

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

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

The Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections was called to order by Chair James Ohrenschall at 3:40 p.m. on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, Online. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator James Ohrenschall, Chair
Senator Roberta Lange, Vice Chair
Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro
Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert
Senator Carrie A. Buck

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Stewart, Policy Analyst
Bryan Fernley, Counsel
Barbara Young, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Vinson Guthreau, Nevada Association of Counties
Jamie Rodriguez, Washoe County
Wesley Harper, Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities
Mary Walker, Carson City, Douglas, Lyon and Storey Counties
Alex Ortiz, Clark County
Zach Bucher, City of Las Vegas

CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:

We have one bill on the agenda today, Assembly Bill (A.B.) 1, which was requested by the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO). Here with us to present A.B. 1 is Vince Guthreau, Deputy Director of NACO.

ASSEMBLY BILL 1: Revises provisions relating to training for Legislators.
(BDR 17-438)

VINSON GUTHREAU (Nevada Association of Counties):

All new Legislators are required to take new Legislator training which is administered by the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB). Assembly Bill 1 proposes additional training, which is outlined in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 218A.285. Because Nevada is a Dillon's Rule state, the Legislature, through NRS, dictates much of what local governments are able to do. This includes many of the policy changes and budget decisions each of you will work on throughout your time as Legislators, and how it will impact local governments. This legislation will ensure Legislators are provided training on the structure, scope and responsibilities of local government. I took the liberty of providing the Committee a list of State and county service providers ([Exhibit B](#)), which has been color-coded to denote the services provided by the State and the county, as well as the services which are shared.

A short video further highlights some of what counties do, especially during this time of Covid-19. This video shows frontline workers providing health and safety measures during the Covid-19 crisis. The county workers who assisted to ensure safe and fair elections were held during the pandemic are also included in the video. Part of the reason NACO put this video together is to highlight and thank all of our county staff in their communities, large and small, and to showcase the efforts county workers make on a daily basis.

We have all come to know more about counties, especially during the pandemic. Nevada has a diverse and unique citizen Legislature. Most of the members of this Body did not come up through local government, as they might in other states. Given the critical nature of the partnership between county and State governments, the NACO Board believes that the additional information on local governments would be helpful for all of you. This bill proposes to make a simple change to NRS 218A.285 which requires training for the Legislators. Section 2 adds to that curriculum, which includes a discussion of local governments, the structure and authority of the local governments, financial administration and the services provided by our State's counties and cities. Essentially, this legislation would become effective July 1, 2022, in advance of the Eighty-second Session of the Nevada Legislature. This Bill is straightforward.

CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:

The language you are recommending to add to the statute as term limits take effect becomes more important now, since the training will be offered.

SENATOR LANGE:

Being a new Senator, I have just been through the Legislator training via Zoom. It was a long training with a great deal of information being disseminated. The information was all relevant nevertheless, and lengthy. I look forward to the additional training but am curious about the length of the training.

MR. GUTHREAU:

While NACO would offer assistance to LCB, the training and structure of the classes would be arranged by LCB.

SENATOR LANGE:

It will be a great addition to our training. Learning about the local governments of our Nevada counties will enhance our knowledge of the State.

MICHAEL STEWART (Policy Analyst):

The Research Division does coordinate with Legislative Leadership on the agenda for new Legislator training. The training is typically broken out into four phases; however, this time it was spread into five phases because we added ethics training at the beginning, after the election. This NACO training information could fit under the Issue Briefing Section with briefings on education, redistricting, education funding, consensus building, revenue and taxation. We did have to pivot significantly because of Covid-19. Normally, all of the training would be held in person, and it would be more interactive. We are willing to coordinate and make this work with NACO. We are actively coordinating with Legislative Leadership on these types of trainings. The Legislators provide us great feedback in our evaluation forms. We are happy to work with NACO, if this bill is approved.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

I have to commend Mr. Stewart and all of his colleagues at the LCB because they do a fantastic job. It has obviously been different this time, facilitating a virtual world, where the same caliber of training is delivered. The Legislative Counsel Bureau does a great job of identifying policy issues and making sure the new Legislators are getting immersed in those issues. When I received my training, we toured some of the Victory Schools, as well as the Nevada Transportation Authority and more. In a nonvirtual world, the NACO training would integrate well within the current curriculum. The training provided by LCB gives us the information necessary to enable us to represent our constituents to the best of our abilities.

SENATOR LANGE:

The training from LCB was thorough. We learned so much, and it was an immersion. Training held in person will be much better. I want to thank LCB for all of the work it does.

MR. STEWART:

It is difficult to receive all of that training and not feel overwhelmed. There is a lot of information covered in the initial training.

CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:

I did notice the fiscal note is zero, so I am assuming this is something the LCB can incorporate into its trainings. Mr. Guthreau, have you had any feedback as to how the trainings can be incorporated, adding these additional areas of study?

MR. GUTHREAU:

I do not want to speak for LCB, but we did reach out to see if there was a fiscal impact. They did not indicate that there was one, so I will just leave it there.

JAMIE RODRIGUEZ (Washoe County):

We are supportive of the bill. The relationship between the Legislature and local government cannot be understated. We are frequently the body responsible for implementing or enforcing the legislation which is passed. While some of the committees do have presentations at the beginning of Session, for some of the departments dealing with our registrar of voters, there were a multitude of other issues heard in different committees, as well as this Committee. We feel a better understanding of the responsibilities at the different levels of local government would be helpful to everyone. We hope A.B. 1 can continue moving forward.

WESLEY HARPER (Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities):

The League is in support of A.B. 1, and we appreciate the work of NACO to bring this bill forward. We applaud the distinguished members on the Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections for hearing the bill. This bill is a thoughtful approach to expanding and understanding an appreciation for the duties, responsibilities, services, processes and workings of local governments which seek to foster a stronger partnership for the benefit of our shared constituents.

MARY WALKER (Carson City, Douglas, Lyon and Storey Counties):

We rise in support of A.B. 1 which will require Legislators to have training on local governments and their issues. Local governments are diverse in Nevada from rural to urban. Each local government provides a wide array of services. Often, the general public does not understand the breadth and the depth of the services local governments provide, everything from roads, parks, cemeteries, fire and sheriff services to more.

ALEX ORTIZ (Clark County):

I am here in support of A.B. 1 which NACO has brought forward. Training the newly elected Legislators is like training new employees in any organization. It is an essential step to ensuring a beneficial and robust understanding of the new venture they are undertaking.

In Clark County, we provide training not only for our new employees but for our newly elected county commissioners. Other elected officials—for example the assessor, clerk, recorder, treasurer—and newly appointed department heads receive an overview of the county organizations at the start of their tenure. This training includes core values along with municipal and regional services which we provide to our constituents. In our training, we also include an overview of our 38 departments; rules of the county manager's office; government structure; fiscal framework, which encompasses our contribution to the nonfederal share of long-term care; financial support of University Medical Center; how we interact and work with other public organizations, such as the Regional Flood Control District, Regional Transportation Commission and Southern Nevada Health District, to name a few. Prior to every Legislative Session, an update about the upcoming session and government affairs issues are presented.

We see the benefits our training has on new employees and newly elected county officials. I urge your support of S.B. 1 and the educational opportunity for newly elected Legislators.

ZACH BUCHER (City of Las Vegas):

The City of Las Vegas echoes the previous comments from NACO and other callers in support of this bill. There is an inherent value for new Legislators to receive training and have discussions regarding local governments in our State.

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MR.GUTHREAU:

Counties recognize and support the partnership we have with the State in delivering services to our shared constituency. We appreciate you hearing the bill and believe this bill enhances that partnership.

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CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:

As we have no public comment, we will close the hearing on A.B. 1. We are adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Barbara Young,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator James Ohrenschall, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Begins on Page	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
A.B. 1	B	1	Vinson Guthreau / Nevada Association of Counties	State and County Service Providers