

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

**Eighty-First Session  
April 13, 2021**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Edgar Flores at 9:14 a.m. on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, Online. 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/81st2021](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair  
Assemblywoman Selena Torres, Vice Chair  
Assemblywoman Natha C. Anderson  
Assemblywoman Annie Black  
Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May  
Assemblywoman Venicia Considine  
Assemblywoman Jill Dickman  
Assemblywoman Bea Duran  
Assemblyman John Ellison  
Assemblywoman Susie Martinez  
Assemblyman Andy Matthews  
Assemblyman Richard McArthur  
Assemblywoman Clara Thomas

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

None

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst  
Erin Sturdivant, Committee Counsel  
Judith Bishop, Committee Manager  
Lindsey Howell, Committee Secretary  
Cheryl Williams, Committee Assistant



**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Emily Ku, Management Analyst, Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs,  
Department of Business and Industry  
Laura E. Freed, Director, Department of Administration  
Terry J. Reynolds, Director, Department of Business and Industry

**Chair Flores:**

[The meeting was called to order. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] This is going to be another hectic week for us, but not in our Committee. As you know, we are going to be having very long floor sessions for the rest of the week until early next week. We are going to minimize the amount of time we meet to allow for time for the floor to do whatever they have to do. I am confident we will have some very long nights, and you will need those extra hours of sleep where possible. We will work on the agenda. I am trying to minimize the number of times we meet, specifically as it pertains to Friday, Monday, and Tuesday.

With that, we have two items on the agenda for today. We will start with the presentation and then make our way into the bill hearing on Senate Bill 16. At this time, I would like to open up the presentation by the Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs.

**Emily Ku, Management Analyst, Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs, Department of Business and Industry:**

I want to take a few minutes to give a very brief overview of the Commission and our purpose. To start with a little bit of background and history, the Commission was formed in 2003 with nine volunteer commissioners. The Commission did not have a full-time staff person until the 2017 Legislative Session, when Senator Ford sponsored Senate Bill 373 of the 79th Session. I was hired in 2018, and we quickly realized we needed more resources to support my position and to aid in our outreach activities. In 2019, Senate Bill 211 of the 80th Session was passed to allocate more funding to the Commission.

Fast-forward to today and these are our current commissioners [page 2, [Exhibit C](#)]. Edward Chaney serves as our chair and Myisha Williams is our vice chair. The rest of the commissioners are Hasaan Azam, Yerania De Luca, E. Mercedes Krause, Jose Melendrez, Amy Shaw, Kathleen Taylor, and Angelica Villarta. Each commissioner chairs at least one subcommittee, and you can see some of them chair two. The commissioners are very involved in our communities; they serve on a host of other volunteer activities and organizations. I consider them to be like our ambassadors; they really help to get the word out on information and resources that are pertinent to our minority community, and then they will also bring information and issues from their community back to the Commission.

As outlined in our statutes, the Commission represents a variety of minority groups that reflect the general population of the state. We have commissioners that represent the Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander populations. It is a very unique forum to have so many groups represented. Also, it increases the understanding between the

minority groups, which I think is also very important. Geographically speaking, we have seven that are based in Clark County, one in Reno, and one in Carson City.

These are our areas of focus; this is just a quick slide about our mission statement [page 3, [Exhibit C](#)]. These are the areas that correlate with our subcommittees: education, housing, employment, civil rights, health, political empowerment, and economic development. As you can see, we cover quite a bit, but a lot of these areas are very interrelated. For example, you cannot talk about workforce development without talking about education.

These are our Commission goals [page 4]. First, we are a central advisory body to the Governor, and we aim to give a voice to minority issues. We submit an annual report to the Governor that highlights our activities and recommendations.

Second, we want to become a hub for statewide minority data. We launched a new website last year; it is [minorityaffairs.nv.gov](http://minorityaffairs.nv.gov). On that website, we have compiled a list of resources and databases where you can go that has the data aggregated by race and ethnicity. I specifically tried to pull out as many Nevada-specific sites as I could to have that all-in-one place to make it easier for those looking for minority data. I know we have had a couple of community groups ask for data to help with their grants or their press releases. We have also increased our social media presence in the last year, trying to get information out as we move to mostly digital.

Third is to encourage discussions and facilitate connections between minority advocates. We have always encouraged discussion on disparities; we have done several presentations. That is called "The Status of Minorities" in Nevada, and that highlights the disparities within our focus areas. That presentation is found on our website. The COVID-19 pandemic and events have really increased the discourse on disparities and structural inequalities, and I think it has made it an easier conversation to have now. This past year, the commissioners have been busy giving numerous interviews and have spoken on various panels related to disparities.

Fourth is supporting legislation. The Commission is very excited to see so many bills this session that affect minorities and address diversity and inclusion, so we are following this session very closely.

This basically concludes my presentation. Thank you again for letting the Commission present today.

**Chair Flores:**

My apologies, I was having a conversation internally in my office. By the way, Ms. Ku, I just wanted to say that we are very appreciative; I know a lot of us had an opportunity to work with many of those who sit on your Commission. We appreciate the work—doing so much with so little—so I just wanted to say thank you on behalf of those of us who have an opportunity to work with such committed folk.

Members, I was having an internal conversation with the team, and I would like to pause the presentation briefly. As you all know, a lot of amendments are coming out. I am going to be sending those out, especially the ones you have worked on. If you could do a quick check on those, even if it is in the middle of a hearing, because we need to report those down to the floor as soon as possible. You may have somebody stopping by your office double-checking on some of those amendments. Please be as responsive as possible to that.

Members, any questions for Ms. Ku? [There were none.] I am sure members will reach out as we move further down the road should they have any questions. I think it is important that we just set that in action for those of you who have not had an opportunity to meet with Ms. Ku. Members, we will go right into our bill presentation for Senate Bill 16.

**Senate Bill 16: Revises provisions relating to the Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs of the Department of Business and Industry. (BDR 18-244)**

**Laura E. Freed, Director, Department of Administration:**

I would like to start by thanking Ms. Ku for the presentation she just gave the Committee because it sets the table for Senate Bill 16. As she just explained, the authorization for the Commission on Minority Affairs resides within the Department of Business and Industry's statutes in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 232.505 through NRS 232.866. The Department of Administration's authorizing statutes explaining our duties and responsibilities are in another section of that chapter. *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 232.864, however, specifies that the Department of Administration should—shall, actually—provide staff support to the Commission, and the operating expenses for the Commission are budgeted in the Department of Business and Industry's director's office, not the Department of Administration's director's office. The Department does not provide any support to the Commission on Minority Affairs, so this is a simple, line-out housekeeping bill that changes NRS 232.864 to make reference to the Department of Business and Industry, rather than the Department of Administration, providing staff support.

That is pretty much it. I would be happy to give some background, if the Chair is interested in it, or answer any other questions.

**Chair Flores:**

Thank you for that brief presentation. Members, any questions? [There were none.] I know that the bill was fairly straightforward, so please do not take the lack of questions as disinterest from our members. I think they just had an opportunity to review it and are pretty squared away on it. At this time, I would like to invite those wishing to testify in support of Senate Bill 16 to call in. Do we know of anybody who is joining us via Zoom who was hoping to speak in support?

**Laura Freed:**

The Director of Business and Industry is here in case there are questions. He testified in support over on the Senate side.

**Chair Flores:**

If it should be your desire that he do it again, that is no problem. We could have his testimony in support now, and/or we could just wait for questions, whatever you prefer.

**Terry J. Reynolds, Director, Department of Business and Industry:**

We do support this change. It is really an administrative cleanup on this. We want to thank the legislative body for their appointment, and the Office of the Governor for their appointment of the members too. In terms of the Minority Affairs Commission, we have an outstanding Commission with very strong leadership. We are very pleased to have them as part of the Department of Business and Industry. Also, I want to give kudos to Emily Ku, who has been outstanding as a management analyst to the Commission and who has really helped broaden the scope of their duties and bring issues to the Commission. With that, we wholeheartedly support this action.

**Chair Flores:**

Ms. Freed, do you have anybody else who also wanted to testify in support joining us via Zoom?

**Laura Freed:**

No, I do not believe so.

**Chair Flores:**

I noticed that we have a question from Assemblywoman Anderson.

**Assemblywoman Anderson:**

This can be for either Ms. Freed or Director Reynolds. I think it is pretty clear that this is cleanup language. But do you believe that moving the Commission on Minority Affairs to the Department of Business and Industry would allow for deeper discussions for the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada—or some of our other industries that are trying to bring businesses into our state—to also consider the Commission on Minority Affairs' point of view? Or are those conversations already taking place, and this is just another way to bring more people into the discussion?

**Terry Reynolds:**

That is very true. It does allow us to enter into deeper discussions in terms of economic development. But as you know, we also house Consumer Affairs and the ombudsman for Minority Affairs. It really helps us when we have groups that come in and are looking at the area and discussion of the topics that we cover, whether it is insurance or labor issues. We do have the ability to do that. Because the Minority Affairs Commission does collect data, they have, I would say, experts in different areas in the fields. We do have that component within the Department to be available to have dialogue with businesses that ask those questions as they come into the state, so it is very helpful. I appreciate that question.

**Assemblywoman Anderson:**

I was also wondering if there would be more outreach or possibly working with other departments in trying to help some of our smaller businesses that might be owned by minorities as well, or if that is in a different department. I do not know if this is the appropriate place for that question or not.

**Terry Reynolds:**

I am going to send this one over to Emily Ku, because they do work with the Commission, do provide data, and do whole sessions with different agencies, departments, and community groups. Emily Ku, do you want to give a little background on that?

**Emily Ku:**

We do a lot of outreach toward small businesses. We are active with the minority chambers in the south. Because we are in the Department of Business and Industry, we helped answer a lot of questions on Pandemic Emergency Technical Support grants and helped minority small business owners that way. We even fielded several questions in Mandarin when needed.

**Chair Flores:**

Members, any additional questions? [There were none.] We will continue with those wishing to testify in support of Senate Bill 16. [There was no one.] At this time, we will invite those wishing to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 16 to call in. [There was no one.] Lastly, we will go to those wishing to testify in the neutral position to Senate Bill 16. [There was no one.] Would anybody like to make closing remarks?

**Laura Freed:**

Only to say thank you for the opportunity to present this bill, and thank you to the Department of Business and Industry for their support in basically cleaning up the statute.

**Chair Flores:**

I am glad we were able to get through that relatively quickly. Hopefully, we can move some things out of here soon. With that, we will go ahead and close out the hearing on Senate Bill 16. Next, I would like those wishing to join us for public comment to call in. [There was no one.]

This morning went a lot faster and a little bit more smoothly than I anticipated. Members, you know we will be meeting tomorrow. We have two bills up: Senate Bill 37 and Senate Bill 46. Both deal with the Office of the Attorney General. The first deals specifically with the relationship between the district attorney's office and the Attorney General's Office. But you will hear all about that tomorrow.

We do also have a meeting scheduled for Thursday. If you check our agenda, I believe we have not set anything up for Friday. Just know that that is by design. We anticipate long

floors. If we can get there earlier, we will do so and not hold any meetings for those days—Friday, Monday, and Tuesday, at least. We will give the Committee an update as we get closer to those days. Please make sure you consistently keep checking back. With that, this meeting is adjourned [at 9:35 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Lindsey Howell  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair

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

## **EXHIBITS**

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Commission on Minority Affairs Overview," dated April 6, 2021, submitted and presented by Emily Ku, Management Analyst, Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs, Department of Business and Industry.