

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

**Eightieth Session  
March 28, 2019**

The Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections was called to order by Chair Sandra Jauregui at 4:04 p.m. on Thursday, March 28, 2019, in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at [www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui, Chair  
Assemblyman Ozzie Fumo, Vice Chair  
Assemblyman Skip Daly  
Assemblyman Glen Leavitt  
Assemblyman William McCurdy II  
Assemblywoman Brittney Miller  
Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno  
Assemblyman Tom Roberts  
Assemblywoman Selena Torres

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Assemblyman John Hambrick (excused)

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Steve Yeager, Assembly District No. 9  
Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Assembly District No. 29

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Carol Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst  
Kevin Powers, Committee Counsel  
Christopher Roske, Committee Manager  
Catherine Bodenstein, Committee Secretary  
Melissa Loomis, Committee Assistant



**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Doug Goodman, Founder and Executive Director, Nevadans for Election Reform  
Doug N. Johnson, Member, Committee of the Emeritus, Nevada Association of Counties  
Lorinda A. Wichman, Member, Board of Commissioners, Nye County  
Dagny Stapleton, Executive Director, Nevada Association of Counties  
Bill Chernock, Executive Director, Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Maurice White, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada  
Dona Dmitrovic, Executive Director, Foundation for Recovery, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Trey Delap, Director, Group Six Partners, LLC, Henderson, Nevada  
John J. Piro, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public Defender's Office  
Kendra G. Bertschy, Deputy Public Defender, Washoe County Public Defender's Office  
Danny Thompson, representing International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; International Union of Operating Engineers; and Lance Gilman, Owner, Mustang Ranch, Sparks, Nevada  
Corey Solferino, Lieutenant, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office  
Jaron S. Hildebrand, Manager of Government Affairs, Nevada Trucking Association; and representing Nevada Self Insurer's Association  
Victoria Hauan, Impaired Driving Program Manager, Office of Traffic Safety, Department of Public Safety  
Barbara G. Brents, Professor, Department of Sociology, College of Liberal Arts, University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Christina Parreira, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Alice Little, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada  
Ruby Rae, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada  
Dena Duff, Private Citizen, Pahrump, Nevada  
Bella Cummins, Executive Director, Onesta Foundation  
Bob Hastings, Private Citizen, Yerington, Nevada  
Holly Welborn, Policy Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada  
Stephen Funk, Secretary and Director of Communications, Onesta Foundation  
Ken Gray, Private Citizen, Dayton, Nevada  
Cherry  
Izzy Youngs, representing Nevada Women's Lobby  
Caity Gwin, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Violet Vause, Private Citizen, Pahrump, Nevada  
Cyrus Hojjaty, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Kay Landwehr, Private Citizen, Gardnerville, Nevada

**Chair Jauregui:**

[Roll was called and Committee protocols were explained.] Welcome, everyone, to the Assembly Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections. In an effort to allow

everyone here to testify on every issue, we do limit testimonies to two minutes, whether you are in opposition, support, or neutral. Thank you.

[Assemblyman Fumo assumed the Chair.]

**Vice Chair Fumo:**

I will now open the hearing on Assembly Bill 259.

**Assembly Bill 259: Revises provisions relating to elections. (BDR 24-951)**

**Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui, Assembly District No. 41:**

I am here today to talk about Assembly Bill 259. In 2015, Senate Bill 499 of the 78th Session was introduced by Senator Settlemeyer, passed, and signed into law. Senate Bill 499 of the 78th Session created the current system of elections we are operating in today where if there are two or more candidates running from the same party and there are zero candidates running from another major party or minority party, then a primary is triggered, and the winner of that primary is the candidate-elect.

Prior to 2015 and what this bill seeks to do is if there are only two members from one party running and no other candidates from a major or minority party, then their names will go directly to and appear on the general ballot. If there are more than two members from a party running and no other candidates from a major or minority party, then this will trigger a primary, and the two members with the highest number of votes would proceed to the general election.

Committee, this is how elections were done in Nevada prior to 2015. It is the right thing to do to ensure that we are not disenfranchising any voters. Every person should have a voice in deciding who represents them despite parties. I would now like to turn it over to Doug Goodman for further testimony and to go over some statistics on the handouts with the Committee.

**Doug Goodman, Founder and Executive Director, Nevadans for Election Reform:**

I believe we can all agree, voter suppression, whether intentional or unintentional, is not smart public policy, nor is it acceptable.

Section 260 of Chapter 293 of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) was added in 1960. In its original wording:

If only one political party has candidates for an office or offices for which there is no independent candidate, the candidates of such party who receive the highest number of votes at such primary, not to exceed twice the number to be elected to such office or offices at the general election, shall be declared the nominees for the office or offices.

In 1989 the language was clarified. Again, to quote:

If only one major political party has candidates for a particular office, and no minor political party has nominated a candidate for the office:

- (a) If there are more candidates than twice the number to be elected to the office, the candidates of that party who receive the highest number of votes at the primary election, not to exceed twice the number to be elected to that office at the general election, must be declared the nominees for the office.
- (b) If there are no more than twice the number of candidates to be elected to the office, the candidates must, without a primary election, be declared the nominees for the office.

The year 1997 saw the first major change when wording provided that if only one candidate were to be elected and a candidate received a majority of the votes in the primary, that candidate would appear on the general election ballot unopposed. The qualifier, the majority requirement, still kept open the original intent that all voters should be able to make a choice in the general election.

The 2015 Legislature, in Senate Bill 499 of the 78th Session, removed the qualifier. For the first time since the paragraph was added in 1960, only voters registered to the party with candidates would be allowed a choice between candidates for who would represent the entire district in either or both of the chambers of the State Legislature, on their county commission, or any other county partisan office. All other voters only had the choice to vote for that candidate or not cast a ballot in those races in the general election.

When considering the impact, you cannot forget that primary election turnout during the even-year state election cycle is about 20 percent. Conversely, general election turnout is usually around 60 to 65 percent during nonpresidential years and over 70 percent during presidential elections.

The impact of the 2015 change was clearly apparent in the 2016 election. In 21 partisan races, 20 of which were Republican and 1 Democratic, nearly 50 percent of the voters were systemically denied a choice. This ranged from a low of 39 percent in Senate District No. 4 to a high of 61 percent in Assembly District No. 19.

During the 2018 election, there were seven races decided in the primary: four Democratic and three Republican. During this cycle, nearly 55 percent of the voters, again, were systemically denied a choice with a range from 44 percent in Assembly District No. 33 to 63 percent for Nye County Commission District No. 5.

When turnout is considered, the winner may have received between 15 and 20 percent support from party members and less than 10 percent support from the district as a whole in the 2016 election, and less than 15 percent from their party and closer to 5 percent of the district in 2018. The Committee has been provided the details of this breakdown ([Exhibit C](#)).

I am not an elected official, so I cannot say with certainty, but it is my perception that a candidate elected under this scenario may have an internal conflict when considering who they represent, since a majority of voters in their districts were systemically not allowed to weigh in.

Some may say that all voters do have a choice. That choice is to register in the party that has candidates and vote in the primary. Some say it is up to the parties, and if a major or minor political party does not field candidates or independent candidates do not file, that is also a choice. I concede the logic in these statements. However, logical statements do not always reflect reality.

Voters are not attracted to the two major political parties. Every month over the past several years with very minor exceptions, voter share of both the Democratic and Republican Parties declines while the voter share represented by those registered to vote as nonpartisan increases. This is true statewide, in Clark County, in Washoe County, and in the rural counties among those 18 to 34 and among those 55 and over. It is happening across congressional, state Senate, and state Assembly districts. In over 75 percent of congressional and state legislative districts, there is less than 5 percent difference between the voter share of one of the major parties and those registered as either nonpartisan or in a minor party. Voter share percentages among younger voters are 10 percent higher than the statewide numbers, and nonpartisan is the No. 1 registration category for those 17-year-olds who are preregistering. Voters are distancing themselves from the major parties. And while all registration groups gain voters, the rate of growth for nonpartisan usually is the highest. Nonpartisan is the default affiliation for automatic voter registration (AVR), so it is likely voter share of those registered as such will increase even faster once AVR is implemented. Since 2000, Democratic Party voter share has fallen 6 percent. Republican Party voter share has fallen 8 percent. During the same period, nonpartisan voter share has risen 8 percent and minor party by 3 percent.

Voters' actions do not follow the logical reasoning. Voters do not feel represented by either major party. They are tired of the divisiveness in government and are making that feeling known through their voter registration. The end result is that by keeping the process enacted in 2015, a much lower percentage of voters will be making decisions for all. This is hardly representative government.

Voter suppression, whether intentional or unintentional, is not smart public policy nor acceptable. When a systemic cause can be readily identified, it is up to those responsible to enact the solution. For 55 years, the problem did not exist. The solution is before you today. Thank you and I welcome your questions.

**Assemblywoman Jauregui:**

Vice Chair, I do want to make a note that we do have a verbal conceptual amendment at the end. We will be making this for all nonpartisan races, not just the judicial ones. I know that at the end of the bill, it specifically says that it will include all judicial races, but it will actually include all nonpartisan races as well. We are open for any questions.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

I want some clarification. What was it—I think you mentioned that in 2015 we changed. If you could give a little more of the background of that, why that bill was introduced and how it was before.

**Assemblywoman Jauregui:**

We would basically be reverting back to the same system. What Senate Bill 499 of the 78th Session did—I actually listened to the hearing and read the minutes—the presentation was basically on changing some filing deadlines and then after the presentation, it was amended. So there was never really an open hearing on the major changes in the bill. But prior to Senate Bill 499 of the 78th Session, as Mr. Goodman said, for 55 years we had the system that we are trying to revert back to where if there was not any other major party or minority party and there were only two people on the ballot for a party, then those two names would appear on the general giving possibility to everyone to participate in that election.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

So in the current system, if you are nonpartisan and you want to vote and there are only two candidates in the primary, then you have no say in who your representative is?

**Assemblywoman Jauregui:**

Correct, you would not be able to participate in that election.

**Assemblyman Roberts:**

Just so I understand exactly how it goes, like in my race, for instance, there was no Democratic candidate, but there was an Independent American candidate. So in the general election, the Independent American and I went on to the general after the primary. If you always had a third party, then it would be the same. It would only be when there is one party where you would process the two top vote-getters, correct?

**Assemblywoman Jauregui:**

Correct. So as long as there is another candidate from another party running, everything would remain the same. You would have a primary. As soon as another candidate from a major or minority party runs, a primary is triggered.

**Assemblyman Leavitt:**

For clarification, and maybe you do not have this data and you could bring it later, prior to 2015, do we have a record of those races in which two candidates ran? If there were two candidates—say two Republicans or two Democrats ran in a primary and they were the only two—did they not do a primary prior to 2015? Is that how it worked?

**Assemblywoman Jauregui:**

So if there were, in your race, for example, two Republicans and two Democrats running, then it would be a normal election. There would be a primary for the Republicans and a primary for the Democrats, and the candidate who received the most votes would go on to the general election for each party. That stayed the same.

**Assemblyman Leavitt:**

Logistically, prior to 2015, when there were only two candidates in one party, did they not do a primary? That is what is suggested in this bill. I just want to make sure it was the same.

**Doug Goodman:**

What would happen is, let us say there were only two Republicans running. There would not have been a primary, so all voters in the general election would have chosen their favorite Republican, whether the votes themselves were Democratic. If there were more than two with the change made in 1989, if no candidate received a majority in the primary, the top two would then go again to the general election. As a nonpartisan, I could at least choose my favorite Republican or favorite Democrat versus with the change made with Senate Bill 499 of the 78th Session, with a 20 percent turnout, such a low number of voters, the winner of the primary actually becomes the elected representative. We are going to change it back to the way it was.

**Assemblyman Leavitt:**

I guess the data I would like to see is if there were three candidates, if that ever occurred, in the same party running and they ran in a primary. Two of them moved on. I would like to see in what instance it flipped. So let us say out of the two who moved on, the heavy vote-getter in the primary, how often did that person not win in the general?

**Doug Goodman:**

I will have to get that information for you, but I am sure I can. I will get it to the Committee.

**Assemblyman Daly:**

Thank you, Assemblywoman Jauregui, for bringing this. For just a little perspective, having been on this Committee last session, we did have an attempt to fix this particular issue. I would just comment a little bit more on the history of what it is we are trying to get done. If you look at the "2016 Single Party Races" document you have in front of you ([Exhibit C](#)), last session Senator Hansen brought a bill to try to fix this [Assembly Bill 226 of the 79th Session]. The reason he wanted to fix it is because he was getting calls. If you look down there on all the Republican races in the rural counties he represents, he was getting calls from the Democrats in those districts complaining that they did not get to vote for a number of people that he represented. Whether you like the bill or do not like the bill, I think it is a good idea. I think we, as the Democratic Party, have always been the party of enfranchisement, not disenfranchisement. This just gives people the right to vote. If you are afraid to face all of the voters, maybe you are in the wrong business. I think enfranchisement is what we should be about and what this bill is about. That is my comment. Thank you.

**Vice Chair Fumo:**

Are there any other questions from the Committee? Seeing none, we will move to testimony in support.

**Doug N. Johnson, Member, Committee of the Emeritus, Nevada Association of Counties:**

I am a termed-out commissioner from Douglas County. I am here testifying in support for the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO) Committee of the Emeritus, something that I helped to create a few years ago, so I thought I better get involved. I have been termed out for about three years now. In my own experience, I have never had to go through the new primary system that we have talked about. Everybody has been making some really good points here.

I will throw in a couple things to give you some insight into the real world. In my county, the majority is Republican. Before the primaries in the last two races, I know for a fact that people were switching parties ahead of the primary election just so they could vote in the primary, and then switching back for the general election. The fact that was being done shows there is something drastically wrong with the system. When it all gets said and done, the people who were harmed the most—which was stated before—were, in our county in particular, when you get a choice on one when you get to the general election, the Democrats and the Independents basically have zero say in the outcomes of these elections. I can only speak from my own history. I had a primary every single time and a general election every single time.

To the one question Assemblyman Leavitt asked, I think that they do not change. I do not have absolute facts on that, but I think generally the winners of the primary do go on to win the general election, however, I still think there is a major underlying problem. If we can get this taken care of—and I do thank Madam Chair Jauregui for bringing this forward—I think it would be a great thing.

**Lorinda A. Wichman, Member, Board of Commissioners, Nye County:**

I will be terming out in a year and eight months. I am the senior commissioner on Nye County Board of Commissioners, and I am a former commission chair and former president of NACO. I am in my final term, and I leave my seat in 2020. Personally, at this point, I do not have a stake in the game and would not personally benefit from any of the changes proposed here today. I support A.B. 259.

When the law was changed in 2015 allowing elections to be decided in the primary, many did not realize that the change was in effect. Ignorance of the 2015 election changes was a severe blow to the unsuspecting candidates and the voters. It was heartbreaking to see some proven talent lose their bid for reelection in the primary. They were convinced the results in the general would be different, only to learn they were no longer in the race.

In 2016, I benefitted from the change and won in the primary. Being the incumbent, as you know, the campaigning and fund-raising efforts take precious time away from the jobs that you have to do every day. The shortened campaign season was actually beneficial for me, but that does not make it right. I am in support of changing the law back to the way it was prior to 2015.



After the general election in 2016, I received many phone calls wanting to know why they had not had the opportunity to vote for their candidate.

Our ballots are partisan and therefore only allow voting for candidates of the same party of which you are registered. Many races in Nye County have candidates from only one party which effectively reduces our voter turnout in general elections simply because the voters have a reason to say, My vote does not count. Currently, they are right.

Following the 2018 primary election, once again, I had many phone calls with complaints of exclusion. Even though many of Nye's races are of one party, it is the full voter turnout in the general election that keeps Nye offices filled with more moderate elected officials.

Since the 2015 changes, the elected positions have become increasingly more polarized. We must encourage all voters to participate. This is the democratic way. And this provides the people with a representative that is more closely aligned with their constituency base. In counties with smaller populations and fewer registered voters, it is imperative to include everyone and encourage even more to register. Please support passage of A.B 259.

**Dagny Stapleton, Executive Director, Nevada Association of Counties:**

We are in support of this bill. We would echo the comments of the commissioner and former commissioner who testified before us. I wanted to put on the record that our board is made up of representatives of all 17 of Nevada's counties. They did vote unanimously to make this policy change a priority for them this legislative session, specific to section 1 regarding the partisan races. I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

**Bill Chernock, Executive Director, Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce:**

I am speaking in support of A.B. 259 (Exhibit D). We look to this piece of legislation to correct a poor decision that was made in the 2015 Session.

That decision, enacted in Senate Bill 499 of the 78th Session at the time, contained language that had the effect of dramatically changing certain elections. That effect was to make law that if, in a partisan election, there were only two candidates from a major party and no candidates from the other major party or independent or minor party candidates, the two candidates would appear on the primary ballot and the winner of the primary declared the winner of the office.

This was a change from previous language which, in that same set of circumstances regarding the number and affiliation of candidates, would forego a primary election for that office and hold that contest as part of the general election. Obviously, the new language, in making the primary election the deciding election, prevents any voter who is not a member of the party with the candidates running unable to vote for that office.

The Nevada Legislature in 2015 passed a law making it impossible for legally registered voters to cast a ballot in a deciding election for their representatives because they were not registered in a certain political party. Let me repeat that for emphasis: The Nevada

Legislature passed a law making it impossible for legally registered voters to cast a ballot in a deciding election for their representatives because they were not registered in a certain political party.

Were there political implications? Of course. But that is not the issue. This is not about politics; it is about allowing all Nevadans to exercise one of their most basic rights. The problem is not, as some have concluded, that independent voters are not allowed to vote in partisan races in primary elections. The problem is that we have made the primary election, with its inherent restrictions and low voter turnouts, the deciding election, and that is simply wrong.

You still have a law on the books that, in case you missed it the first two times, makes it impossible for legally registered voters to cast a ballot in a deciding election for their representatives because they are not registered in a certain political party.

This Committee has an opportunity to begin to change that. A recommendation of do pass from this Committee on A.B. 259, including the language that fixes the issue noted in NRS 293.260, is the first step toward restoring basic voting rights for all Nevadans. I thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee and am more than willing to answer any questions.

**Vice Chair Fumo:**

Are there any questions from the Committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Is there any more testimony in support? Seeing none, we will move on to testimony in opposition.

**Maurice White, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:**

Our founders created a system of parties. That system requires an active electorate to be successful. If you or your party chose not to participate in nominating your own candidates, that is not a cause to insert yourselves in the nomination of another party's candidates. Of particular concern to me in this bill is section 1, subsection 4, paragraph (a). As the wording is structured in that particular paragraph, it opens the door for one party to actually manipulate the nomination effort of the party that does have candidates registered. This is a situation where the logic of what our founders put together is substantially more important than statistics. You are not disenfranchised because one party has candidates and another party does not. You are disenfranchised because you did not have your act together enough to get parties into the election. I would ask you to let this A.B. 259 go in a drawer and die a slow death. Thank you.

**Vice Chair Fumo:**

Thank you very much. Is there any other testimony in opposition? Seeing none, we will move to neutral testimony. Seeing none, we will bring the bill sponsor back up for closing remarks.

**Assemblywoman Jauregui:**

Thank you for your willingness to hear Assembly Bill 259 today. Again, you heard from people on both sides of the aisle from various parties on why this is important to every seat, such as county commissioners and legislators here in this building. I would urge you to support it. Thank you.

[Other exhibits submitted before the deadline which were not mentioned include ([Exhibit E](#)), ([Exhibit F](#)), ([Exhibit G](#)), and ([Exhibit H](#)).]

**Vice Chair Fumo:**

I will now close the bill hearing on A.B. 259.

[Assemblywoman Jauregui reassumed the Chair.]

**Chair Jauregui:**

Our next order of business on the agenda is going to be Assembly Bill 367. I will now open the hearing on A.B. 367.

**Assembly Bill 367: Revises provisions governing persons affected by addictive disorders. (BDR 17-690)**

**Assemblyman Steve Yeager, Assembly District No. 9:**

I represent Assembly District No. 9 in southwest Las Vegas. It is my honor to present Assembly Bill 367 to you this afternoon.

I would like to tell you about the genesis of this bill and then tell you about what the bill does before turning it over to the two sitting with me at the table for additional remarks. By way of introduction, with me to my left is Dona Dmitrovic, executive director of Foundation for Recovery, and to my right here is Trey Delap, director of Group Six Partners, LLC.

I had the privilege of being voted chair of the Southern Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board in the last interim. As those of you who were here the last session will remember, Assembly Bill 366 of the 79th Session, sponsored by our former colleague, Assemblyman Nelson Araujo, created four regional behavioral health boards. Each board received one bill draft request (BDR). The Southern Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board debated many ideas and talked about which idea to advance to this session of the Legislature.

The bill in front of you today, Assembly Bill 367, was one of the ideas that was brought forward at our board meetings. The idea was to update the language in the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) to remove stigmatizing language and to use terminology that more accurately reflects the fact that addictive disorders are really behavioral health issues. Ultimately, this idea was not the one chosen by our board, but it was important enough to me that I chose to use one of my personal bills to advance this idea to this session of the Legislature. That is where Assembly Bill 367 came from.

Now to the bill itself. Thankfully, it is really not too complicated in terms of bills that we see. It essentially says that the Legislative Counsel Bureau should update the language of our statutes. It specifies the preferred terminology and also specifies the terminology that is not preferred.

The terminology itself will be updated in the next codification of the NRS, which will happen after the session, as it always does. All existing language will be updated, as well as language from any bills we pass this session. Going forward, only the preferred terminology would be used. That is the bill. With your permission, Madam Chair, I would like to hand it over to either Ms. Dmitrovic or Mr. Delap to provide additional testimony and then open it up for questions.

**Dona Dmitrovic, Executive Director, Foundation for Recovery, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I would like to thank Assemblyman Yeager for his leadership on this important piece of legislation and offer these comments in support of A.B. 367. As he said, I am representing Foundation for Recovery (FFR), a recovery community organization based in Las Vegas. Statewide, it provides peer recovery support services to those who have substance use disorders. We also provide advocacy and education around the power of recovery. I am also representing the Recovery Advocacy Project (RAP) which is based in Las Vegas and looks at the policy issues that are relevant to the recovering community.

As a woman in long-term recovery, I have over 33 years of continuous recovery, and I have been working in the field for 30 years. I have learned how important words are when working with our most vulnerable populations. Foundation for Recovery and RAP wholeheartedly support replacing the stigmatizing language and replacing terms that reflect people with substance use disorders. Describing patients as having a substance use disorder demonstrates that their illness does not define them, just as we should no longer call a person with schizophrenia a "schizophrenic."

Words used have been shown by researchers to negatively influence attitudes toward people in recovery and those who are using substances which suggests that our health condition is a moral, social, or criminal issue. I ask you to take a second and think about when you hear the term "addict" or "alcoholic," what do you see in your mind? Now think about the term "person afflicted with an addictive disorder." Does your mental image differ in your mind between the person labeled as an alcoholic or a person with an addictive disorder?

Over the years, we have seen this also impact access to health care. If people do not access health care, our outcomes are much lower, and we know that addiction costs our society billions of dollars.

Foundation for Recovery and RAP are so appreciative of the leadership and support of this bill, especially given the evidence of the opioid epidemic and the public health crisis that we see across this country. It is a first step to encourage "person-first" language, and the bill will also encourage others in the field to look at the way they represent people and those who are seeking treatment. As with other health conditions, person-first language has been widely

adopted by professional associations and scientific journals to replace negative terms that label people.

I think we will find that more people will seek treatment or help for their addictive disorder if the shame, stigma, and/or discriminatory practices are gone, and we are identifying folks as having a health condition. I know with many of the individuals with whom we work, and even myself when I got into recovery, it was much easier for me to ask for help when I understood that I had a health condition and I was not just a bad person. Thank you very much.

**Trey Delap, Director, Group Six Partners, LLC, Henderson, Nevada:**

Thank you for hearing A.B. 367 today. One of our objectives this session is to support initiatives removing barriers to recovery from addiction for all Nevadans and their families.

Over the past five years, I have been working on public health policy, and political issues addressing the addiction epidemic currently being experienced in Nevada and throughout our country. During this time, we have learned a number of things. Most importantly, and relevant to the legislation before you, is the negative impact of stigma. Words matter. Words like "junkie," "degenerate," "drug addict," "drunk," "abuser," "methhead," "convict," and the like are harsh and condemning.

My colleague, Ms. Dmitrovic, aptly reviewed the extensive research on the effect of language and stigma on addiction recovery. We understand that we do not have power over how people use words to describe themselves or others. But, represented through you, we do have the power to eliminate this presumption in laws we live by. For many people with addictions or who are affected by them, the law currently sustains negative stigma by focusing on the problems people have rather than the people who have problems. Assembly Bill 367 will flip this focus.

Since the "Just Say No" campaign of the 1980s, which suggested that addictive behavior was a moral choice, people with addictions were seen as weak and punishment would set them straight. The failure of this approach was worsened by aggressive criminal penalties resulting in an exploding prison population creating a culture or class of people whose legitimate addictive disorders were, first, not addressed; and, second, their ability to reenter society was severely hindered by the criminal records branded upon them.

We have learned that addiction is a progressive, complex, and chronic disorder, one that cannot be punished away. Rather, recovery can be attained and sustained by someone given the opportunity, especially when they have contact with a public institution, like the criminal justice system or public health provider.

There have been some affirming and progressive remedies to the consequences often incurred by people with addictions. For example, in the last legislative session, record-sealing wait times have been halved, voting rights were restored automatically, and the box [pertaining to questions about criminal history] was banned from public employer

applications. These acts are tremendously empowering for those disenfranchised and condemned by the law. The direction the state is going is good, and we can continue this forward progress by personifying addiction and recovery by updating our laws through this bill.

There is notable precedent for this method of updating statutory language. The original draft of the *Nevada Constitution*, Article 2, Section 1, denied the right to vote to a person who was, "an idiot or insane." In the 2004 General Election, Question 7, originating from Assembly Joint Resolution 3 of the 71st Session, was approved and this language was fixed. A decade later in 2013, Senate Bill 338 of the 77th Session successfully replaced the words "mental retardation" throughout NRS with "intellectual disability." Last session, Senate Bill 27 of the 79th Session updated the definition of "mental illness," which was qualified in statute by reference to an outdated diagnostic manual. This change ensured ongoing access to federal funding and the ability of the state to provide evidence-based treatment and recovery support through its public programs.

Ms. Dmitrovic covered the key points of the research on language, and those references are included in my exhibit ([Exhibit I](#)). I would like to illustrate an example of how this bill may affect language in the NRS. For example, NRS 458.290 contains a statutory definition of "drug addict." For context, this statute deals with civil commitment of addicts. When a judge is satisfied that someone is a drug addict per statute, they may be sentenced to a program for treatment.

Now for clarity, it is not the intent of this bill to deprive anyone of any public assistance in treating an addictive disorder. The powers outlined in Chapter 458 and others should not be infringed, except that instead of being a statutory "drug addict," they would be referred to as a "person with a substance use disorder" or "person with addictive disorder." This person-first language better achieves the aim of the court in NRS Chapter 458 and others by helping the person with the problem.

In conclusion, it is our hope that passing A.B. 367 will orient Nevada law away from focusing on problems people have and toward serving people who have problems and restoring to their liberties, their families, to the benefit of all Nevada communities.

I would like to personally thank Assemblyman Yeager for his leadership as Chair of the Southern Nevada Regional Behavioral Health Policy Advisory Board, for offering a personal BDR for this piece of legislation, and his professional and personal commitment to helping people raise themselves with a little support from our state. Thank you, Madam Chair. I urge support of this bill, and I stand ready for any questions.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Thank you for bringing this bill forward and sharing your personal story as well. Does the Committee have any questions?

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

First of all, the fact that this is being brought forward is because we know the reality as we have grown and evolved as a society. We have learned that whether it is color or race, gender, profession, ability, or religion, the utmost respect is to refer to people as they desire to be referred to. I think that is the bottom level of respect that we can give. I also am a big believer in what we say is what we become. I understand, even personally, what those words and identifications can mean. I really appreciate this. Let us be honest, there is not one of us humans who has not been affected by addiction in some way, whether it is a family member or ourselves, but it is something that, as humans, we deal with. My question is: What other states have moved to this type of respectful language? Do we have some examples? Are we the first? What is happening?

**Trey Delap:**

I am going to refer that to Ms. Dmitrovic because she is from another state. She has developed these programs all over the place.

**Dona Dmitrovic:**

I am actually from the Northeast and have been working in the field for a long time. There has been other legislation, I believe in Minnesota and Pennsylvania, to change the terms. I will say, though, at the federal level, we have not gotten to that point yet. But I think for us to look at this as a state, I think we also can be a model for others.

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

So the language that is being suggested here would be similar to the language in those states?

**Dona Dmitrovic:**

Yes.

**Assemblyman McCurdy:**

I have a comment, Madam Chair. I am really glad we are bringing this forward. I am so happy about the amount of progress we are making on many fronts as it relates to reform. Having a family member who suffers from addiction and having lived through that, I am really glad that this is now being changed. Thank you. I really appreciate this.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Seeing no further questions, we will open it up to testimony in support.

**John J. Piro, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public Defender's Office:**

As a person who works in a trade where words are all of my profession, I think that we all know that words have the power to uplift, or they can create a stigma and an impression of a person that they are disposable. As you all know, sometimes the pen is mightier than the sword. In this case, I am going to urge you all to use the power of the pen and remove this stigma from our statutes by passing this bill. I thank you for your time.

**Kendra G. Bertschy, Deputy Public Defender, Washoe County Public Defender's Office:**

As you all know from working at the Legislature now and with working on your own bills, the words you are using in your bills have such importance—every comma, every semicolon, everything really will change and shape the way that your bill will then be enacted and how as attorneys we are going to use that going forward. The same goes for the people who are affected by these bills, and that is why this bill is extremely important because it does help uplift the community members. As public defenders, for those who were in the Assembly Committee on Judiciary, you heard us describe how our office uses a holistic approach to defense where we really try to get to the root of the problem of the individuals and the clients we see to help fix them. We believe that goes with even the labeling to help ensure that they do not continue on the path they are going and use that to become better citizens and become more productive members. We believe this bill will help support that.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Is there anyone else who wishes to give testimony in support? Seeing no one, we will move to testimony in opposition. Seeing none, we will move to testimony in neutral. Seeing none, we will invite the bill sponsor back up to give any final remarks.

**Assemblyman Yeager:**

I think Mr. Piro put it really, really well that people are people and we should not throw anyone away. We should not give up on people who need help. A lot of people in our state need our help, a lot of people in our country. I think this is a reflection that we as a society are trying to view these issues for what they are which are behavioral health issues. Just because you deal with these, it does not make you a bad person. I think this is a good first step for the state of Nevada to send that message loudly and clearly. Thank you for hearing the bill, and I urge your support.

**Chair Jauregui:**

I will now close the hearing on Assembly Bill 367. Next on our agenda, we have Assembly Concurrent Resolution 7.

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution 7: Directs the Legislative Commission to appoint a committee to conduct an interim study of issues relating to driving under the influence of marijuana. (BDR R-758)**

**Assemblyman Steve Yeager, Assembly District No. 9:**

It is an honor to present Assembly Concurrent Resolution 7 to you this afternoon. The issue of marijuana impairment in drivers is a very complicated one. There is a lot to say about this topic. I am not going to say it all here this afternoon. I am going to keep it fairly simple and then if members have additional questions, I will be happy to answer those.

Right now, when we look at our current laws with respect to DUI offenses based on marijuana we look at active THC—and in case anyone is wondering what THC stands for, it is delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol—and we look at marijuana metabolite which is



11-OH-tetrahydrocannabinol. Assembly Concurrent Resolution 7 in front of you asks for an interim study to look at this issue about how we address impairment when it comes to marijuana. When you look at the bill itself, it is fairly straightforward. It sets out topics that the study must include. Here are the topics, and you can follow along on the first page of the bill. The study would review:

1. The scientific evidence that is out there relating to marijuana and marijuana impairment.
2. The data from our state and from other places about the number of arrests and convictions for marijuana DUIs both before and after legalization. Obviously, this would only apply in states where there is legalization.
3. The way other states have approached this issue. For example, Colorado was one of the first states to legalize the recreational use of marijuana. They look at marijuana DUIs a lot differently than we do. Their statutes are different. I think I can say the same for Oregon and for Washington as well. We would compare Nevada's laws to other states.
4. New or existing products to test for marijuana impairment at roadside. Right now, as far as I am aware, we do not have any roadside test for marijuana. There are some products that are coming on the market and hopefully will be here soon where we could do probably a saliva test at the roadside, but the study would look at that to see what is out there on the market.
5. Nevada's existing laws and whether our laws should be changed to distinguish between medical and recreational users. Right now, those two classes of users are treated exactly the same. So you can have a medical card and be a user or just be recreational and our DUI laws are applied the same way to both classes of users. I think other states do make distinctions between those.
6. How any changes to our laws might impact any other laws, such as workers' compensation. A little-known fact in our law is that workers' compensation statutes are tied directly to our DUI statutes for purposes of impairment. If we make changes to the marijuana impairment statute, it is going to necessarily affect workers' compensation unless we decide to divide those up somehow.
7. Any other relevant matter, which I think is really exciting because that gives the study committee a chance to pull in other data and information.

If Assembly Concurrent Resolution 7 were to be enacted, there would be six members of the interim study committee—three from the Assembly and three from the Senate. They would probably meet—based on my experience last interim—three or four times. They would prepare a report and up to five bill draft requests (BDR) to bring to the 2021 Session. This is an important issue, but it is one that we need to get right. I do not feel confident that we can get it right in the next 60-plus days that we still have in this legislative session. I know with this study and having a little bit of extra time to look at this, I am confident that we could bring back to the 2021 Legislature some proposals for how to better update our DUI laws as they pertain to impairment. With that, I am happy to answer any questions.

**Assemblyman Roberts:**

Thank you very much for bringing this forward. I can tell you with my law enforcement background, we knew years ago when we first approved medical marijuana and then moved to recreational marijuana that law enforcement is behind the curve when it comes to enforcing DUI laws. We looked at other states while I was at Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department—Colorado and a number of places. They were caught off guard too. This is very needed, not only for driving, but for workers' compensation and everything. Since recreational marijuana is a reality, it is here and we need to look at how to address it. I think an interim study is a fantastic idea. Thank you for bringing it forward.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Committee, are there any other questions? On bullet point No. 1, regarding scientific evidence relating to driving under the influence of marijuana, could you give me an example? I know it is hard to detect whether someone has used marijuana or they are under the influence. What kind of scientific evidence would you use to determine that?

**Assemblyman Yeager:**

Great question, and honestly, this is one of the gaps we have in our law right now because if you think about alcohol and blood alcohol content, the 0.08 that we operate under now used to be 0.10 and in Utah, it is actually 0.04, I think, now. Those are based on extensive scientific studies that were done by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. That is how they developed the roadside tests. Based on all this testing and aggregate data of how alcohol affects an individual, they essentially came up with 0.08 as the line where most people are going to be impaired, not everybody, but most people. Every state in the country has taken 0.08 and used that as a barometer of impairment.

So to get to your question, we do not have that kind of scientific data at this point with marijuana because it is still federally illegal, which makes studying it difficult. That being said, there are studies out there that have been done in other countries. Those of you who were on the Assembly Committee on Judiciary last session will remember Assembly Bill 135 of the 79th Session where we had two Touro University students who looked at research that was taking place in Europe. Through that research, we decided that our law enforcement, our crime labs, were testing for a metabolite that did not impair somebody. That was an example of some research that was already out there. When I say scientific data, that is kind of what we are talking about, studies that have been done, probably mostly overseas at this point, to try to actually detect at what level somebody is impaired. Marijuana reacts very differently in your body than alcohol does. It depends on many factors, one of which is how much you weigh. The more you weigh, the more you are going to have metabolite attached to those cells. We would look at research from overseas. Then my hope is that as states have come online and started legalizing, there have been some efforts in some states to research this.

We very well may come to the 2021 Session and say that we are still not there with research because the alcohol research took decades to get to where it is. That is the kind of scientific data we would be looking at. I am also hopeful that it is something that some of our universities here in the state can help with. There is still that federal interplay that causes

problems, but if we could ever get the federal government to just exempt marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act, that would allow unfettered research and scientific research so we could make better decisions on how to craft criminal laws.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Are there any other questions? Seeing none, we will move to testimony in support.

**Danny Thompson, representing International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; and International Union of Operating Engineers:**

We think it is important to understand what levels represent impairment, especially if someone uses marijuana on the weekend, they go to work, and they are involved in a workers' compensation case on Wednesday. They get hurt on the job, there is a case, and the drug is found in their system. We have a zero-tolerance policy in the contracts. It does happen and it has happened where these cases then end up in disarray. Understanding what that level is, I think, is very important for workers' compensation as well. Thank you.

**Corey Solferino, Lieutenant, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office:**

I am proud to come to the table and support A.C.R. 7 and thank Assemblyman Yeager for bringing this important piece of legislation forward. Assemblyman Yeager is exactly right, we have decades of empirical research regarding the effects of alcohol on the body and how it impairs and metabolizes. Marijuana is still a question. For the officer out in the field who is conducting the field sobriety test and looking at the levels of impairment, I want to make sure that we offer the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, our forensic laboratory, and all the data we have associated with it over the last 11 years that shows impairment with marijuana and samples that we are seeing in the field. I am proud to be here in support, and I hope that we can do anything we can to assist this endeavor. Thank you.

**John J. Piro, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public Defender's Office:**

We are in support. Data-informed criminal justice reform is what we are all about—finding what is effective, what can be done—and this moves us toward that. I urge your support.

**Jaron S. Hildebrand, Manager of Government Affairs, Nevada Trucking Association; and representing Nevada Self Insurer's Association:**

For comments that were previously stated, we are in support. Thank you.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Is there anyone else who wishes to testify in support? Seeing no one, we will move to opposition. Seeing none, is there anyone who wishes to testify in neutral?

**Victoria Hauan, Impaired Driving Program Manager, Office of Traffic Safety, Department of Public Safety:**

I do a lot of research on this topic. I just want to say, we are happy to provide any resources and things that I have already collected so you do not have to reinvent the wheel. I do have studies from Washington and Colorado, and I am happy to share that with you. Thanks.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Is there anyone else who wishes to testify in neutral? Seeing no one, would Assemblyman Yeager like to give any final remarks? [He did not.] [([Exhibit J](#))] was submitted but not mentioned.] We will close the hearing on Assembly Concurrent Resolution 7.

Our last item on the agenda is Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6.

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6: Directs the Legislative Commission to create an interim committee to study the working conditions at licensed brothels. (BDR R-696)**

**Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Assembly District No. 29:**

I am here to present Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6 which would create an interim committee to study the working conditions of licensed brothels in Nevada. Before I discuss the reason why the interim committee is needed and what it will do, I want to state what this resolution will not do.

This resolution is not about trying to outlaw brothels. Alternatively, it is not about trying to legalize sex work throughout the state. This resolution is very pragmatic, and it is not sensationalizing prostitution. The bottom line for me is that if we are going to have brothels, there needs to be a modicum of uniform standards for the sake of the workers, and the workers need to know their rights.

This is about a very specific subset of workers, but they are, in fact, legal workers in Nevada who deserve to be treated with respect and to have fair working conditions. Currently, as I will detail, I do not believe this is always the case. Pursuant to *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 201.354, it is unlawful for a person to engage in prostitution or solicitation except in a licensed house of prostitution. In addition, state law NRS 244.345 prohibits the issuance of licenses to operate a "house of ill fame or repute or any other business employing any person for the purpose of prostitution" in counties with populations of 700,000 or more. Currently that is only Clark County in that category. For purposes of this measure, such businesses, the legal ones, will be referred to as brothels.

Today there are approximately 21 legal brothels in Nevada, and currently seven Nevada counties have legally licensed brothels. These include Elko, Lander, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, Storey, and White Pine. Three other counties do not outlaw prostitution; however, currently there are no licensed brothels in those counties. Those are Churchill, Esmeralda, and Humboldt.

According to a report from University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) *Sex Industry and Sex Workers in Nevada*, which I have included as an exhibit ([Exhibit K](#)), "There are 36 available brothel licenses across Nevada . . . Counties with legal prostitution earn thousands to hundreds of thousands [of dollars] annually in brothel work card, application, licensing, and liquor license fees." There is a table attached to the exhibit [page 10, ([Exhibit K](#))] that does break down the fees that are going to the different counties. According to the UNLV report,

"Women working as legal prostitutes pay taxes, work card fees, 'house' fees, and room and board expenses within the brothel. They typically earn 40-50 percent of what they bring in by servicing customers, while the remainder goes to the brothel. Workers also usually tip cleaning and food service staff."

The workers are considered independent contractors and therefore do not have the benefit of seeking the assistance from the Office of Labor Commissioner, Department of Business and Industry. Chapter 441A of the *Nevada Administrative Code* provides regulations governing prostitution and testing of sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Other aspects of the industry are regulated by county or city codes. This has led to some disparities in how brothels operate across the state. For example, in Elko and Lyon Counties, prostitutes must be at least 18 years of age. In the remaining counties in the licensed brothels, the minimum age to work is 21.

Differences in work conditions have also been found. For example, regulations at some brothels provide for what are called "lockdown policies." In Nevada the brothel workers are tested for STDs each time they return to work. Until the test results come back, the workers cannot make money for themselves or for the brothel. If a worker leaves the brothel, she has to be retested before she returns to work. In order to prevent the repeated cost of testing and downtime, some brothels place their workers on lockdown during the week that they are there so that the worker cannot leave the premises. This can go on for weeks because some workers are at the brothels for a month at a time. In other brothels, the lockdown policy allows the workers to leave, but they must be chaperoned by an escort from the brothel. While in some brothels, they do not have any lockdown policies.

Similarly to lockdown policies, some towns in Nevada have curfews for brothel workers that limit their ability to be in the town in certain hours. Let me repeat that. Some towns have actual curfews for these workers.

The goal of A.C.R. 6 is to study the working conditions of the brothels, including how they are regulated, and examine how the conditions impact the health, safety, and general welfare of the workers.

I would like to share with you how I came to understand that the working conditions in the brothels are not uniform and the workers often do not know what the laws are that actually affect them. During the interim, I saw a post on social media about the lockdowns, and I started to ask questions about the lockdowns. I was told that in one brothel, because the women are in lockdown, if they want to buy personal items, as one would just buy at the grocery store or pharmacy, they would have to buy the items from the brothel's own store. But the brothel charged exorbitant prices. So, for instance, the razor that would cost \$1 at a store would cost \$15 at the brothel. That razor really bugged me.

I was also told that some workers have been told that Nevada state law requires the lockdown, but there is no such law.

I was told that some brothels which bring in a doctor to do the state-required testing allowed the doctor to inflate the cost to the worker.

I was also told about noncompete clauses where workers are not allowed to work in brothels within 100 miles of the brothel where they are. That limits the workers' ability to change brothels if they do not feel like they are being treated well where they are.

Worst of all, I was told about buying out contracts. As an independent contractor, women pay for all of their supplies, for instance, condoms and lingerie. They pay for their blood tests. They pay for other costs of doing business. However, many women go to work in brothels because of great financial need, and the brothels will pay for their transportation to get there. If a woman decides after a day or two that it is not for her, at some brothels she is expected to pay back the brothel and buy out her contract.

Similarly, I have been told about women being given gift bags when they arrive, but if they decide this is not for them and they want to leave, they have to pay the brothel back for the items in the gift bag. Again, these are women who are often in financial hardship, and they are now having to worry about the original financial hardship and having to deal with their contract and paying back the brothel.

About that contract, many of the brothels refuse to allow the women to have a copy of their contract. This bears repeating. They are not allowed to have their own contract. A madam told me personally that her workers were not allowed to have the contract.

So I knew that these were all serious issues affecting workers, but I did not want to bring a bill addressing these issues based on what were, in some cases, just things I had been told. I asked the Legislative Counsel Bureau for some research, and I began to do my own research. I spoke to people who work in and around the sex industry including sex workers and madams. However, I also spoke with academics in the field including Dr. Barbara G. Brents from UNLV and Christina Parreira who is a Ph.D. candidate studying with Dr. Brents.

Dr. Brents is a professor in the sociology department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri. Dr. Brents has been researching the sex industry for 25 years and has numerous peer-reviewed publications and one coauthored book on the subject. Dr. Brents has also given many lectures and talks at universities on the sex industry and other venues throughout the United States and Europe. The book she coauthored is based on ten years of research on the Nevada brothels. That book is titled *The State of Sex: Tourism, Sex, and Sin in the New American Heartland*, which was published by Routledge. Dr. Brents, I hope, is at the Grant Sawyer State Office Building. She will provide testimony and is available to answer questions about the industry.

As I was deciding what would be the best way to address concerns that were being raised, what became clear to me is that there are gaps in our knowledge about the industry. Even after speaking with the academics and sources who I trusted, I was left with questions and concerns. Frankly, if the researchers who study the field still have questions about the

working conditions of the brothel workers, there is a problem. We are not giving the field proper oversight. That is why a study is necessary.

As A.C.R. 6 states, the Nevada Legislature has an inherent interest in the health, safety, and general welfare of all workers in the state, including sex workers in the licensed brothels. Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6 also states that the Nevada Legislature wishes to be well-informed on these matters. I believe that it is actually our duty to be well-informed on the working conditions in the brothels. Again, I am not here to debate if we should outlaw brothels or legalize sex work throughout the state. My message is this: If we are going to have brothels, there needs to be oversight; there needs to be fairness for workers; there needs to be a modicum of uniformity; and the workers need to know their rights. Because of this, we must have an interim committee to study the issue.

What does A.C.R. 6 do? It directs the Legislative Commission to create an interim committee to study the working conditions at licensed brothels. The committee would be comprised of six members—three members of the Assembly and three members of the Senate. The study is required to examine four topics:

1. The extent to which the rules and working conditions in licensed brothels provide for the health, safety, and general welfare of sex workers;
2. The ways in which contracts between sex workers and brothel owners and operators protect the physical and mental health of those workers;
3. The adequacy of oversight and regulation by the state and local governments with respect to the health, safety, and general welfare of sex workers; and
4. Employment issues including classification of sex workers as employees versus independent contractors.

The measure requires input from interested stakeholders including local governments that license brothels, owners and operators of brothels, law enforcement agencies, and workers in licensed brothels.

The measure provides that any recommendations from the interim committee must be approved by a majority of the members representing each house and be submitted to the 2021 Legislature.

It is time that we study our brothel system in our state, including how they are regulated, to determine how the conditions impact the health, safety, and general welfare of the workers.

If Dr. Brents is in Las Vegas, I invite her forward. I believe Ms. Christina Parreira is there with her. They can provide testimony and then help with answering questions.

**Barbara G. Brents, Professor, Department of Sociology, College of Liberal Arts, University of Nevada, Las Vegas:**

I am a professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I have been there for 31 years. I am here to support Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6

which would create an interim committee to study the working conditions at licensed brothels.

As Assemblywoman Cohen has said, I have been studying the sex industry for 25 years. I and a team of scholars have studied Nevada's legal brothel industry since the late 1990s, and our book and several peer-reviewed publications are based on our interviews with sex workers, managers, owners, local law enforcement, and observations in the brothels. I have most recently led a team conducting a study of sex buyers in both legal brothels and illegal industries and am currently completing a book with a colleague who also surveyed buyers in the United Kingdom.

In the past 25 years, evidence-based, peer-reviewed research on the sex industry has dramatically increased. At the same time, heightened policy interest has generated a lot of misinformation about what actually happens in the sex industry. Misinformation abounds about Nevada's legal brothels. Oftentimes, relevant evidence-based research sits in an academic journal while legislators and the media only hear anecdotes from advocates. And the sex workers, especially in Nevada, often struggle for a voice.

Our research has found that working conditions in the legal brothels are governed by an often confusing array of state, county, municipal, and individual business rules. Neither workers, nor owners, often know all their rights. The health codes need modernizing. Workers are independent contractors, and with the dramatic growth of the gig economy, all workers in these categories in any job are caught in outdated rules so confusing and contradictory that both owners and workers need lawyers to figure them out. And the sex industry is so highly stigmatized and politicized, confusion and lack of resources result in the kinds of situations Assemblywoman Cohen just described.

Many workers do quite well in this system, and many owners have recognized that they have to treat workers fairly to run a profitable brothel. It is also true that many of the existing codes were written at a time when policymakers thought little of the rights of the workers. I do not think these businesses need excessive regulations. Rather, treat them with the same respect and rules that protect workers in other industries.

The best way to figure out how we might modernize and improve the industry in ways that would benefit the workers is to do precisely what Assemblywoman Cohen has outlined. Like it or not, these legal brothels are businesses, and you owe it to the workers and the local communities to use objective evidence to investigate what would work best. I applaud Assemblywoman Cohen and this Committee for considering this resolution. I would urge you all to conduct an open study listening to the voices of sex workers with a variety of experiences in the licensed brothels and rely on sound research methods. I and other researchers at UNLV and the University of Nevada, Reno are ready to help as best we can. Thank you.



**Christina Parreira, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in the Department of Sociology. I actually work with Dr. Brents. As part of my dissertation, I worked as a sex worker in three of the legal Nevada brothels between 2014 and 2017. I am happy to be here and answer any questions from both the perspective of a former sex worker and an academic who has been steeped in the topic for almost five years now.

I have to say that I am neutral on the matter of A.C.R. 6. While I believe we need more information, I worry about the means. To be frank, I worry about lawmakers and politicians being around an already stigmatized and maligned group, that being sex workers. This comes from a place of concern as being a sex worker myself and often dealing with the damaging outcomes of well-meaning lawmakers. I applaud this effort. I think it is a great idea, but I do echo what Dr. Brents said about the fears of overregulation.

If I had to impart anything on this Committee, it would be to listen to the voices of the women who these laws and regulations will impact. Oftentimes, with sex workers and other marginalized populations, we see a lot of concern for them, wanting to rescue them, wanting to save them, and that is wonderful, but we need to listen to them. We are the people who work in those brothels. We are the people who make the money to feed our families and pay our rent. At the end of the day, we are the ones on the line. I plead with and urge you to listen to our voices, to the current workers who are in these brothels, whether they are the small, rural brothels that house 3 women, or the mega brothels with 25. Everyone should have an equal voice. Everyone is important. As I said, I am neutral on the matter but very happy to assist and answer any questions that I can. Thank you very much.

**Assemblywoman Cohen:**

Should this pass, we are going to take great pains to make sure that we are including the workers in the committee, hearing their voices. We wrote the resolution that way because we do think that is important. We do not want to come down and say, Let me tell you what is best for you. We do want to work with them to make sure their rights are being considered. With that, I am available for questions.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Thank you for bringing this resolution forward. Does the Committee have any questions? I have one and I am not sure if you know or if maybe our legal counsel would know. Has there ever been a study before about the working conditions of the brothels in Nevada?

**Kevin Powers, Committee Counsel:**

That would require additional research. I could not say conclusively one way or the other.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Are there any other questions from the Committee? Seeing none, I want to thank you for your presentation, Assemblywoman Cohen.

Our next order of business is testimony. We will receive testimony from proponents followed by those in opposition, and then those who wish to testify in a neutral position. In each category of testimony, I will rotate between Carson City and Las Vegas.

First, I want to go over our Assembly Standing Rule No. 54 to define support, opposition, and neutrality. Support of a bill or resolution means that the testifier approves of the measure as written or approves of the measure as written along with proposed amendments that have been approved by the sponsor. That means that you are in support of the entire bill as is. Opposition of a bill or resolution means that the testifier does not support the measure as written or opposes the measure as revised by an amendment that has not been approved by the sponsor. Neutral on a bill means a testifier offers information or insight on the bill or resolution but expresses no position whatsoever on the measure. Please be clear on your position on A.C.R. 6 before you come to the witness table.

Second, I wish to state on the record that as Chair, I am permitting certain individuals to testify without stating their names on the record due to the nature of the topic associated with A.C.R. 6.

Third, the subject of A.C.R. 6 is a proposal to create a legislative interim committee to study working conditions at licensed brothels in Nevada. The proposed issues to be considered by the interim committee are listed on page 2 of the resolution. Let me remind you of the following: Today's hearing on A.C.R. 6 is not a forum for a general discussion regarding prostitution, legal or otherwise. Therefore, do not treat today's hearing as if the interim committee study has already taken place. Please be aware that if a testifier begins to make statements on anything other than the potential scope of this proposed interim study, I will interrupt to ask the witness to redirect comments to the contents of this resolution.

Testimony will be limited to two minutes. I remind everyone to please be respectful with Committee members and other witnesses. Do not comment on testimony provided by other speakers, and do not make personal attacks. You may always also submit written remarks to be included on the record and shared with the Committee. With that, I will open the hearing to testimony in support of A.C.R. 6.

**Danny Thompson, representing Lance Gilman, Owner, Mustang Ranch, Sparks, Nevada:**

In answer to your question, this is my fortieth year in this building. To my knowledge, there has never been a study by the Legislature. There were in the early 1990s some tours done that were legislative tours of several brothels. It was actually a legislative-endorsed tour. As far as a study, there was never a study that I am aware of in the past 40 years.

I would like to read a letter from my client, Lance Gilman—I am here today representing Lance Gilman—if I can. And if I run afoul of your order, just stop me and I will submit it for the record.

Madam Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Lance Gilman. I am an owner of the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center and also the owner of the Mustang Ranch and Wild Horse Saloon. I support the Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6 and I thank Assemblywoman Cohen for its introduction and your Committee for considering this important topic.

In 1971, Nevada blazed a new path in the United States by authorizing a regulated brothel industry, just as it had two decades prior in gaming. For rural counties, licensed brothels brought much needed tax revenue, particularly during times of economic distress. Nevada's brothels have a solid tradition over the last half century of being great corporate citizens and leaders in charitable donations in the local communities. For example, at the Mustang, we fund weekly food deliveries to local senior centers and a food backpack program for children in Storey County.

I welcome efforts by our state's leaders to learn more about our industry and invite members of this legislative body and members of the community to come visit us and learn about our business. As the most regulated industry in the state – more heavily regulated than gaming – we are monitored by regulators 24/7 and we run professional, above board businesses.

The women working in Nevada brothels undergo annual FBI fingerprint and background checks, receive work cards through the sheriff's office, and routinely undergo health screenings, all of which prevent trafficking and ensures the health and safety of the women and our guests.

In polls across the state and the recent vote in Lyon County, the public has spoken repeatedly and decisively by wide margins, as large as 80 percent – 20 percent, in favor of our industry.

For many of the women, this is more than a job – it is a passion.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Mr. Thompson.

**Danny Thompson:**

I think I just ran afoul of your order.

**Chair Jauregui:**

You did, thank you, but if you submit those comments ([Exhibit L](#)) we can share the entire letter with our Committee and then we will also put them on the record.

**Danny Thompson:**

I certainly will, and I also have a letter from one of the ladies who works there, who could not be here tonight. I will submit that as well ([Exhibit M](#)). We do thank Assemblywoman Cohen. We think it is important to separate the myths from the facts.

**Alice Little, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:**

I am a legal sex worker at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch as well as an ambassador for the Nevada Brothel Association. We are in support of this resolution, and I thank you so much for bringing this legislation forward. As many have spoken, this is a very stigmatized industry, and we welcome people to come and learn the facts about who we are and what we do. We are proud that we have existed in Nevada. We believe that we will be able to show everyone who we are and the validity of our industry. I appreciate the opportunity to come forward and represent the industry when previously we have not been able to do so. Many of us do feel as if we are harshly judged by society and miscategorized. Many people make stigmatizing remarks and have incorrect facts about us, and it would be fantastic to be able to set the record straight and bring forward information that we believe is important. Our voices matter, especially those of the women in this industry. If legislation is going to be drafted in regards to us, it is important that we are included, so I really appreciate the fact that the legislation has been written in such a way that our voices are going to be included. I am available for that counsel as well, if anyone is interested in asking me questions about my job. Thank you.

**Ruby Rae, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:**

I am a legal sex worker at the Bunny Ranch, and I am also an ambassador for the Nevada Brothel Association. Today I will be reading a statement from Suzette Cole, president of Nevada Brothel Association.

The Nevada Brothel Association generally supports Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6 calling for the creation of an interim legislative committee to study the working conditions in Nevada's licensed brothels.

However, the proposed resolution states that "The Nevada Legislature has an inherent interest in the health, safety and general welfare of all workers in the State, including sex workers in licensed brothels."

With that in mind we respectfully suggest that A.C.R. 6 be amended to direct the committee to also include the following:

- 1.) Study of the health, safety, and general welfare of sex workers who are currently engaging in illegal sex work rather than working in a licensed brothel.
- 2.) Study of the comparative difference between sex work in legal brothels versus engaging in such work in the illegal market and whether or not

the current prohibition on legal brothels in counties with populations greater than 700,000 should be reconsidered.

3.) Study of advertising restrictions currently in place on legal brothels in contrast to the absence of such restrictions on other legal businesses in the state, including gaming, liquor, marijuana, gentlemen's clubs, escort services, et cetera.

Lastly, we ask for consideration of an amendment to the bill stipulating that the makeup of the study committee include a majority of members who represent counties in which legal brothels are currently operating.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Are those amendments that were supported by the bill sponsor? Support of the resolution means that you are in support of it exactly the way it is or with amendments that are supported by the bill sponsor.

**Ruby Rae:**

No. So I guess we are in neutral?

**Chair Jauregui:**

Opposition.

**Ruby Rae:**

Opposition, alright. We are in opposition.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Your time is about up. Again, opposition just means that you were not in favor of the bill as it was written.

**Ruby Rae:**

Great. Thanks.

**Dena Duff, Private Citizen, Pahrump, Nevada:**

I am the madam of Sheri's Ranch in Pahrump, Nevada. My statement was submitted to the committee secretary and is on the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System ([Exhibit N](#)). I have been a resident of Nevada since 1988 and a Nye County resident since 2004. I am a mother and grandmother, and I have worked at Sheri's Ranch for the last 13 years. In that time, I have interacted with hundreds of women from not only Nevada, but all over the United States and in other countries.

I find myself in a very unique position in that I have the privilege to work with and help empower these amazing women. These women come from all walks of life, working hard to

support themselves and their families, but also working to better their futures. These same women become productive members of their communities by investing in property as well as the local economy by paying taxes on the money earned while working in the brothels.

A licensed brothel provides a safe place for sex workers and their clients to conduct their business in an atmosphere of respect, dignity, and confidentiality. These are women who are entrepreneurs providing a service, nothing more and nothing less. Making sure all of us working within the brothel industry are on the same page by providing and maintaining a safe working environment and certain amount of uniformity across the board for all sex workers is a step in the right direction.

In our country, women have had a long, hard journey to attain achievements that we have today. We currently have more women in Congress than ever before, and we also have more women owning and operating their own businesses. Even here in Nevada, we have the first female-majority legislative body in the United States. All of this while juggling family, careers, and all of life's other challenges. We can be proud of all of these milestones that women have accomplished, but we still have a way to go. I feel that the perception of what the brothel industry is in the public eye versus the reality of what the brothel industry truly is needs to be voiced and heard by more than just a few of us in the industry.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Thank you so much. We appreciate your testimony. I want to make sure we are fair to everyone and we keep everyone on the same timeline.

**Bella Cummins, Executive Director, Onesta Foundation:**

Thank you for this opportunity to share my perspectives with you today. We formed the Onesta Foundation last summer to bring the light of my knowledge and experience gained by decades of frontline work as a sole proprietor and owner of a licensed brothel and my compassion to educate, to minimize the negative effects of stigmas that legal workers, these wonderful women, have to deal with because of misplaced judgement. The sensual services these women provide serve every Nevadan's health and safety. When they choose to come to work as independent contractors in full charge of their own lives and with goals that they are working to realize, they want to be welcomed, to be safe, and to be supported. To that end, the Onesta Foundation welcomes and encourages this body's interest in better understandings. We pledge to support your committee as a uniquely informed resource, a resource with a vision for the long-term health and safety of everyone in our state which is, by the way, why these ladies and their work are so fundamentally important. We ask that in your quest for a full appreciation, please put it into a larger context of sex work in the state. Remember that ladies who work in legal brothels have a safety that the other workers who work illegally fail to have. We ask you to remain conscientious of and resist the forces of judgment and work together with our foundation to take advantage of the unique knowledge and experience we bring.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Thank you so much for your testimony.

**Bob Hastings, Private Citizen, Yerington, Nevada:**

I am testifying as myself but I am also the chair of the Board of Commissioners in Lyon County. Up until probably a year ago, I had my idea of what the brothel industry was, what they did. Until then, 14 years in this state, I had only once even stepped on the property, and that was while doing a ride-along with the sheriff. I had no idea what was going on. Lyon County was faced with Lyon County Question No. 1 asking the voters what they felt about the brothels, if they supported them. Nearly 81 percent did. They wanted the brothels left alone. That being said, I felt I needed to do my due diligence. I took the time during Lyon County Question No. 1 to speak with some of the ladies back here and other ladies who are not here. I took time to speak with the madams and the workers at the brothels. I took time to understand the industry and take tours and do whatever I could to find out about the industry.

What I found is that I was completely wrong in what I thought it was. I was completely wrong about what I thought about what these ladies were being put through. I initially thought that I really did not want an interim committee because I did not think it was necessary, but I do think it is important for all of you to have the same opportunity that I did, which is to understand the industry, understand the misconceptions, understand who these ladies are and how their lives are affected or not affected by the industry they work in. Most of these ladies are doing this because they love it. This is what they want to do. I think it is very fair for a committee to be put together to understand what they are going through, how they truly feel, and how we can make things better for them as well. That all being said, I would like to speak in support of A.C.R. 6. Thank you.

**Holly Welborn, Policy Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada:**

We were originally going to come in a neutral position, but after hearing the testimony today from Assemblywoman Cohen, it is very clear to us what her focus and her emphasis is with this bill. We are pleased to see that there will be feedback from sex workers. We are pleased to see that we are working with experts in the field who have the appropriate type of knowledge. I want to extend an invitation to Assemblywoman Cohen to utilize me and the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada, our national organization, and the organizations both nationally and internationally that we have contact with that can come in and also provide any kind of data and assistance that she may need. I hope that the goal and the aim of this is, and it seems that the goal and the aim of this is, to shed light on what types of poor employment practices may be happening or what types of good employment practices may be taking place in brothels and empowering those workers. I envision in Nevada where one day we extend rights, we extend collective bargaining to sex workers, where we extend the full protections of employment laws to people who are working in a legitimate industry. So for these reasons, we support this legislation. Thank you.

**Stephen Funk, Secretary and Director of Communications, Onesta Foundation:**

I serve as the secretary of the Nevada nonprofit, the Onesta Foundation. Thank you for the opportunity to share some perspective with you as you consider creating this committee under discussion. The Onesta Foundation, as you know, is dedicated to educating for the appreciation of a well-regulated sensual services industry. To that end, we have cooperated

with a variety of studies by researchers from institutions within Nevada and from without. Dr. Sarah Blithe from the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) has asked that we bring her concerns related to A.C.R. 6 to you today. She is unable to attend. Dr. Blithe is a gender and organizational communications professor at UNR and the author of *Sex and Stigma: Stories of Everyday Life in Nevada's Legal Brothels*. This is a very recent publication. She studies how discourse and communication shape social identities and organizational policies. Her research takes social justice approaches to inequality. Her concerns are as follows. She writes:

I was recently contacted by Assemblywoman Cohen, who told me she wanted to use my recently published book to justify further research into the brothels. While I think more research is a good thing to gain equality for sex workers, I am concerned about how the committee might proceed. I understand that it is proposed that the research be conducted by the legislature. My concern is that Legislators are not experienced researchers. I recommend that they work with and rely principally on experts in the field.

Madam Chair, she goes on to write:

I also understand through my contacts with workers that the resolution proposed has caused some anxiety for them as they fear that some may use excerpts from our book against the brothels. I have also heard from other sources that some plan on using it to promote fair labor practices for sex workers, so I am not sure of the true intentions.

I am not able to be at the hearing, but I want to be clear: Our book is in complete support of sex workers and sex worker rights. We speak out for best practices and against stigma of the industry. We are, in some places, critical of brothel owners. However, we also argue that brothels are safer than other sex work options, that there are not diseases in the brothels . . . .

**Chair Jauregui:**

Thank you for sharing your testimony. We appreciate it.

**Stephen Funk:**

Did I run out of time?

**Chair Jauregui:**

Yes.

**Ken Gray, Private Citizen, Dayton, Nevada:**

I assure you that I will not run out of time. I am a Lyon County and Dayton resident and a Lyon County Commissioner. I am not going to belabor the point. I am just going to echo the sentiments of our Chairman, Mr. Hastings. I wanted to register my support of this legislation.



**Cherry:**

I am here in support of Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6. I would like to thank Assemblywoman Cohen for its introduction. I have worked as an independent contractor at the Mustang Ranch for five years. I started working at the Mustang Ranch when I was 18 years old, and I believe my story can highlight the positive impact that this industry can have on women. Prior to starting at the Mustang Ranch, I had to pass a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint and an FBI criminal background check, obtain a work card from the sheriff's office, and I had to be medically cleared. Every year that I have worked at the Mustang, I had to pass these checks to maintain my work card, and I was medically cleared on a weekly basis. I have been financially independent since starting at the Mustang. Within two years of starting work, my income between the ages of 20 and 22 allowed me to pay for medical expenses for my late mother who was dying of cancer. The money I earned also allowed me to pay for schooling for my two siblings who were 8 and 15 at the time. I was also able to completely pay off my two college loans, purchase a home, my first new car, and establish my own independent life.

I have recently stepped away from being an independent contractor in this industry to pursue different dreams, but I am thankful for the existence of this industry and that it has provided me a safe, secure workplace and the ability to earn money at levels far in excess of others in my age group. I applaud this Committee for considering a resolution that looks at this industry for the first time ever. This industry is important to the lives of thousands of women who are and who will be working in the legal industry in Nevada. I ask the Committee to keep in mind that the women who work in this industry have the right to control their own bodies. That right should be respected, especially when the industry can be a tremendous benefit to their lives. I also ask that the Committee look at the ladies in this industry with the same respect and tolerance that you would give any woman. For these reasons, I support Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6, and I thank you for your time.

**Izzy Youngs, representing Nevada Women's Lobby:**

We are in support of A.C.R. 6 today. Sex workers from all walks of life deserve labor rights and the ability to organize themselves to advocate for better working conditions. This interim committee would be an important space for sex workers to come forward and speak about their labor needs. We want to stress how important it is to ensure this space is one where sex workers feel comfortable and safe talking about these issues and have the opportunity to advocate without fear. A sex worker's self-determination is of the utmost importance, and we look forward to being a part of these conversations in the interim.

**Kevin Powers:**

Just so the record is clear, I followed up and did some preliminary research. By researching the *Statutes of Nevada*, which are the session law since 1945, there has not been a piece of legislation that directed a study with regard to sex workers specifically or brothels generally. That covers pieces of legislation. It is possible that the Legislature through the Legislative Commission or some other means did some interim study work on those issues, but there has never been a piece of legislation directing a particular study with regard to sex workers or brothels.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Thank you, Mr. Powers. I appreciate your finding that information for us. We are now moving into testimony in opposition. Seeing no one, we will move to those who are here to testify in the neutral position.

**Caity Gwin, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am with the Las Vegas Sex Worker Collective. I am cautiously optimistic about this resolution but would like to remain neutral at this time. I am very excited by the use of the words "sex worker," not "prostitute," as "prostitute" is a word that is brought with stigma. I am excited by the focus on labor, not trafficking concerns. I am excited by the focus on financially struggling sex workers and looking at the diverse reasons why women enter into this industry. And I am excited about the research that you have done previous to this with sex workers and academics. My caution comes from making sure that we speak directly to sex workers, which I believe Assemblywoman Cohen did address, but making sure it is on a condition of anonymity and by people who are not law enforcement or represent law enforcement or are perceived to be law enforcement. Sex workers, both legal and illegal, have grown cautious of law enforcement, so be sure that the interview process is done conscientiously. Also, make sure that sex workers who are no longer contracted or who are dissatisfied with the brothels are being interviewed as well, not just the ones who are consensually or happily there.

I would also want to remind you how this information may be used in the future and keep that in mind. The argument between independent contractors and employees is something that we have seen in the strip club industry over the last ten years. I would like you to look at the cases in California right now in the strip clubs where all workers are being forced to work as employees, and in many cases this has caused women's earnings to be completely eradicated. Women are not being paid. People are exploiting this. Keep that in mind moving forward, how this information will be used. My last concern is, let this not polarize legal versus illegal sex work. Let us use this study as one aspect in a larger field of research that needs to be done.

**Violet Vause, Private Citizen, Pahrump, Nevada:**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. I originally came in here with a stance that was for the committee; however, I am not comfortable at this time supporting a committee and everything the way that the resolution is written. Sex workers should be spoken to more about this. It should be focused on the sex workers, not anything else, whether they are in the brothels or not in the brothels. Whoever is in charge of this committee should be focusing their attention on those of us who are working here because, ultimately, the working conditions affect us. Yes, those who have left, their opinions obviously also matter. But it is so easy for things to get misconstrued and sensationalized because it is more dramatic, I guess you could say. I think that everybody, collectively, should be listened to. I also agree that more restrictions and more law enforcement presence is not needed. I think that is it.

**Cyrus Hojjaty, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I do not really seem to have too much of a position on this because of the fact that I believe in the long term this industry is going to be in jeopardy because I have been working with a lot of other companies that are thinking about introducing female robots and are considering opening that here in downtown. So this is kind of like an argument of regulating the taxi industry ten years ago when people did not really find out that ride-share companies were going to take over. I am just curious, What are you going to do when the robots come in? Certainly it is going to have an impact on the brothel industry. I think one of the things you need to understand is why people going are to brothels. What is causing people to go to such places? Maybe a lot of it has to do with frustrated men. Maybe the marketplace of dating is pretty tough. Certainly these dating apps are not helping. We have to look at the underlying problem that is causing people to go to such places. I believe that one of the things we have to do is consider investing in technologies that involve female robots. We can open companies downtown and then we can say, Look, you do not have to travel 200 miles away. Maybe some men can realize they do not have to bother with marriage and dating because there are rigged family court policies and all these different responsibilities and costs and everything that comes with it. So I just want to point out that we should be looking at latest technologies. Technology certainly has a lot of impact on society. A lot of people need to figure this out rather than policymakers. I really do not have that much of an opinion about this.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Thank you so much. Your two minutes are up. We appreciate your being here.

**Kay Landwehr, Private Citizen, Gardnerville, Nevada:**

I have gone into brothels all over the state for many years. Some of the girls call me "The Church Lady." We bring in gifts and that sort of thing. After traveling the state for many years and observing the working conditions in the brothels, I am so excited to see the concern and hope the working conditions will improve on many levels. I am not sure—I am very new at this—I am not sure if I should be for it or against it or whatever, but I would ask that you be very careful. Be very careful because these girls are human beings, and they deserve to be treated with respect, kindness, and to have the same kinds of laws passed for them that would protect them and their earnings. That is my concern for the girls. I want to thank you and bless you for doing what you are doing here. Again, I guess I am in neutral. Thank you.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Thank you. One final check, is there anyone else here to testify in neutral? [There was no one.] I will invite the bill sponsor back up to give any final remarks if she would like. I would like to take a point of privilege to say thank you to everyone who came up, who said it was their first time testifying, and that you did not know where to be. I want to say thank you for sharing your stories and being brave enough to come here and being a part of the legislative process.

**Assemblywoman Cohen:**

I echo your thanking the people who were testifying for the first time, and I also appreciate the respect that was shown to people and by people for the process. Again, to me this is about the workers. No one brought this idea to me. This was my idea that I came up with after being concerned and not being able to get enough information to know what we are really doing in this state. If this passes, my plan is to make sure that this interim study and committee are focusing on the workers, having the academics participate, having the workers participate, and having people from different sides of the issues participate. With that, if anyone would like to speak at another time about this, I am open. Thank you.

**Chair Jauregui:**

Thank you. [Exhibits submitted but not mentioned include ([Exhibit O](#)) and ([Exhibit P](#)).] I will close the hearing on Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6.

Our last item of business on the agenda is public comment. If anyone is here to give public comment, please approach. Before we go to this agenda item, I would like to remind those present that the period for public comment is an opportunity to discuss general matters that fall under the purview of this Committee. The public has already been given time to support or oppose specific legislation. We open and close hearings on bills so that we establish a record of the public testimony on the bill. Therefore, public comment is not intended to continue a bill hearing, so let me remind you of the following: Your testimony under public comment is limited to two minutes. Please address your remarks to issues that fall within the jurisdiction of this Committee. Please be respectful to Committee members and other witnesses. Again, you may always submit any written testimony to our Committee assistant.

**Cyrus Hojjaty, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

[Testimony in a foreign language.]

**Chair Jauregui:**

Is there anyone else who wishes to testify under public comment? Seeing no one, our meeting is adjourned [at 6:02 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Catherine Bodenstein  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui, Chair

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

## EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is a document titled "2016 Single Party Races," submitted by Doug Goodman, Founder and Executive Director, Nevadans for Election Reform.

[Exhibit D](#) is a letter in support of [Assembly Bill 259](#), dated March 26, 2019, submitted by Bill Chernock, Executive Director, Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce.

[Exhibit E](#) is a letter in support of [Assembly Bill 259](#), dated March 26, 2019, submitted by Steve Teshara, Chief Executive Officer, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

[Exhibit F](#) is a letter in support of [Assembly Bill 259](#), dated March 26, 2019, submitted by Jan Vandermade, Private Citizen, Minden, Nevada.

[Exhibit G](#) is a letter in support of [Assembly Bill 259](#), submitted by Heidi Saucedo, Private Citizen, Gardnerville, Nevada.

[Exhibit H](#) is a letter in support of [Assembly Bill 259](#), dated March 25, 2019, submitted by Renea Louie, Executive Director, Business Council of Douglas County.

[Exhibit I](#) is a letter and supporting documentation in support of [Assembly Bill 367](#), dated March 27, 2019, submitted by Trey Delap, Director, Group Six Partners, LLC, Henderson, Nevada.

[Exhibit J](#) is a letter in support of [Assembly Concurrent Resolution 7](#), dated March 27, 2019, submitted by Jim Hoffman, Legislative Committee, Nevada Attorneys for Criminal Justice.

[Exhibit K](#) is a link to an article titled "Sex Industry and Sex Workers in Nevada," authored by Rachel T. Macfarlane, Celene Fuller, Chris Wakefield, and Barbara G. Brents, University of Nevada Las Vegas, submitted by Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Assembly District No. 29.

[Exhibit L](#) is a letter in support of [Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6](#), dated March 28, 2019, authored by Lance Gilman, Owner, Mustang Ranch, Sparks, Nevada, and presented by Danny Thompson, representing Lance Gilman, Owner, Mustang Ranch, Sparks, Nevada.

[Exhibit M](#) is testimony in support of [Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6](#), dated March 28, 2019, submitted by Cheryl Ray, Private Citizen.

[Exhibit N](#) is a letter in support of [Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6](#), dated March 28, 2019, submitted by Dena Duff, Private Citizen, Pahrump, Nevada.

[Exhibit O](#) is a commentary for Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6, submitted by Melissa Farley, Private Citizen, San Francisco, California.

[Exhibit P](#) is a letter in support of Assembly Concurrent Resolution 6, dated March 28, 2019, submitted by Sarah Hill, Private Citizen, Nevada.