruiters year-round just to go out and get the word out. That is the nice thing about a 25-year-old program. We have a lot of experience and a lot of states to draw from on how to get the best kids, the most kids, the ones who are most likely to succeed in this program. Thank you for that question, but I wanted you to know that we have not spent all our time here—we have been out there, too, and had just as warm a reception as we have had here in this building.

I wanted to talk to you today because I am a mom of a kid who went through this program. If you have questions about what it is really like, I can at least tell you my experience. In 2014, our family was living in Oregon, and my son was finishing his third year of high school and he had a freshman's number of credits. He had been smoking pot and skipping school. By now, he was so far behind he could not see any reason to go to school his senior year. Why even start? I cannot graduate anyway, why not keep doing these stupid things that I am doing? He was only 17 years old and he had no hope. As his momma, I had no hope either. What the heck are we going to do to turn this kid around? We heard about Oregon's Youth Challenge Program, so we went to the orientation to check it out. There was hope in the air. We spent the day there. They had a really good orientation program, which

we will have too, and we left with some of that hope. He filled out his 17-page application, and it is really clever—the kids have to sign the bottom of every page. They have to write an essay. They really get the kid involved in thinking about, How did I get to this spot, and am I willing to do something to get out of this spot? My son got into some trouble with the law. His future was looking worse. He was not on track to graduate. Now he is getting in trouble with the law and, again, he is 17 years old.

He applied to Youth Challenge and he got into it. I hoped and prayed that this structured quasi-military program would speak to him and bring out the best in him—and it did. He developed athletically. He developed academically. He earned the maximum number of high school credits and his GED. Here is a kid who was not getting success in a traditional school. Now he had the maximum success and he left with a Youth Challenge college scholarship so he could go to junior college. They took a kid going right down the tubes and turned that thing around. He learned self-discipline, when to talk, and when to zip it. The military taught him that. That is a skill that has served him and will serve all the other kids for the rest of their lives. We had dropped off a hopeless boy. This is not some 30-day turnaround because we all know it is hard to change behavior and mind-sets. But after five months of living 24/7 in the military when you are that young, we picked up a confident young man.

When we moved from Oregon to Nevada, I thought we should have a Youth Challenge program here too. I contacted General Burks at a pancake breakfast one year ago yesterday, and he was enthusiastic from the start. For me, Youth Challenge is more than just a great program that really helped my son, it is also a new path of hope for Nevada's dropout youth. We have the same kinds of kids with the same kinds of problems as Oregon, California, Montana, Utah, and Washington, but they have a Youth Challenge program. Right now, we do not. Those states are getting that 75 percent federal match and we are not taking it, but you can fix that by supporting S.B. 295 (R1). Thank you, on behalf of all of Nevada's high school dropouts, at-risk students, and their moms and dads.

Chair Flores:

Thank you for your comments and for allowing us into your family and explaining how this program has helped. Is there anybody else wishing to testify in support of Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to speak in the neutral position for Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint)? [There was no one.] Senator Spearman, do you have any closing remarks?

Senator Spearman:

I just want to put on the record that I had the easy part once Grace called me, and I think it was in November. She was all excited and talking loud and I said, Hold on, let me go outside so I can hear what you are saying and ask you about this. I was convinced after about five or ten minutes that this was a really good thing for Nevada. Having spent most of my life in the military, I know that the training does not go away easily. I still put my clothes in the closet according to color and height, and make sure that when I put my shoes on that they are not scuffed—that sort of thing. It teaches you the kind of discipline that you need in life.

It has been my experience that many times when young people begin to make the wrong choices or do not have the ability to make the right choice, it is because of fear. A lot of times we say, Do you not want to be successful? For some of the students who will be able to access this program, they are okay with failure because that is all they have seen. It is success they are afraid of. Getting them into a different environment and teaching them how to be successful is a lifelong skill. It is not just a lifelong skill for them, but whenever they get into situations where they are required to think about more than themselves and to think about the end and not just the journey. I think it is the military. I know for me, that has really helped me to do that. I have stepped into some situations that were seemingly impossible, but I was not afraid to step into them because I am secure in who I am, and I know my ability. It is my hope that we will do this so we will have students who become productive adults, and they will contribute largely to our society. I do not want to take any credit. I really think all the credit goes to Grace and Heather. They have done a yeoman's job. With that, I will end with the Army as we say, "Hooah."

Chair Flores:

With that, we will close the hearing on Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint). I will take a motion.

ASSEMBLYMAN LEAVITT MOVED TO DO PASS SENATE BILL 295 (1ST REPRINT).

ASSEMBLYMAN McCURDY SECONDED THE MOTION.

Committee members, is there any discussion on the motion? While in discussion, I will say to you, Senator Spearman and all the stakeholders involved, that there are a whole host of people on this Committee who would love to be a co-sponsor, but they are not going to do that in fear of prolonging the process and getting it backed up. If the bill went back, we would have to do a concur, not concur. My point in saying this is that there is so much respect for what is being done here that nobody wants to, in any way, risk this being sent back.

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEN BILBRAY-AXELROD AND CARRILLO WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

Assemblyman Smith will do the floor statement on Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint). I would like to invite those forward wishing to speak for public comment. [There was no one.]

Assemblyman Ellison:

I want to thank this Committee. You have done a great job. We do not always have the same opinion, but we look for what is good for the state of Nevada, and how important it is for our constituents—even though it is so diverse, it is so different, we still have the same goal as the people, and I want to thank you, Chair Flores.

Chair Flores:

We will have an opportunity to have closing remarks, as I anticipate we will be meeting tomorrow most certainly. For now, we will be in recess. Again, the intent is for us to meet tomorrow morning. We are going to recess out of an abundance of caution.

We are in recess [at 10:30 a.m.]. The meeting adjourned [at 11:59 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Mark Peckham
Recording Secretary

Connie Jo Smith
Transcribing Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

[Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster.

[Exhibit C](#) is written testimony to Chair Flores and members of the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs, dated May 29, 2019, authored and presented by Grace Nichols, Co-Chair, Coalition for Nevada National Guard Youth Challenge, in support of Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint).

[Exhibit D](#) is a letter dated May 28, 2019, to Chair Flores and members of the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs, submitted by Grace Nichols, Co-Chair, Coalition for Nevada National Guard Youth Challenge, and Heather Goulding, Co-Chair, Coalition for Nevada National Guard Youth Challenge, in support of Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint).

[Exhibit E](#) is a document titled "Nevada National Guard Youth Challenge – Overview and Fiscal Note," dated 10 April, 2019, prepared and submitted by LTC John Brownell, Nevada National Guard, in support of Senate Bill 295 (1st Reprint).