

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OPERATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

**Eightieth Session  
April 29, 2019**

The Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections was called to order by Chair James Ohrenschall at 3:58 p.m. on Monday, April 29, 2019, in Room 2144 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator James Ohrenschall, Chair  
Senator Yvanna D. Cancela, Vice Chair  
Senator Marcia Washington  
Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert  
Senator Keith F. Pickard

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Assembly District No. 29  
Assemblyman Howard Watts III, Assembly District No. 15

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Michael Stewart, Committee Policy Analyst  
Diane Rea, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Peter Long, Administrator, Human Resource Management, Department of Administration  
Fred Wagar, Deputy Director of Programs and Services, Nevada Department of Veterans Services  
Tony Yarbrough, State Senior Vice Commander, Nevada Legislative Deputy Chairman, Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Will Adler, Principal, Silver State Government Relations, representing Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe

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Christine Saunders, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
Annette Magnus-Marquart, Executive Director, Battle Born Progress  
Christopher Rose, Strategies 360, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony  
Melody Judilla, Silver State Voices; on behalf of Let Nevadans Vote

Chair Ohrenschall opened the hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B) 89.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 89 (1st Reprint)**: Revises provisions governing preferences provided to veterans relating to certain state employment. (BDR 23-162)

Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Assembly District No. 29, read her testimony ([Exhibit C](#)). She also mentioned the relationship with Assembly Bill 309 of the 79th Legislative Session.

Assemblywoman Cohen added this change to the definition would not affect Nevada's statutory definition of "veteran" as set forth in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 417.005 which would continue to require residency. This creates the exception by removing the requirement for a veteran to be a resident to receive the preference points in State hiring.

She said with A.B. 309 in the last Session, this body made it clear that it is beneficial for our State to encourage veterans to become State employees. Assembly Bill 89 encourages veterans, widows and widowers of those killed in the line of duty in the armed forces to move to Nevada and become State employees.

Chair Ohrenschall asked are there any figures on how many veterans might be coming to Nevada or have an interest in applying for employment.

Peter Long, Administrator, Human Resource Management, Department of Administration, said an exact number is not available but A.B. 89 would increase the number of qualified applicants to Nevada. Prior to the 2017 Session, being a State resident was not a requirement, and the numbers declined in the last 2 years.

Chair Ohrenschall said he is interested in some data as to how many veterans have applied in the last few years.

Mr. Long replied he could get that for the Committee.

Fred Wagar, Deputy Director of Programs and Services, Nevada Department of Veterans Services, said in 2018 the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) sent 3,200 letters to every service member who indicated on their discharge document they were moving to Nevada.

Chair Ohrenschall asked if the letters are sent by snail mail.

Mr. Wagar said electronically is a possibility. At this point they are snail mail, but NDVS is not getting discharge documents. Instead they are getting what is called data dumps from the U.S. Department of Defense.

Tony Yarbrough, State Senior Vice Commander, Nevada Legislative Deputy Chairman, Veterans of Foreign Wars, said a major positive is the incentive of being offered points to those who are interested in coming to Nevada. It is certainly an opportunity to attract people and would open a door that is not available right now. Veterans of Foreign Wars testifies in favor of this bill.

Mr. Wagar said the No. 1 priority heard from all veterans moving to Nevada is employment. The second is housing.

Chair Ohrenschall closed the hearing on A.B. 89.

SENATOR PICKARD MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 89.

SENATOR WASHINGTON SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Chair Ohrenschall opened the hearing on A.B. 137.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 137 (1st Reprint)**: Revises provisions relating to certain polling places. (BDR 24-800)

Assemblyman Howard Watts III, Assembly District No. 15, read his testimony ([Exhibit D](#)). He also mentioned the relationship with Assembly Bill 492.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 492 (1st Reprint)**: Revises provisions governing industrial insurance benefits. (BDR 53-709)

Senator Seevers Gansert said the way she reads this bill is once an established polling location is set, a tribe has to have a location but not necessarily the same location.

Assemblyman Watts replied that is correct. Once a particular tribal territory has a polling place, it has to continue, but the location could change from cycle to cycle. To change the location or add additional locations would involve a conversation between the election officials and the tribal representatives.

Senator Seevers Gansert said it would be agreed upon by the tribes and the county or city.

Chair Ohrenschall asked if there are any tribes encompassing more than one county in Nevada.

Will Adler, Principal, Silver State Government Relations, representing Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (PLPT), said he does not believe there is any tribe that spans more than one county because counties are large in Nevada. The tribes identify with a single county for their tribal offices and council.

He said PLPT is in support of this bill because it was created for them. It is a long distance between where voting was available and where they vote today. The closest voting station was by the Legends in Sparks. It was a minimum 90-minute drive each way. Having a polling place on site did increase their voter participation. He said PLPT supports this bill and thanks Assemblyman Watts for bringing it forward.

Christine Saunders, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, said she is here in support. Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada had opportunities to support Natives voting during the past few years and has seen an increase in civic engagement of tribal members. Assembly Bill 137 is a great step in the right direction to ensure every person with the right to vote can cast a ballot.

Annette Magnus-Marquart, Executive Director, Battle Born Progress, said Battle Born Progress supports A.B. 137 and thanked Assemblyman Watts for sponsoring this bill. Assembly Bill 137 will improve indigenous community

access to voting across the State while respecting tribal sovereignty—meaning that tribes can opt in or opt out of voting. This is the right thing to do for Nevada’s indigenous communities which have had trouble voting in the past. She asked the Committee to please do right by our indigenous brothers and sisters and support A.B. 137.

Christopher Rose, Strategies 360, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, said Reno Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC) wants to go on record in support of A.B. 137 and extend their appreciation to Assemblyman Watts for recognizing the importance of maintaining the polling locations established last election cycle. The process for the RSIC in Washoe County was streamlined and easy.

Melody Judilla, Silver State Voices, said she is testifying in support of A.B. 137 on behalf of Let Nevadans Vote. Let Nevadans Vote is thankful to Assemblyman Watts for his commitment to expand voting rights for Native American communities. If the bill passes, tribunals will no longer have to request a polling location every election. The consistency of having polling locations will help build the culture of voting and improve accessibility to the polls for communities that feel left out of the voting process.

Chair Ohrenschall closed the hearing on A.B. 137 and asked for a motion.

SENATOR CANCELA MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 137.

SENATOR WASHINGTON SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Chair Ohrenschall adjourned the meeting at 4:19 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Diane Rea,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator James Ohrenschall, Chair

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

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit / # of pages		Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	3		Attendance Roster
A.B. 89	C	2	Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen	Testimony
A.B. 137	D	1	Assemblyman Howard Watts III	Testimony