

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

**Eightieth Session
March 26, 2019**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Edgar Flores at 8:34 a.m. on Tuesday, March 26, 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
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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Committee Counsel
Connie Jo Smith, Committee Secretary
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Emily Paulsen, Executive Director, Nevada Homeless Alliance
Ellen Richardson-Adams, Outpatient Administrator, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services, Division of Public and Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services
Brian O'Callaghan, Government Liaison, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Shani J. Coleman, Deputy Director, Office of Administrative Services, City of Las Vegas
Kathy Clewett, Legislative Liaison, City of Sparks
Wes Henderson, Executive Director, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities
Michael Cathcart, Business Operations Manager, Finance Department, City of Henderson
Fuilala Riley, President and CEO, HELP of Southern Nevada
John Wagner, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Veronica Galas, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Bob Coffin, Councilman, City of Las Vegas
David Dazlich, Director, Government Affairs, Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce
Craig Lagier, Director, Night Off the Street, Carson City, Nevada
Mendy Elliott, representing Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce; Nevada Rural Housing Authority; and Reno Housing Authority
Megan Rockefeller, representing Food Bank of Northern Nevada; and Human Services Network
Serena Evans, Policy Specialist, Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
Arash Ghafouri, Executive Director, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth

Chair Flores:

[Roll was taken. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] This morning we have one bill that we are hearing. I would like to open the hearing on Assembly Bill 174, which establishes the Nevada Interagency Advisory Council on Homelessness to Housing.

Assembly Bill 174: Establishes the Nevada Interagency Advisory Council on Homelessness to Housing. (BDR 18-94)

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17:

I am Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, representing Assembly District No. 17, in the growing City of North Las Vegas—the city that I am proud to have been born and raised in. On this Homeless to Housing Awareness Day at the Legislature, I am excited to present Assembly Bill 174, which establishes the Nevada Interagency Advisory Council on Homelessness to Housing ([Exhibit C](#)) and ([Exhibit D](#)). I want to start off with a quote from an unknown author that I think is quite fitting for the work, that we, as a whole, are tasked to do as a state Legislature: Let us feed the hungry, house the homeless, stop the killing, and provide medicine for the sick. And when we have all accomplished that, then we can sit around and argue about everything else. I think that gives us a good framework for today. When I was packing to come back to Carson City this past Sunday from home, I thought, I need to get my "End Homelessness" shirt out, because this is something that I represent and have worn for years whenever we are out in the trenches trying to engage people to come into care and get into housing or whenever we are at a convention trying to share the good work that we are doing in the state of Nevada. I thought it would be fitting. I know it is not the normal shirt and tie you are used to seeing me wear here, but I wanted to represent today.

I previously served as a regional homeless coordinator in southern Nevada. I know that collectively and statewide, we have the resources and we can continue to gain resources around this work to truly create a "functional zero" homelessness state. I will explain more what functional zero means. Complementing all those resources is the partial village sitting behind me, because there are a lot of the foot soldiers who do this dedicated work every single day throughout our state—not just in southern Nevada, in our rural communities, and also in northern Nevada.

When I talked about functional zero, we actually have a case and example in a few areas of our state where we have been able to have functional zero for our homeless veterans. As we know, our veterans have served. The last thing they need to do is come home and not have a home. I just want to share with you that functional zero means a well-coordinated and efficient community system that assures homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring. In that situation, it does not mean that, necessarily, homelessness is fully eradicated. What it means is that should a person who is experiencing homelessness, if they chose to end their homelessness, we, as a state, would have all the resources, all of the permanent and supportive housing for them to do so.

At this time, I will hand the presentation over to Emily Paulsen. She is the executive director of Nevada Homeless Alliance, and Ms. Ellen Richardson-Adams, with the Division of Public and Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services. She is the agency manager there and is the current chair of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. They will further walk you through the framework of today and walk you through the bill. Then we will open it up for any questions you may have.

Emily Paulsen, Executive Director, Nevada Homeless Alliance:

This bill has been put forth because homelessness in Nevada is a tragedy. It is a significant problem. Our state ranks third in the nation for the rate of unsheltered people—people who do not have access to emergency shelter, transitional housing, or supportive housing. They are living in places that no human should live: the streets, storm drains, desert encampments, in cars, and other places of that nature.

The causes of homelessness are complex, and homeless individuals have highly diverse needs [page 2, ([Exhibit C](#))]. Various systems of care are designated to address these various needs in specific aspects. Effectively addressing homelessness requires collaboration among state agencies, local governments, the private sector, service provider networks, et cetera, in order to coordinate program developments, deliver essential services, and provide housing.

Ellen Richardson-Adams, Outpatient Administrator, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services, Division of Public and Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services:

In 2013, then-Governor Sandoval had signed an executive order [Executive Order 2013-20] establishing the Nevada Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) [page 3, ([Exhibit C](#))]. That executive order is set to sunset in 2020. The ICH was established to coordinate the state's efforts in merely looking at the challenges of homelessness. It is a statewide coordinated effort. The rurals participate, as well as northern Nevada and southern Nevada. It also provides an opportunity for Nevada to engage in an integrated approach and merely look at promoting the interagency efforts. On behalf of the ICH, we have developed a strategic plan ([Exhibit E](#)). The plan has focused on six significant goals. We have leveraged nearly \$5 million in federal funds [page 4, ([Exhibit C](#))] through the Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) grant since the inception. Through the CABHI grant, we must have an Interagency Council on Homelessness. The CABHI grant is awarded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and it is to the Department of Health and Human Services. Those dollars are then put down to local organizations that serve individuals who are homeless. So it helps provide wraparound services [page 6, ([Exhibit E](#))] and the resources that individuals would need to help stay in their housing situation.

Emily Paulsen:

In order to receive those grant funds, we would have to have an Interagency Council on Homelessness in place. If the Council goes away, we lose those grant dollars that are so extremely valuable in our communities. The executive order is set to expire next year in 2020 [page 5, ([Exhibit C](#))]. Assembly Bill 174 would establish the Council into statute and provide the necessary administrative resources for it to continue its work. Assembly Bill 174 would require the Department of Health and Human Services to provide the administrative support. This would occur through current, existing staff structures. It would coordinate the response of state and local agencies and promote cooperation among federal, state, and local agencies to address homelessness. It would develop a statewide strategic plan. This plan has already been created. Essentially, the Council would ensure that every year that plan is updated and renewed to be relevant; establish a technical assistance committee to provide

advice and information to assist the Council in development of the strategic plan; and would also increase awareness of issues related to homelessness in this state [page 6, ([Exhibit C](#))].

The bill would also authorize the Council to collaborate with and request the assistance of service providers; it would require state and local agencies to cooperate with and provide relevant data and information. In addition, it would prescribe the membership of the Council to include representatives from various systems of care in the state that are charged with responding to homelessness. This could include law enforcement agencies, health care agencies, the Department of Health and Human Services, service providers, and on and on.

Assemblyman Thompson:

As you see, this is work that has already been happening, and I just want to share with you, and I know Ms. Richardson-Adams will chime in with me, that we have had some challenges. We have not had the appropriate staffing, so I am proud to say that the work we have been doing with the Department of Health and Human Services identified some resources for us to have a statewide coordinator around this work, as well as the assistance around the administrative help that is needed. As you see in section 3 of A.B. 174, all of the people listed on this Council are extremely busy people. We need to make sure that there is someone working on this 24/7 because we know that homelessness is not 8 to 5. We are very appreciative of Director Whitley of the Department of Health and Human Services and his staff for identifying those resources for us.

I do not know if you want us to walk you through the entire bill. What is your pleasure, Mr. Chair? I think it is self-explanatory. The key points are that we have on the Council the Chief of Staff from the Office of the Governor; the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services; the Director of the Department of Corrections; the Administrator of the Housing Division of the Department of Business and Industry; the Director of the Department of Veterans Services; the Sheriffs of Clark County and Washoe County; representatives from our body; and a district court judge because we know that there are many specialty courts throughout. We were very thoughtful in how we looked at this on a big picture level. We have talked with the agencies to make sure that people were on board, and they do this work every single day.

I will say that the true worker bees are going to be captured in section 5, subsection 1, paragraph (c) where it says, "Establish a technical assistance committee." When we were brainstorming, we literally might have up to 25 people representing 25 entities and voices throughout our state that will be a part of this process. Even though it looks like it is buried in the bill, those are the everyday people who are hitting the ground running.

Without further ado, I will open it up for any questions you may have.

Chair Flores:

I agree with you. I think it is pretty self-explanatory. What the Council can do, what it may do, when it meets, and who makes up the Council is pretty much what the bill is. Committee members, any questions directly on that?

Assemblyman Carrillo:

My question deals with the relevance regarding the number of homeless people. I know a census was done in January. I do not know the numbers for 2018. I think it was a little over 6,000 who were considered homeless. At some point, 17,000 can be homeless at any point—of course, that fluctuates. In my district alone, I see the encampments. I am wondering if that will be addressing those individuals. Of course you have people in shelters who are considered homeless. Are we going to concentrate on that particular group? There are plenty in my district as well. In the summertime, I take cases of water and drop them off because I know these people do not have access to clean water. It hurts to see that these people—whatever issues they may have or however they got there—it is more of a concern of how we can help them out—not just those in the shelters.

Assemblyman Thompson:

It is all of that. I appreciate your sharing that because that is another reason why we want to have the statewide system. You mentioned your specific Assembly district area, and I am sure that every one of my colleagues seated can say they have someone in that situation. It might be, We have a lot; some can say, Well, we have a few. Some can say, We might have one or two, and we know them by name. Regardless, it is happening throughout the state, so we are really looking to create that system of care starting at the very root of the problem. It deals with housing. I believe an article came out a few days ago saying that affordable housing is almost becoming nonexistent in Nevada as our housing prices continue to rise. I think it is spiking at about an 8 percent gain on housing prices.

Unfortunately, you have problems with people paying their rent because rents are also going up. People cannot handle all of that. And then you have all the other ills that are going on: gambling, alcoholism, and the whole gamut of things. We decided that it was necessary to get everybody together. When you talk about different cities and counties, it is not one city's or one county's problem. It is everybody's problem, so we are trying to get everybody together. We really think, and this is something that we as a state have always been trying to look at, are we as a state truly getting all of the federal dollars to which we are entitled? By putting this Council together, which is going to be policy-driven and work-driven, we should be able to accomplish that.

Assemblywoman Munk:

I see that the ICH has already been successfully formed. You just want it in statute. Can you share with the Committee a little bit about the statewide plan? What was the plan, and what have you discovered on that plan?

Ellen Richardson-Adams:

Assemblyman Thompson shared that the plan itself ([Exhibit E](#)) has been uploaded to the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS), but I will provide some highlights. In terms of the goals, we have:

- Preserving an existing affordable housing stock;
- Providing the resources necessary to expand and develop the continued inventory;

- Increased construction of new or rehabilitated housing;
- Providing coordinated housing among agencies for prevention and diversion and really looking at some mediation opportunities so individuals, hopefully, will not be evicted;
- Increasing access to funding;
- Closing the gap that is available and needed among appropriate credentialed health professionals statewide;
- Increasing access to education and workforce development for people experiencing homelessness; and,
- Integrating primary and behavioral health so that wraparound services are available for individuals.

Everyone collects data. Oftentimes, that data is not shared, so we look at how to collect data appropriately and how to promote that data sharing so that we really are working from one agenda. Those are the highlights.

Assemblyman Thompson:

I want to piggyback on the data. Data is so important to capture, and I want to call our state out because we have received awards. We have been asked to present at certain homelessness presentations and conferences through the system that we have. The system is through an organization called Bitfocus, Inc., and it is called Clarity Human Services. What is great about it is that we allow all of our partners in this work to actually be a part of it. So we are able to share some information so you can keep your agency information intact. You have to realize that people are bouncing everywhere around, and so we can, hopefully, stop with the duplication of services. We are able to communicate even better. That is truly an amazing system. It is something that we invest through our Continuum of Care in our state. We have three Continuums of Care: northern Nevada, southern Nevada, and for what we call the balance of the state which deals with the rural communities.

Assemblyman Leavitt:

I think all of our districts are touched by some level of homelessness, so I am grateful for the opportunity to take a look at this and try to work toward a solution. My question is more logistical. In section 5, subsection 2, it says, "The Council may," and in subsection 3 it says, "local agencies shall." I wonder what the extent of the agency's liability or resource allocation to the goals of the Council are? What are they required to do in accordance with this language?

Assemblyman Thompson:

I had a visit, which I appreciate, and a proposed amendment—I am not sure if it is uploaded to NELIS—to look at the words around "shall cooperate." [The proposed amendment was not submitted.] It is through the Nevada Rural Housing Authority. We want to change the wording where it is a little bit lighter, but we do not want to make it too light. Because personally and professionally, I feel that a core reason why we need to have this Council is because we are not cooperating on the level that we should. We say it, but we have to really do it. I would not see that anything would be done punitively, but we wanted to put the

language in the bill that really brings in the spirit of true collaboration. I hope that answers your question.

Assemblyman Leavitt:

I think that gets the gist of it. As the author of the bill, I just want to know what your thoughts are on these agencies and entities and what your goals are as far as cooperation and coordination—what you expect of them, so they have a bit of a heads up. I do not have an issue with expecting a lot of them. I just wonder what your expectation initially is of the various agencies.

Assemblyman Thompson:

The expectation is: Let us all get along. Seriously, this is a very serious issue. It becomes a very contentious issue when we are dealing with municipalities. It is something that is real. We have some bills that are being presented, hopefully, to this body during this legislative session that are an indicator that we need to communicate better. With that communication is that we have to collaborate better. We need to put our resources together, because if the dividing line of your jurisdiction is a street, if the homeless person walks over to the other side of the street, we should collectively be working together. I am not saying that it does not happen, but I am saying we have the opportunity to continue to tighten up that framework and that work we are doing. It is kind of in the spirit of a firefighter or even the police department. At the end of the day, we want to make sure we put that fire out. We want to make sure that the person is safe and away from harm. Then we will figure out what the costs were or what the resources were that we expended. I hope that gives you a visual of what I am talking about because it is literally like that: You have dividing lines which are streets and that can make a difference on where your services may lie.

Assemblyman Leavitt:

Thank you for that explanation and comprehensive answer. As you seek to make amendments, I would like to add a friendly amendment with my name on the bill, if that is possible.

Assemblyman Thompson:

Absolutely.

Assemblyman Assefa:

I am a proud cosponsor of the bill. Assemblywoman Munk briefly touched on this, and possibly you could expand on it. If we could figure out a way to entirely eradicate homelessness, that would be the ideal solution. Until we find that magic formula, more work has to be done to help the less fortunate and, collectively, it takes all of our efforts. The Council was put in place in 2013 by executive order. You are putting it into statute now because you understand it is doing some good work. There is a history of five or six years. At this point, if you could, briefly highlight the work that was done and the record that is in place already enough to trigger us to put it into statute. That would be great.

Assemblyman Thompson:

I want to step in because we had an executive order which was only until 2020. We will not be in session in 2020, so that was one of the reasons that we wanted to do it. As was mentioned before, we had to fight pretty hard to get this Council on board. But the way in which we were able to do so is because in order to get that \$5 million in federal grants, we had to have an established Council. We wanted to continue that work and, therefore, that is why we are here. I will let Ms. Richardson-Adams continue.

Ellen Richardson-Adams:

The Council has been working to look at the issues surrounding homelessness. Some of the successes we have had are the communications piece and looking at how homelessness as a system impacts all of our local and statewide systems. It has started that communication piece and releasing how one individual can touch so many different systems of care. I think that is one of my favorite pieces in addition to how we access dollars so that we can push it down to local entities that truly are serving individuals. It is figuring out, almost to Assemblyman Carrillo's point, is it going to be at the shelters? Is it going to be for encampments, that type of thing? How do you choose? It is looking at strategies and prioritizing and how to bring wraparound services to individuals. There has been significant work done in terms of case management and what intensive case management can look like for individuals. Oftentimes what we have seen is individuals may have been homeless. They want to access services, as Assemblyman Thompson had spoken about, but now the person is in a place, in a house, and it is quiet. And that is a little weird; the person is not used to the sound-of-silence type of thing. Having that link with case management and resources, signing them up for health care and ensuring they have access to food—how to go grocery shopping for food; how to budget money—all of that is encompassed in the case management piece and it really helps them to stay housed. It is one thing to get into a place; it is another step to stay in that place. Maybe I am biased, but on behalf of the Council, I think that has been one of the primary focuses. If we can get one person to be successful, that is one person who is not living on the street or in an unhealthy situation.

Some other areas that the Council has focused on are how do different people touch so many different systems. An individual may be arrested for trespassing. Then they end up in the local detention center. Then they are released to the street, not necessarily having the means to get to a shelter that they need. So they may walk into an emergency room because they are not feeling well; they are dehydrated. That is already three systems that have been touched. So it is looking at how all these systems can come together. It may be saying, We have John Smith who needs help in solving a problem specific to John Smith. It is also looking at the policies around the John Smiths who continually touch these different systems. How do we create a system that makes it healthy for them so that no matter what door they touch, they are getting the wraparound services and the support they need?

Emily Paulsen:

Assemblyman Assefa, you mentioned a "magic formula," and the good news is we actually know a lot of the solutions to this issue. The formula is the strategic plan ([Exhibit E](#)). It breaks it down very specifically around specific strategies that the systems of care can adopt,

so it is a less mysterious issue to solve. That is one of the major successes of the Council—they have created a plan that all the systems across the state can follow to really meet that goal in making homelessness rare, brief, and one time.

Assemblyman Ellison:

I think you answered a lot of my questions. My concern was on subsections 2 and 3 out of section 5. If we can get that addressed. That is in subsection 3, the word "shall." If you get this thing moving, I think the Council is a great idea. You can bring all the resources together. Once you get that, where do you go with it? Do you take the findings and try to bring them back to the Legislature? Do you try to take it to the cities and the counties? Where are the nuts and bolts going to go with this?

Ellen Richardson-Adams:

The intent and structure written into the bill have a lot of high positions listed. We have the sheriffs for Washoe and Clark Counties and the rural areas. We have department heads out of the state, et cetera. It is really looking at individuals at that level to be able to make decisions. They have the decision-making ability to allocate the resources, push the dollars, push policy to where it should and needs to go.

Looking at the technical assistance level, those are more the individuals, as Assemblyman Thompson mentioned, who are doing the work. The intent is we have to use the Assemblyman's term "worker bees" here in the technical area, pushing that information up to the overriding Council, and the Council being able to field and push down that policy and allocation of fiscal resources. It does provide the "solve" to the problems and address the strategic plan's goals.

Assemblyman Ellison:

I think that is a great idea and that is a good way to do this. It is a good ground base. There is a movie I watched recently called, *Do You Believe?* There was a young woman and her child living on the street, and they were trying to get her into a home. What was good about it is she said, Because I am living on the street, it does not make me a bad mother. She was at the end of her rope. If you ever get a chance, watch the movie—it is great.

Chair Flores:

Committee members, are there any additional questions? [There were none.] I would like to invite those in support of Assembly Bill 174 to please come forward. As we have individuals from the audience come up, if the individual who spoke just prior to you already mentioned a point, we respect that you say, Me too, or I agree with that point. Do not feel the need to have to repeat it.

Brian O'Callaghan, Government Liaison, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:

This issue is not just a county or state problem, it is a national issue. A couple of Sheriff Lombardo's priorities are homelessness and mental illness—and they coincide. We fully support A.B. 174.

Shani J. Coleman, Deputy Director, Office of Administrative Services, City of Las Vegas:

We want to thank Assemblyman Thompson for bringing this bill forward. The City of Las Vegas is at the forefront of homelessness in southern Nevada. A number of the homeless services are in the City of Las Vegas in our downtown area, so we are greatly impacted by homelessness. Addressing homelessness is a priority for our city council. However, we do believe that addressing homelessness is a regional issue and needs a regional approach. We support this bill because it brings people together. It brings everybody to the table to communicate on the best practices on how to, if I can say, get to functional zero. The City of Las Vegas supports A.B. 174.

Kathy Clewett, Legislative Liaison, City of Sparks:

I want to make sure that people listening and those who are here in the committee room who are not normally here know that up north, we have our Community Homelessness Advisory Board, which is known as CHAB. We are very proud of that—all three jurisdictions, Washoe County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks—we are working together diligently. There are elected officials on the board, and it is staffed by city and county employees. I believe it is this month, if not next month, we have made great strides in working with the state and getting some of the cottages at the Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services homelessness facility (NNAMHS) in Sparks. Truly, this goes to the point of there are no boundaries. It is everywhere and everybody crosses. We all need to work together and this month, next month, they are moving the women, the children, the families out from our community assistance center, which is in downtown Reno. The only types of people who will be there will be the single men, which will get rid of a lot of the trafficking problems. It will allow us to have access for the youth to come to the facility at NNAMHS. We are very excited about this, and this is absolutely what this bill is doing. We are moving forward up north and we thank you for your support.

Wes Henderson, Executive Director, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities:

We, too, would like to thank Assemblyman Thompson and the other sponsors for bringing this important bill forward. This is an issue that affects not only every municipality in this state, but every municipality across the country. It has long been a priority with the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities, but it is also a priority of the National League of Cities. In fact the current president has established a task force on homelessness to address this issue. Until Governor Sisolak named David Bobzien to the Office of Energy, we had him on that committee. The National League of Cities has released a report on homelessness. I would be happy to provide a copy to any Committee member who would like one. I know that we have very talented municipal staff who would bring expertise to the "technical assistance committee" that is referenced in section 5, subsection 1, paragraph (c) of the bill. Again, we fully support this bill.

Michael Cathcart, Business Operations Manager, Finance Department, City of Henderson:

We want to thank Assemblyman Thompson for bringing this bill. We will make sure that we are available for any participation on the technical assistance committee. We are currently

working with all of our partners in southern Nevada on this issue. It is a very important issue to all communities.

Fuila Riley, President and CEO, HELP of Southern Nevada:

This morning, 623 formerly homeless clients woke up in one of our program beds, 90 of them at the Shannon West Homeless Youth Center. Furthermore, 44 of them are funded by the CABHI funding that hinges on this Council being put into statute. We fully support the bill on behalf of our homeless clients. We could do more with the work of the Interagency Advisory Council, and HELP of Southern Nevada is fully in support of this bill.

John Wagner, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

In this context, I am representing myself. In my day job, I direct community relations and do a lot of work in this sort of collaborative environment. I wanted to urge this bill's passage for three reasons: coordination, infrastructure, and trust. These types of changes cannot occur without coordination. I am impressed by the thoughtfulness that went into the way this is set up. Both coordination of services and also coordination of data, to be able to measure the impact of the services, they go hand in hand. Infrastructure? My goodness, how nice is it to already have the infrastructure set up? This is not something we are imagining what it might look like—it already exists. It would seem a tragedy to throw the infrastructure away. Trust, for those who are in the community, who are working in these spaces, it is precarious to have starts and stops in these sorts of efforts. It can become like a flavor of the month. Okay, What is the new council doing this month? The trust that this is the official thing that is now set forward in statute means a lot. I think that is almost invaluable. This is not just the Governor's thing that he did once. This is going to be Nevada's thing that we are doing forever, or at least for the foreseeable future until we address homelessness. For those reasons, I urge its passing.

Veronica Galas, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

I am part of over 170 volunteers who have for the past few years volunteered to house homeless in the churches in Carson City because, in our capital, there is no shelter for homeless folks. So, over 170 people over two years, three years, set up the churches and volunteer from 8:30 p.m. to 12 a.m., 12 a.m. to 4 a.m., or 4 a.m. to 7 a.m. I am one of the people who get up in the middle of the night from 12 a.m. to 4 a.m. to volunteer. A bill like this respects our volunteer efforts. I am happy to serve, but you respect volunteers like us by putting bills forward that make it so that I do not see the same people in the shelter in our churches year after year after year. I do not volunteer because I want to see it continue or I want to see the same people every year. I applaud efforts such as these. I watch on the ground Forensic Assessment Services Triage Teams (FASTT) and Mobile Outreach Safety Teams (MOST) in our community collaborating, coordinating, working really hard to make this effort. You respect our efforts as citizens and volunteers when you support bills such as this.

Chair Flores:

Before we continue in Carson City, I notice that we have Councilman Coffin in Las Vegas, and I do not want to keep him waiting too long.

Bob Coffin, Councilman, City of Las Vegas:

Thanks to all those who have testified, and thanks to all of you on this Committee who are hearing this. It is undoubtedly something you hear back home, and now you are there, and the bubble has to be pierced every now and then. I served for 28 years in the same place you are. Now, with eight years on local government, I am leaving shortly, as soon as my replacement is elected. I feel that I have been in the streets with them. The time in the Legislature helped prepare me for this. In fact, I think it is the only training available for really efficient local government management—legislative experience.

I do not want to digress from the subject. I am proud of the fact that Assemblyman Thompson has introduced this bill and all of you who are co-sponsors. I am very much in sync with our lobbyists from the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities, as well as the City of Las Vegas. There are many, many people up there who are so concerned about this. All of your districts have homelessness. I am surprised that Carson City itself does not have an organized homeless shelter, because it is not immune from anything.

I have lived in Las Vegas since the early 1950s, and I used to hear about the "Hooverilles," which is what happened during the Depression. During the Depression, the homeless and what were called "the bums," if they did not find a shelter in the railroad yards in the jungle there, they were directed to go out of town—just leave town. They were directed to go to the tent cities that were forming along what we called the Boulder Highway. In honor of the president who had been the president at the time the Depression started, they were called "Hooverilles." We have baby Hooverilles all over the place in Las Vegas. We are the center of it all in the whole valley. Everybody comes to the city, and then some of them leave, but I have represented downtown now for 36 years in public office. I have never seen it this bad. One would have hoped that when the recession, the so-called "Great Recession" was over, that we would have seen an improvement in the situation, but it is getting worse. Many, many jobs, millions of jobs have been exported overseas. They did not come back during the recovery. While many sectors of the economy are good, millions are hurting.

Two years ago, under the sheriff's sponsorship, a bunch of us traveled to San Antonio to look at its homeless problem. I am glad that Brian O'Callaghan was there to speak about it. It is a combination of love and tough love. We have come back and we have been full steam ahead for 24 months. We are doing it in the City of Las Vegas because we are unique. As all of you know, we have different systems of taxation, even within Clark County. Our municipality is taxing differently and has different sources of revenue altogether than the county does, and the city is different. One-size-fits-all does not work. I must say that I hope those of you who serve on the committee where Assembly Bill 73 has been directed [Assembly Committee on Taxation] support the portion of A.B. 73 that will assist us in paying for this. Because nowhere here is there a way to pay for it, and I am not asking the state to pay for it. We will not turn down any money. We do get money from the state, we get grants, we get pass-throughs, too, from the federal government, but it is not enough. So we have put forth a proposal, not in this Committee's jurisdiction, but you will hear about A.B. 73 later.

For goodness sakes, give us a chance to pay for our problem. Pass it to us. Give us a chance to raise some sort of revenue. In two months you will be gone. We cannot solve this in the next 24 months—we have got to have assistance now, and we are not asking for a handout. The city knows that it will have to bear this burden. It is part of the responsibility of the charter of the City of Las Vegas. In 1991 it was revised. Members who used to be called commissioners became council members. The charter requires by state law that the council take care of the health and welfare and the safety of the citizens. Our safety is out of control. We do not have enough people to control all the parks 24/7—the public places—your backyards, your front yards when you are not home; your roof in the summertime; the fronts of businesses—anywhere, we pray for their safety. Two hundred people died in the streets in the valley last year—not one of them died from hunger. Hunger becomes an issue which we know we can do something about as individuals. Assemblyman Carrillo, my good friend, who was with me this past Saturday at an event, is feeding these people from the bottom of his heart because he does not know what else to do. That is the way it is with a million other people here.

We have passed an ordinance inside the city that forbids this, it makes it against our law to feed people in public places. Why? Because it encourages them to stay in those parks and backyards and neighborhoods, and this is where the tough love comes in. We have an agreement with the courts, the federal courts and the American Civil Liberties Union, to not hassle homeless people. "Hassle" could be loosely defined, but essentially it amounts to, You cannot just hit them with a baton and move them on, like a New York cop—the Irish variety in the movies. You cannot do that. They have to have a place to go, so we started spending money 24 months ago. In our last two budgets, we really allocated a lot of funds, and now we are hurting our other departments. We cannot, it is part of public safety. Public safety consumes 80 percent of the local governments' budgets. That varies, but it is a good round number. Well, who is going to take care of your parks, and your districts, and your neighborhoods? Who is going to take care of all the facilities that your neighbors—and you—count on?

As the increasing expense to public safety cuts the availability of money for other budgets, the ones that most people want, all taken up by about 10,000 people—we think 6,000 the last count, but I am going to say it is higher than 6,000—give us the opportunity. I do support this bill, and I want you to consider the possibility, if you are going to continue with this, Assemblyman Thompson, that you add a local government representative or two because I think we are not on this as ex officio. I think you need to have people like that on the committee, I really do.

I am available for questions from all of you, my colleagues—we are partners in this problem. We are partners in every problem because you are home for 20 months, and we have to try to help you solve your problems that you encounter when the neighbors say, Why can you not do this? Or why can you not do that? You can do one big thing for all of your neighbors and yourselves, and that is to give the city, and all cities, the ability to pay. By the way, one-size-fits-all does not work on how payments are and how care is. Everybody is different. The county has marijuana money they want to spend. We do not have that kind of money. We

do have a proposal with A.B. 73 to pay for it. We may want you to tell the different representatives of government, and you, to not force us to pay with one way, and do not wait 22 more months to give us that opportunity.

Chair Flores:

With that, we will come back to Carson City.

David Dazlich, Director, Government Affairs, Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce:

We would like to thank the sponsor for bringing forward this bill today. We are in support. The homelessness problem is multifaceted and requires a number of different resources, not only to collect and analyze the data over a period of time to determine what efforts are the most effective, but the infrastructure that has already been put in place needs to be continued in order to efficiently direct our unfortunately limited resources to address this in the most efficient way possible. We are in support of this bill.

Craig Lagier, Director, Night Off the Street, Carson City, Nevada:

We work with the churches. It is an overflow situation. Friends in Service Helping, Carson City, has 24 beds total for all of the homeless available in this community. So we have opened the churches from November 1 to the end of March, and we take seven days a week, seven nights a week, and we have about 170 volunteers who put this together.

We have supplied over 4,027 beds from November 1 until March 24. That is what we have had here. Of those, 28 were children under the age of 18. We can break them down: the average age is 51.7 years. We support this bill tremendously. It is absolutely imperative we have something like this. I currently serve on a couple of boards with the hospital to talk about the "frequent fliers," as we call them, who visit the emergency room. One of those in particular ran up a bill of over \$100,000 in 30 days. When we have the type of services we are talking about here, we are able to coordinate together with health and human services, with the Ron Wood Family Resource Center, all of the possible social services that we have out there, including the sheriff's department, the MOST and FASTT teams that we have. I am also chaplain at the Carson City Sheriff's Office. We work with them. We can coordinate, but having this type of committee and this type of council brings everything together, and we can talk and see what we can do to better improve the communities.

Mendy Elliott, representing Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce; Nevada Rural Housing Authority; and Reno Housing Authority:

This morning I am wearing a couple of hats. I am representing the Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce. I will just say, Me too, ditto, to what the Las Vegas Chamber has said.

I also represent the Nevada Rural Housing Authority, as well as the Reno Housing Authority. We did propose an amendment, Assemblyman Leavitt, and we are working strongly with the bill's sponsor in order to tweak the language. We appreciate the time he spent with us, and we recognize his passion for trying not to dilute, in section 5, subsection 3, the tenor of that language. We are working on it, and we have an amendment in to him. We are not sure if it

is friendly yet or not. As far as the housing authorities, I have been involved in housing and housing issues since the '90s. I think it is important that this bill represents a cohesive effort. So much of the time we are fragmented in our approach. Bifurcation: sometimes it is okay, but you have organizations that are not structured enough. They do not have the resources that they need, nor do they have the expertise. Having this Council in place will help guide these organizations and entities, not only local governments, state governments, as well as chambers of commerce, and organizations such as the rural housing organizations, but the housing organizations that provide what I call "gap" housing or sometimes transitional housing. We have the vouchers that are so necessary. Affordable housing is a high issue this session. We have a need. We have capacity need. We have the need to develop housing quicker, sooner, faster, and it really is a coordinated effort. This bill will help at least to, number one, provide additional resources with the CABHI grant but, hopefully, there will be additional grants on a federal level that we as a state can apply for because of the efforts that this bill represents. On behalf of both housing authorities, we want to thank Assemblyman Thompson for the time that he spent with us, number one, and number two for continuing this effort on a statewide basis.

Megan Rockefeller, representing Food Bank of Northern Nevada; and Human Services Network:

I am here with the Food Bank of Northern Nevada and the Human Services Network. We would like to thank the sponsors for their effort in bringing this bill forth, as well as express our support for Assembly Bill 174.

Serena Evans, Policy Specialist, Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence:

We know that domestic violence increases an individual's risk for homelessness. Fleeing an abusive home with nowhere to go, individuals and their children are often displaced to the streets. We also know that homelessness also greatly increases an individual's risk for sexual assault. For these reasons, we are in support of A.B. 174.

Chair Flores:

If anyone else would like to speak in support of A.B. 174, we have four seats available.

Arash Ghafoori, Executive Director, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth:

We are here to express our support for A.B. 174. The issue of homelessness, and really a lot of major human services problems in our communities, cannot be solved by one organization, cannot be solved by one sector, cannot be solved by one system. What this bill represents is the opportunity for what I call "extending the golden square," and the golden square at each corner is education, government, providers, and business. Between all these entities and related entities, that is where we find some of the most innovative solutions, some of the most cross sector collaborations, the public-private partnerships, the more aggressive seeking of federal dollars, et cetera, that we really need to start moving the needle in the right direction on the issue of homelessness in our great state. Therefore, this bill will allow that square to be memorialized legislatively and allow it to continue its work and expand on its work and do more great things to bring even more resources to bear and great

ideas on how we can better solve the issue of homelessness in our community. We are in full support of A.B. 174.

Chair Flores:

Is there anyone else wishing to speak in support of Assembly Bill 174? [There was no one.] I would like for the record to reflect that there are at least 34 people signed in in support of the bill. I understand that not everybody came up. I just wanted to acknowledge them.

I would like to invite those wishing to speak in opposition to Assembly Bill 174. [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to speak in the neutral position for Assembly Bill 174? [There was no one.] I would like to invite our sponsor to please come back up for any closing remarks you may have, Assemblyman Thompson.

Assemblyman Thompson:

First of all, thank you Chair Flores and the Committee for being actively engaged in today's presentation and conversation, and especially on Homeless to Housing Awareness Day. We intentionally scheduled this hearing for today, and I appreciate that you were so accommodating. I want to end by giving you a visual: the 2019 version of the face of homelessness, and it is not that traditional and stereotypical single man, unkempt, and unemployed in our community. It is far beyond that. We have homeless widows and widowers who, many times, being that we are a state around gambling, sometimes they lose everything when they lose their spouse of X-amount of years. We have an abundance of homeless youth. We are a state that has a right-to-shelter law that was established some years ago. We have homeless youth. In our communities we have very educated people, people who have master's degrees and doctorate degrees who are homeless in our streets. Just as important are our veterans, as I mentioned earlier, coming back home and not having a place. The 2019 version of the face of homelessness has totally changed.

Lastly, I want to say there is a word that sticks out in my heart called legacy. When we speak to, and I am sure when you speak to your young people in the community and you talk about legacy, and I know Vice Chair McCurdy and I, we were speaking to some young people a few weekends ago—what are you going to be known for when you leave here or just in the space that you are in? I immediately think of a person who poured into so many of us, not just in southern Nevada, but throughout this state.

I have to give props to her on the record, and that is my bestie Shannon West. Shannon West, for one person to have poured so much into the dedicated people who are sitting behind me and sitting beside me is just amazing. We have to keep that drive alive. With the passing of A.B. 174, we are going to continue to keep this work going. I wish most of you would have known her because, seriously, it takes about 30 of us to be the equivalent of the voice and the presence that she had when she talked about the work that needs to be done around homelessness. We need to do this in our state. This is not a fluff type of bill or a fluff type of Council. This is truly going to do some great work in our state, and I thank you. I hope we can continue to have your support for Assembly Bill 174.

Chair Flores:

Assemblyman Thompson, the only thing I want to clarify, aside from Assemblyman Leavitt asking that he be amended onto your bill as a sponsor, there are no other amendments, correct?

Assemblyman Thompson:

We will add Assemblyman Leavitt and anybody else who wants to be added, and of course we want to work around the wording in the section that talks about "shall cooperate," section 5, subsection 3, which the Rural Housing Authority and probably other providers will be working on. Also, for the record, I appreciate Councilman Coffin mentioning that he would love to have the City of Las Vegas to have a seat at the table. That was one of our thought processes, How do we put just one city on the larger Council? What we would like to do, because they are working on this every single day, is to allow them to have seats on the technical subcommittee.

Chair Flores:

Understood. With that I would like, moving forward with the conversation, that you invite our Vice Chair so that we can have him report back to the Committee. The sooner we have that language as you want it, I think the faster we can move this.

I do not know if we have any additional comments or questions, Committee members? I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 174. I would like to invite anybody wishing to speak for public comment. [There was no one.]

This meeting is adjourned [at 9:39 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Connie Jo Smith
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is a PowerPoint presentation titled "[Assembly Bill 174](#): Establishes the Nevada Interagency Advisory Council on Homelessness to Housing," presented by Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17, and Emily Paulsen, Executive Director, Nevada Homeless Alliance.

[Exhibit D](#) is a copy of a Fact Sheet submitted by Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17, regarding [Assembly Bill 174](#).

[Exhibit E](#) is a copy of a document titled "Strategic Plan: Nevada Interagency Council on Homelessness," revised April 2018, provided by Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17; Ellen Richardson-Adams, Outpatient Administrator, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services, Division of Public and Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services; and Emily Paulsen, Executive Director, Nevada Homeless Alliance.