

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

**Eighty-Second Session
February 17, 2023**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Selena Torres at 9:07 a.m. on Friday, February 17, 2023, in Room 3143 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/82nd2023.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Selena Torres, Chair
Assemblywoman Bea Duran, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Max Carter
Assemblyman Rich DeLong
Assemblyman Reuben D'Silva
Assemblywoman Cecelia González
Assemblyman Bert Gurr
Assemblyman Brian Hibbetts
Assemblyman Gregory Koenig
Assemblyman Richard McArthur
Assemblyman Duy Nguyen
Assemblywoman Angie Taylor
Assemblywoman Clara Thomas

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Erica Mosca, Assembly District No. 14



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jennifer Ruedy, Committee Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Committee Counsel
Sarah Delap, Committee Counsel
Lindsey Howell, Committee Secretary
Cheryl Williams, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jason Walker, Sergeant, Administrative Division, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office
Mary-Sarah Kinner, Government Affairs Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office
Beth Schmidt, Director-Police Sergeant, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Adrian Hunt, Police Detective, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Christopher M. Ries, Police Detective, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Hieu Le, President and Founder, Nevada Esports Education League, Las Vegas, Nevada
Michael Cox, Co-Owner and Chief Operations Officer, Las Vegas Inferno, Las Vegas, Nevada
Edward Thompson, Workforce Development Specialist, Youth Development and Social Innovation, City of Las Vegas
Raymond Wu, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Lorenzita Santos, Community Engagement Director, One APIA [Asian Pacific Islander Americans], Nevada
Paul J. Moradkhan, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs, Vegas Chamber
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Roi Tristan, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Jairo Urcuyo, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Las Vegas Inferno, Las Vegas, Nevada
Genaro Grillo, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Chair Torres:

[Roll was taken. Committee protocol was reviewed.] We have a couple of items on the agenda. We will begin with the presentations. We will hear Assembly Bill 82 after. We will begin with the Washoe County Sheriff's Office.

Jason Walker, Sergeant, Administrative Division, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office:

I am happily here to present an overview of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office with my colleague, Mary-Sarah Kinner. Washoe County incorporates two main cities, Reno and Sparks. There are a few townships along the way: Incline Village up at beautiful

Lake Tahoe, Wadsworth, Vya, and Gerlach, which incorporates the Black Rock Desert, home of the Burning Man festival. For those of you who have never been out there, the art installations that show up are amazing. If you get a chance to head out that way during the festival, it is definitely something to look at.

The population of Washoe County was 499,508 persons the last time I looked it up [page 2, [Exhibit C](#)]. That is a one-and-a-third increase in the last year or so. We are one-fifth the size of Clark County. Washoe County was founded in 1861. It is the second-largest county in Nevada, encompassing 6,542 square miles.

This is our mission and vision statement for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office [page 3]. The vision statement is there. I will read you our mission statement. It is, "Dedicated to preserving a safe and secure community with professionalism, respect, integrity and the highest commitment to equality."

Our core values are the acronym PRIDE [Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, Equality]; our motto is "Commitment to Community" [page 4]. We are working on our 2023 through 2025 strategic plan. We will share those core values with you when they come out.

About the Washoe County Sheriff's Office [page 5]: We provide law enforcement services for the unincorporated area of Washoe County. We are also responsible for operating the only adult detention facility for pretrial detainees and sentenced misdemeanants within Washoe County. The agency has an authorized strength of 443 commissioned, 301 civilian, and 60 intermittent hourly employees. The agency has approximately 422 dedicated individuals who donate their time to volunteer for programs, such as Search and Rescue, Community Emergency Response Team, and Citizen's Homeland Security Council. Our current annual operating budget is \$131.5 million, with a little over \$5 million in restricted funding, such as grants and donations.

Sheriff Darin Balaam is the 27th person elected to serve as the sheriff of Washoe County [page 6]. He was sworn into office January 7, 2019 and has since been reelected to a second term. He has over 26 years of dedicated service to the sheriff's office, having served in all three bureaus. Those bureaus are Administration, Detention, and Operations. Sheriff Balaam is committed to enhancing mental health services for inmates at the detention facility and formed our Detention Services Unit (DSU) within his first year in office. He is committed to combatting human exploitation and trafficking in our community. He, along with now-retired Reno Police Chief Jason Soto and Sparks Police Chief Chris Crawforth, created the Human Exploitation and Trafficking (HEAT) Team. Their mission is to combat human and sex trafficking, which plagues our communities.

The next slide [page 7] is a picture of our organizational chart, with Sheriff Balaam at the top. Next is Undersheriff Jeffery Clark, followed by our three chief deputies: Chief Deputy Phillip Jones, Chief Deputy Ralph Caldwell, and Chief Deputy Corey Solferino, with the captains that work below them.

I will continue on with our command structure below the chief deputies [page 8, [Exhibit C](#)]. They have five captains who are responsible for the valley and Incline patrols, the detention facility, our Special Operations Division, and Administration. They also head up our police accountability and transparency. Those 5 captains have 15 lieutenants, who have 45 sergeants, who work with 358 deputy sheriffs. The deputy sheriffs are the boots on the street.

The next slide [page 9] shows our increase in staffing levels, which has trended upward since 2015. For 2022, our authorized commissioned staffing levels were 443. I believe our numbers for 2023 are adding an additional 15, making it 458. That is not an official number. We do have a State of the Sheriff's Office, a robust report that is coming out. I believe it is sitting on the sheriff's desk right now. It has a lot more information on it. As of 2023, I believe that number is going to be 458. That is exciting. There is always that old adage that there are never the police around when you need them. We are working to increase those numbers.

I am sharing some of our agency demographics with you [page 10]: 79 percent are male, and 21 percent are female. Ethnicity-wise, 81 percent are white, 11 percent are Hispanic, 4 percent are Asian, 2.5 percent are Black, 1 percent are American Indian, and 0.5 percent are Pacific Islander. Dialing directly into the next slide [page 11], it shows Washoe County demographics: 50.5 percent are male, and 49.5 percent are female. The ethnicities are listed below that.

I am the background sergeant, so I am at the ground floor of initial contact: Do you want to come work here? Is there something I can offer you? I am pleased to say that our agency represents our community. We are hiring our community. It helps us police our community as well. We have a lot of efforts out there for recruitment. The sheriff is in about every community out there—faith-based breakfasts and police symposiums. We bring the background group out there. I would say nearly everyone who works at the agency participates in recruitment. That is one of the biggest things. It is easy to just say staffing levels, but everybody at the agency works on recruitment as well as retention. I am happy to say our agency reflects the community we work in.

The first bureau I would like to highlight is our Administrative Bureau [page 12]. That is run by Chief Deputy Phillip Jones. He is responsible for Backgrounds; Civil Section; Community Engagement; dispatch; the front desk; the NNLEA [Northern Nevada Law Enforcement Academy], which is our regional academy; our OPI [Office of Professional Integrity] Division; our Records Section; R&D [Research & Development], and our training and compliance.

Here are a couple highlights for the Administrative Bureau and Research & Development [page 13]. Going back a few years to 2017, Senate Bill 176 of the 79th Session authorized body-worn cameras. We rolled them out to our Operations Bureau that year. Two years later, we integrated Fleet 2, which are Axon-brand cameras, into all our marked patrol

vehicles. A couple years later, we integrated the body-worn cameras to all commissioned detention personnel, so not only do we have them in the cars, but on the patrol people. We have them downstairs as of 2021.

For this year's second quarter release, we are hoping to release Axon's latest version, which is Fleet 3. In a nutshell, it is going to ease the video-based evidence dissemination for a more efficient workflow for the Office of the District Attorney and the Office of the Public Defender. It assembles all videos, all interviews, and all case information into one complete case. When we drop our probable cause sheet, everybody is already asking for the video. This helps us compile that information and put our best foot forward for decision-making at that time.

I would like to highlight our concealed carry weapons permits [page 14, [Exhibit C](#)]. The total currently in process is 1,326. These stats are for fiscal year 2022, so this is through July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. We have revoked 54, suspended 0, denied 44, and reinstated 24. Out of those who applied, about 2,800 were male and 1,222 were female. We are currently looking at 67 days to process a concealed carry permit.

We report our crimes on the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) [page 15]. Most of the agencies in the area, the four that are listed, work to update the software platform, Tiburon. This work included building code tables, adaptation of workflows, and State of Nevada-mandated training for staff. The transition from summary, or Universal Crime Reporting, to NIBRS reporting was on August 1, 2019. In December of that same year, we met that reporting criteria for NIBRS, certifying our agency. The margin of error is less than 3 percent; for every incident we report, the margin for error is 3 percent, and we hit that note. Our site certification helped the state attain FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] NIBRS certification. The FBI transitioned to NIBRS-only as of January 1, 2021. The National Incident-Based Reporting System collects more detailed information and provides a greater analytical flexibility for trends and analysis.

Here are a couple of our community outreach events [page 16]. We have "Christmas in July." In 2022, 1,400 parents and children who have the greatest need in our community came to the sheriff's office's 4th annual "Christmas in July." We distributed 1,200 backpacks full of school supplies and hygiene items, fed nearly 1,400 people and gave out countless prizes for the carnival games. The record-breaking success of our annual event was a direct reflection of the kindness and generosity of people and organizations that do what it takes to realize a vision and make a positive difference in our community. The 2022 event was held at the Boys and Girls Club of Truckee Meadows on July 30, 2022.

It was sponsored by the Washoe County Honorary Deputies Association and community sponsors, such as Walmart, AT&T Pioneers, The Ferrero Group, Sysco, Northern Nevada Dental Health, The Katie Grace Foundation, the Fly High Trampoline Park, and of course, the Boys and Girls Club of the Truckee Meadows. The estimated cash and donations were valued at nearly \$25,000. The Honorary Deputies Association donated an additional \$7,000 toward their successes.

Another big outreach event for us is the "Shop with the Sheriff" event. The Washoe County Sheriff's Office and Honorary Deputies Association ask the school district and nonprofit agencies to identify children in our community who have the greatest need to participate. The 2022 "Shop with the Sheriff" event was the 20th annual, taking place on December 6 at a local Walmart. Just in time for Christmas, the "Shop with the Sheriff" event pairs children who are referred by the school district with the Sheriff's Office and community volunteers for a holiday shopping spree. As in years past, we will work with our organizations to select students aged 5 to 12 to participate in future events.

Lastly, I would like to highlight our "No Shave" campaign. In exchange for a monthly charitable donation, between the months of October and January, Sheriff Balaam relaxes grooming standards to allow facial hair for male deputies. Female deputies are allowed to have relaxed hair standards. Civilian support can wear hats, jeans, and sports jerseys. Since we started this in 2016, the sheriff's office has donated over \$100,000 to a variety of deserving local charities.

I will next highlight our Detention Bureau [page 17, [Exhibit C](#)]. It is headed by Chief Deputy Ralph Caldwell. A few things that fall under that umbrella are our Alternatives to Incarceration, Inmate Assistance Program, our Second Judicial District Court bailiffs, our court transportation staff, our DSU, our Detention Response Team, and our Inmate Management program, as well as the programs that operate within the facility.

The main thing I would like to highlight is our Detention Services Unit [page 18]. They operate a Medication Assisted Treatment Program, one of 12 accredited. It offers state social services, discharge planners, local social services, grant-funded advocate, and the veterans unit. I will just highlight a couple programs: Narcotics Anonymous; Alcoholics Anonymous; and addiction, mental health, and anger management.

I will share a few of our stats from 2022 [page 19]. Our average daily population is up to 1,241 inmates. Our average length of stay from January of last year to May of last year was up to just under 24 days. Bookings totaled a little over 16,000. Our average cost per day per inmate ranges from \$126 to about \$180. It fluctuates because in the wintertime, it is colder downstairs. They might need a thermal; they might need an additional blanket. We are factoring about \$126 per day per inmate, who might have a standard of care of up to about \$500, depending on programming and medical needs. Someone who needed a bit more could top up to \$800.

Also within the detention facility is our Washoe County multiplex [page 20]. When COVID-19 hit and the courts were shut down, that had to continue. We created video court connections with the courts listed: Incline Village Justice Court, the Reno and Sparks Justice Courts, the Wadsworth Justice Court, the Reno and Sparks Municipal Courts, the Federal Court, and the Tribal Courts. They operate four court rooms: red, pink, green, and blue arraignment rooms. There are eight individual video court stations. There are iPads available for use within the housing units for the inmates.

Here are a few of our transportation statistics [page 21, [Exhibit C](#)]. These are inmates going top-line—inmates going to district court appearances only. You can see that pre-COVID-19, we were at about 6,000. It trended down during the heat of COVID-19, and now it is trending back up in 2022 at 4,828. That is just district court appearances. Total court events through all other jurisdictions are listed on the bottom line. Again, there was pre-COVID-19, then it trended down during COVID-19. For 2022, we are trending back upwards. The court transportation staff is very busy moving inmates back and forth.

Next, I will highlight our Operations Bureau, which is headed up by Chief Deputy Corey Solferino [page 22]. He is responsible for our Investigations Division, which is our detectives; patrol; our MAIT [Major Accident Investigation Team]; our Marine 9 Division, which is the boat asset up at Incline Village; our Motor Division; our EOD [explosive ordnance disposal], which are our bomb techs; extraditions, our hostage team; K9; the Northern Nevada Interdiction Task Force; the Northern Nevada Regional Intelligence Center (NNRIC); Regional Aviation Enforcement Unit (RAVEN), which are our helicopter assets; RGU [Regional Gang Unit]; Search and Rescue; and SWAT [Special Weapons and Tactics], as far as another regional team.

A highlight from our Operations Bureau is our dispatch staff, which includes police, fire, and emergency medical services dispatches [page 23]. A quick search produced 106,270 entries. Of those, there were 17,080 police dispatch calls for services. There were 42,970 officer-initiated calls. That totals about 60,000 calls for service annually. The officer-initiated calls are traffic stops, vehicle checks, park checks, and so on. That falls under our regional initiative. There are other teams under our NNRIC umbrella, such as the Crime Suppression Unit of Reno and Sparks, our Narcotics Unit, and our HEAT team. There is SONU [Sex Offender Notification Unit] and ICAC [Internet Crimes Against Children] Division.

When they fall under that NNRIC umbrella, what that means is, it is one thing for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office to have a piece of information. As a region, we share that with all those other individuals who tie into it. It is best if we all have the same information as a region.

Our Patrol Division is working on a stratified policing model [page 24]. It is intelligence-led policing that is place-based, person-focused, problem-solving, and community-based, all in one methodology. It is real-time analytics. We look at repeat calls for service. We look at significant incidents. We look at crime patterns, problem locations, and problem areas.

I will touch on one area: a popular trailhead in town. People would go out on a nice spring day wanting to go on a hike. Their cars were getting broken into. We looked at that and analyzed it with our stratified policing. We decided to put the police there during certain times when we know these crimes are occurring. That did have an effect on that.

The next slide [page 25, [Exhibit C](#)] shows the top-down, bottom-up thought process to the model. Accountability-wise, we get incidents every once in a while. When it becomes significant [inaudible], we look at it. When it becomes a repeat incident, we look at it. It starts with the deputies and supervisors. As the problems are assigned, the accountability is assigned. I can tell you, as a sergeant, I have yet to get it up to a command, captain, or executive staff level. We put some thought into it and try to knock it in the bud before it raises up in accountability.

Next, I would like to highlight our Search and Rescue operations [page 26]. These were our volunteer hours. They totaled 4,981 volunteer hours with a savings of \$333,000. Those Search and Rescue people do some tremendous things. They have a lot of skills, a lot of abilities, and a lot of equipment that get us out of a lot of stuff. Generally, they are deployed by a rope from the helicopter, rappelling, or something along those lines. The Regional Aviation Enforcement Unit goes out there. There were 63 requests for service for RAVEN and 43 responses, totaling 255 flight hours for RAVEN. That is a tremendous asset.

Last but not least is our mighty Forensic Science Division [page 27]. They provide services for 13 of the 17 counties in northern and central Nevada, and one county in California [page 28]. Local, state, federal, and tribal agencies are within these counties. The scope of services provided are breath alcohol calibration, controlled substances, crime scenes, DNA, firearms, print processing and comparison, and toxicology of alcohol and drugs.

Since 2020, they have analyzed 979 cases [page 29]. They have responded to 83 homicides, reduced turnaround times on firearms, and reported 157 latent print database hits. They changed our drug testing policy to test for drugs even in cases with high alcohol contents. That is that poly-DUI, where you can smell the alcohol on them and see the signs and symptoms of alcohol consumption, but now we are testing for whether they also have any illegal drug substances on board.

That concludes my presentation [page 30].

Mary-Sarah Kinner, Government Affairs Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office:

I am pleased to be here with Sergeant Jason Walker to help answer any questions.

Chair Torres:

We stand open for any questions. Members?

Assemblywoman González:

Number one, I was wondering if the Committee was able to get a breakdown of the gender and race of your incarcerated population in Washoe County. I did not see that on the slide. My second question is, what are you all doing to diversify your workforce? On the slide where you broke down your race by department [page 10, [Exhibit C](#)], I saw that Latinos are

only 11 percent of the population, but in Washoe County, they actually represent closer to 25 or 26 percent of the overall population. I was just curious what you are doing to diversify. The last question I have is, what has Washoe County done over the last two years to implement or put in social workers at intake?

For the data breakdown—just the most current data you have in terms of your incarcerated population's gender and race.

Jason Walker:

The timing was not on my side. We have just compiled a robust State of the Sheriff's Office, an approximately 80-page report from all divisions—all those numbers. I have heard it is sitting on the sheriff's desk. It is not signed off yet. There will be a press release. I will happily share that information in copy form or in an email when I get it. Those are important stats.

A lot of the meetings that I have been to are about that—show me the numbers. Why is this? Why is that? I can tell you with certainty the ones who are in the jail are there for a reason. The ones who have met *Valdez-Jimenez* [*Valdez-Jimenez v. Eighth Judicial Court*] are able to get out from other services. The ones that can be out are out. I will get you that information.

As far as diversifying our workers, we are out all the time. We are talking to all the groups. We have the police symposium. We are going out to Naval Air Station Fallon. We are hitting those community engagement efforts to include the University of Nevada, Reno and all that. Our best recruiters are the people who are working there. I have been the sergeant of the Backgrounds Division now for a year. I could tell you that the majority of the applications we get are from somebody who knows somebody. They have that friend who is out there. The sheriff is in the police symposium. He is out with the faith-based breakfasts, and he is pushing to get that diversity. Showing that we do hire from our community is a big deal.

The last question was about social workers and intake. I do not have an answer. I know they go through a series of screening questions as they move through the intake process, but I do not have a specific answer for you. I have it noted, and I will certainly follow up with you. I think, oftentimes, getting the information out of them right from the very beginning is the most important. I can understand that. However, having worked intake as a deputy and having supervised intake, some of the people who come in are under the influence of something. They are irritated because they are in jail, and they might not give us the proper response we need to get them down the lane to where they need to go. But I will follow up with you on that.

Chair Torres:

I have heard some phenomenal things about using social workers at the intake process. It seems like it really is the gold standard of how we should be intaking individuals—not just pushing individuals into incarceration. We would definitely love more information if we can get it.

Assemblyman Hibbetts:

You list your authorized strength at 443 commissioned personnel [page 5]. How many do you have?

Jason Walker:

According to my colleague, we are fully staffed.

Assemblyman Hibbetts:

You would be one of very few agencies in this entire country, if that is true. I congratulate you.

Jason Walker:

This is what I can tell you with certainty, having worked in the Backgrounds Division for a year: Sheriff Balaam told me, Get me 25 for this academy. Give me 15 for the academy coming up in July. The next academy coming up would be January. He says after that January, he is probably going to have a name for every full-time employee on our books. The one thing that I cannot factor in is retirements. A lot of times people hold that close to them. We do not know when people are going to go. Generally, it is in July or January, just because.

I am proudly going to say we are close to being staffed. It came up in another meeting. Somebody says, How do you do it? There is no direct answer to how Washoe County does what we do. It could be the diversity of the work. Somebody could amass a 30-year career and do ten jobs for three years. There is the staff. There are a lot of factors that play into that, but we are close to fully staffed.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Good for you. I love this idea that Washoe County recruits from its own. I wish every other department or county could do the same thing. To me, this is a big thing. I have always asked, Why are we not doing more of that, instead of hiring people from Valdosta, Georgia? I do not have anything against Valdosta. But we should police our own. That is my comment.

But I have a question. You have mentioned videos. I was wondering if that is free to the public, or do you charge attorneys and/or common folk for videos?

Jason Walker:

That is all free.

Assemblywoman Taylor:

It is always extra special when the Washoe County people come. This is great information from the sheriff's office. I have been there and seen some of the great work that has been done, particularly by the sheriff. He actually told me last night that the report was coming. He said, Make sure you look for it. I would certainly say he is out and about as a sheriff. He is very open. Whenever I have reached out to him with a question, challenge, or concern—and they have not all been nice, fuzzy conversations—he is always very good about that. He believes in the work of the community, and that speaks for itself.

To follow up from my colleague, Assemblywoman González's comment, I will talk more about the diversity piece. I know you are going to be getting some numbers, and it may already be in the sheriff's report. But what does the command staff, specifically, look like from a diversity standpoint? There has been some growth, I want to commend that.

Then, can you talk about what your hiring process looks like? What are those steps? How does one say, Great, I would love to be a part of the sheriff's office? What does that look like?

Jason Walker:

It starts with Human Resources (HR) listing an opening for either lateral deputy sheriff or deputy sheriff recruit. "Lateral" is somebody who has a Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission (POST) certification from either Nevada or another state. Somebody dials into the Washoe County Sheriff's Office to see it is accepting applications. Openings for applications have been wide open for many years, which could be why we are getting as many applications as we are.

It starts with the application process. Then Human Resources accepts the application. The person puts in all the biographical information. They do meet the minimum standards to apply for this position. Then Human Resources throws them out a link to take a written test. They pass a written civil service test. Once they are past that, then they go to what is called the POST Physical Readiness Test (PPRT). It is a series of runs, push-ups, sit-ups, and a sprint and agility course. They have to pass that PPRT.

Once the application is written and the PPRT is completed, it goes from HR to us. Once we get it at the sheriff's office, we get a certified list from HR: These three processes have been done; here is my list of 30 potential applicants or 30 potential deputy sheriff recruits. Once the Backgrounds Division gets them, we send them a computer program called electronic Statement of Personal History (eSOPH). We also send them the pre-investigative questionnaire. It is 15 questions.

One background investigation could range from 40 to 90 hours to complete to put somebody in an academy. We have mandatory rejection criteria based off *Nevada Administrative Code* standards that have to do with time and distance from drugs, as well as time and distance

from arrests. That pre-investigative questionnaire allows us to triage those applications. If we have a rejection criterion, we have to respond to the applicant and say, Based on this, we are not able to look at your application; please reapply at a certain date and time.

We send the ones who do pass that rejection criteria the link for eSOPH. That is hours of information that needs to come to us before we start the background investigation—bank references, address references, work references, and personal references. We tie all that together.

We bring them in for a face-to-face interview, and then we put them on the Computerized Voice Stress Analysis. It is one thing to say something or write something. We confirm that what they are saying is the most accurate information. At that point, we send them to the hiring board. The Background Division's job is done at that point. I provide the Hiring Board with the information—these applications look great. The Hiring Board, which is two chiefs, makes the hiring decision at that point. Does that answer your question?

Assemblywoman Taylor:

It does. That is very detailed, so thank you. There was a time in law enforcement when there was a big focus on psychological exams. You did not mention that. Do you guys still have that?

Jason Walker:

We still do a psychological evaluation.

Assemblywoman Taylor:

I wondered because there is some research that found those can sometimes disproportionately exclude people of color. You have done a good job in a lot of the areas. This may be bigger for our Hispanic officers.

Assemblyman Carter:

You mentioned laterals [candidates]. How many laterals come in in proportion to locals? In that same vein, is there any system to give locals in the service area a leg up over laterals or people from outside the community?

Jason Walker:

I do not have an exact percentage, but I can tell you we are getting laterals in like they are going out of style. As for whether we have a better program, it could have to do with the pay. It could have to do with the ability to work in the jail. The jail is 70 degrees [Fahrenheit (F)] 365 days a year, and it is either 9 degrees F outside in the wintertime or 110 degrees in the summertime. Our program may look better.

I can tell you an exact number right now. We are looking at five laterals on our board. Four of them are within the great state of Nevada. One of them is POST-certified out of California. When we pick up a lateral from the state of Nevada, their Nevada POST is already set. When somebody comes from another state, they have to challenge POST. In the

past, we have hired them and given the final offer. They come to work for us in the training office. We get with POST, and they open up that challenge course. Do not quote me on this, but they sit there and do at least three weeks of coursework before they are ready for the test. Then they challenge that POST test. From a business standpoint, the leg up does go to the in-states because they do not have to challenge POST. They already have Nevada POST certification. Did that answer your question, sir?

Assemblyman Carter:

Actually, no. What I was trying to figure out and wanted to hear, based on what Assemblywoman Thomas complimented you on, is what the Washoe County Sheriff's Office is doing to develop locals. We talk about this: Officers are servants of the community. I am a firm believer that you need to be a part of the community before you can serve the community, and our forces should be developing that skillset within the community before it gets up there. I am not a big fan of laterals. We need to develop our own. But I was asking what we are doing to create public servants within our community.

Jason Walker:

I am sorry for the misunderstanding on the initial question. I can tell you Sheriff Balaam authorizes deputies to adopt schools in the area. They go out. We are not just talking college-level, we are talking elementary school. From my experience, when you get somebody at high school or college level, they are already in a certain lane, and they know what they want to do. But by sending these deputies out there to be that law enforcement liaison with a particular school, it sets that standard. They see, and I will give him props, Deputy Brad Demitropoulos. He works for me. He has adopted a school. He has done that for years. You can go and ask those kids, and they are youngsters, What do you want to do when you grow up? They say, I want to go work with Deputy Demo. We have those officers out there talking to little kids, getting out there for community engagement events, and throwing the flyers out there at the younger age to help develop those people.

Assemblyman Carter:

What is your response time, pick up time, or wait time on your 311 system?

Mary-Sarah Kinner:

I do not have an answer for that right now, but I am happy to get you one.

Chair Torres:

Do you know even a ballpark figure, such as generally under 30 minutes or anything like that? I know in southern Nevada, I have heard complaints about waiting, for example, three hours.

Mary-Sarah Kinner:

Unfortunately, I do not today, but I am happy to get you an answer this afternoon.

Assemblywoman Duran:

How does your office interact with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)? Do you have any affiliation with that department?

Jason Walker:

We work with them every day. When I was working as the intake sergeant and intake deputy, there was an officer with ICE who sat there at the desk.

Assemblywoman Duran:

When you have a person that is on that, do you release information for them? From my understanding, that is supposed to be a separate entity.

Jason Walker:

I do not have an answer for you on that.

Assemblywoman Duran:

If we could get information on that, please.

Chair Torres:

Members, any additional questions? [There were none.] We do have one more presentation from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's Office of Intergovernmental Services.

**Beth Schmidt, Director-Police Sergeant, Office of Intergovernmental Services,
Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:**

With me today is Detective Adrian Hunt and Detective Chris Ries. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (Metro) is one of the largest police agencies in the United States. Our mission is to provide exceptional police services in partnership with the community. We want to stress that phrase—in partnership with the community. We recognize that as a law enforcement agency, we cannot be effective in working exclusively on our own. Our success can only be achieved through collaboration, by building strong relationships, and partnering with individuals, groups, and organizations throughout our community.

We police 7,560 square miles in southern Nevada. We are responsible for ensuring the safety of 1.7 million residents and 3.9 million tourists who visit our community annually. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department uses commissioned officers as our lobbyists because we speak from positions of experience and knowledge when it comes to policing and corrections.

As the director, I am on executive staff. This is my 14th year with the agency. I have served as a sergeant, a detective, and an officer. Detective Adrian Hunt is in his 17th year with Metro. He spent 13 years as a corrections officer with us and has been a police officer for 4 years. Detective Chris Ries is in his 14th year with Metro.

Our sheriff, Kevin McMahonill, was sworn in last month as the eighth elected sheriff of the Metro [page 4, [Exhibit D](#)]. Prior to becoming our sheriff, he dedicated 30 years to our organization, rising to the role of undersheriff for then-Sheriff Joe Lombardo. He retired from Metro in 2020. In 2022, he successfully ran for and won the sheriff of Clark County race.

Sheriff Kevin McMahonill's number one priority is to inject more humanity into our policing model [page 5]. What do we mean by that? Well, history shows us that police agencies, cities, and counties do not improve neighborhoods by arresting their way out of the problem. If we want to improve public safety and quality of life, police agencies need to inject more humanity into how we treat the people we are allowed to serve. After all, we derive our power from our community.

As an agency, we are moving away from labeling neighborhoods as problems and crime hotspots. Instead, we see them for what they are. They are vulnerable communities, and we are asking ourselves how we, as a police department, can create dramatically different outcomes and create lasting relationships moving forward.

Another priority of our sheriff is the establishment of a wellness bureau. The intent of the bureau is to care for our employees' physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Our mission is to bring together police, fire, and emergency medical services with the goal of taking care of them in a profoundly different way. We believe that with this approach, we will be able to serve our community with a deeper sense of understanding and care.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year [page 6]. We were created in 1973 when the Nevada Legislature voted to merge the Clark County Sheriff's Office with the Las Vegas Police Department. Historically, most police departments are funded by cities, and sheriff's departments are funded by counties. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is a hybrid among law enforcement agencies. It is funded by *Nevada Revised Statutes* Chapter 280. This dictates that the Committee on Fiscal Affairs provides oversight and approval of all Metro fiscal issues except for the detention center budget.

Our budget for this year is \$1.4 billion. Thirty-five percent of our budget is self-generated from property and sales taxes. The remaining 65 percent is split between Clark County and the City of Las Vegas, based on a formula that utilizes population, calls for service, and felony crimes.

We employ 5,800 employees [page 7]. Four thousand are commissioned officers; 3,100 of them are police officers; and 900 of them are corrections officers in the jail. That means 1,800 of our additional employees are civilians. Thirty-three percent of all our employees are female. Fifteen percent of our commissioned employees, meaning our police officers and corrections officers, are female.

One of our greatest challenges is recruitment and retention, which are nationwide challenges in policing. For us, it is both on the commissioned and the civilian sides. One of our approaches to improving recruitment is to continue to build bridges in the Las Vegas Valley, especially in our communities of color, because we remain challenged in filling our ranks with non-white officers. One of the things we are looking for is finding ways to bridge that gap between the ages of 18 and 21, so young men and women in our community can grow and develop both an interest and the skillsets that will make them strong candidates for Metro.

This map [page 9, [Exhibit D](#)] shows our jurisdiction, and the colors show the ten different area commands that we have. In addition to this vast area, we are also responsible for the Harry Reid International Airport. Every one of these ten area commands has what is known as a community-oriented policing (COP) squad. We also have crime prevention specialists in each of these ten area commands to serve our neighborhoods.

We have other bureaus and divisions that include K9 and Search and Rescue. We have our own forensic lab. We have crime scene investigators. We also house the Southern Nevada Counter Terrorism Center, which serves as the state of Nevada's fusion center. We have a real-time crime center that utilizes real-time analytics and technology to help us solve crimes. An example of this would be recently, one of our real-time camera operators located bank robbers we had been looking for. They had robbed 9 banks in 20 days. They were using stolen vehicles, so we were having difficulty finding them. The camera operator was able to locate them in a vehicle and guide our officers to the robbers. They were taken into custody. This is just one example of how we successfully use technology at Metro.

Our goal for 2023 is to reduce overall crime in Las Vegas by 10 percent [page 11]. Last year, our jurisdiction saw a 6 percent drop in homicides and an overall reduction in violent crime of 4 percent [page 12, [Exhibit D](#)]. Among the major cities in the United States, the average murder solvability rate is 51 percent. That means that in most of the major cities in the United States, 49 percent of the murders committed do not get solved. We are proud to say that Metro's Homicide Section leads the nation among major cities when it comes to solving murders. In 2021, we solved nearly 94 percent of our homicides in Las Vegas and 89 percent of our homicides last year. Many of those investigations are still continuing from 2022. As those investigations come to a close, we expect that murder solvability number to rise to between 92 and 94 percent. Solvability rates matter.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department has demonstrated a continuous effort to learn and improve since the U.S. Department of Justice worked with us on collaborative reform in 2012 [page 13]. Under then-Sheriff Doug Gillespie, we voluntarily stepped up and agreed to a deep dive of our uses of deadly force. As a result of this collaborative reform, Metro is considered a national model in reducing officer-involved shootings. Our use of force policy changed then, and it is continually updated as we learn through our reviews of incidents that happen here and nationwide. In 2014, we voluntarily participated in a body-worn camera pilot program. I personally stepped up and volunteered to wear a camera. Consequently, Metro became the first major police department to wear body-worn cameras.

As an agency, we are consistently ahead of the curve when it comes to police reform. How are we ahead of the curve? Well, in the way that we release information to the media, including our transparency and our accountability. We are the only police department in the country that releases a video with preliminary details of an officer-involved shooting. We follow that up with a live media briefing 72 hours after a critical incident. In addition, we employ a dual model of investigating these critical incidents through our Force Investigation Team and our Critical Incident Review Team.

There is further participation in this process from the community in the form of citizen Use of Force Review Board members. De-escalation is a critical component of our policing model. Our officers have a duty to intervene with no retaliation. We stress the importance of monitoring subjects and immediately summoning medical attention if required. We hold our supervisors accountable, and we expect them to be involved in the management of our overall response to potentially violent encounters.

The Clark County Detention Center (CCDC) is funded 100 percent by the Clark County general fund [page 14, [Exhibit D](#)]. The Clark County Detention Center is composed of two facilities. On an average day, we house 2,800 men and women. Last year we processed 52,000 bookings.

The Clark County Detention Center is a county jail. I will quickly explain the difference between a jail and prison. An individual is housed in prison if they have been sentenced to more than a year for their crime. A jail typically houses individuals who are serving less than a one-year sentence. In the case of CCDC, most inmates are awaiting trial or sentencing.

We are not proud to say this, but it is a reality: The Clark County Detention Center is the largest mental health facility, the largest addiction treatment center, and the largest homeless center in the state of Nevada. We know that incarceration does not fix mental health, addiction, or homelessness. Sheriff McMahon's intention is for Metro to do as much as we can to help our vulnerable citizens who are struggling with mental health, addiction, and homelessness. Two months into his tenure, we are already working in partnership with the City of Las Vegas, Clark County, and other stakeholders to solve what people claim are unsolvable problems. We know this is a heavy lift, but through leadership and partnership we believe we can effect change in Clark County.

But we cannot solve these problems without help from the community [page 15]. One of the hallmarks of our agency is the way we build relationships and conduct community outreach. Community engagement is a tenant of our agency. Our Office of Community Engagement promotes prevention, education, support, and redirection. Our Homeless Outreach Team's mission is to partner with community providers to identify those alternatives to arrest and challenges to reduce homelessness. Other outreach is conducted through youth outreach, faith-based programs, First Tuesdays, Coffee with a Cop, our Citizens' Police Academy, and our Hispanic Citizens Police Academy.

I want to highlight Metro's Multicultural Advisory Council (MMAC). For 20 years, this diverse group of community members has listened to the public safety concerns of our community and worked with Metro to strategize on how we improve policies and police procedures within the organization. Metro's Multicultural Advisory Council members represent our diverse community, including Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans, Arab Americans, the LGBTQIA+ community, the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union], the Anti-Defamation League, and the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]. Some of the challenges MMAC is helping our agency address are recruitment, mental health awareness, homelessness, substance abuse, and the reduction of youth violence and homicide.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department remains committed to ensuring that all citizens of southern Nevada feel safe, supported, and proud of their police department [page 16, [Exhibit D](#)].

Chair Torres:

Members, any questions?

Assemblyman D'Silva:

This is very informative and very much needed. I have two questions. Before I ask the first question, I want to commend Detective Adrian Hunt here. A few years back, he helped me with a very tense situation at Rancho High School dealing with the Black Lives Matter movement and this real need for the students to have a conversation. There was apprehension from administrators for us to even host this sort of community conversation on our campus after school. But Detective Hunt was able to help me, and we had an excellent conversation. We had representatives of law enforcement as well as folks from the local New Era Nation and the Black Panther Party in the same room with our young people. We had one of the most fruitful civil discourses I have ever seen young high schoolers involved with. It is great to see you are also now part of the lobbying team here for this legislative session.

That leads to my question. I did not see too much here about the youth engagement and the programs that Metro has pertaining directly to the youth. This is a big issue right now. We see what is currently going on in the news with law enforcement vis-à-vis our young people. I was wondering if you could discuss some of the youth-oriented programming, or even goals you may have in the near future.

Adrian Hunt, Police Detective, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:

I am a product of the City of Las Vegas. I grew up in the city. I am a firm believer that what they see is what they will be. One of the pivotal things we need to have across the nation in law enforcement is mentoring the youth. A lot of the older folk are stuck in their ways. We have to get to the young folk.

I definitely run a program, and I am proud to say it is a program that has been thriving throughout the department. It is called DREAM, which stands for Discover, Redirect, Empower, Advocate, and Mentor. It consists of a 12-week program of mentoring youth. We work with personal development and interactive activities. The amazing thing is, when you start, a lot of the youth are apprehensive of law enforcement. When they are done with the program, they are asking questions like, How can I be an officer? It is a great program; we get to humanize the badge as well. We show the kids that we are human just like them. We love the same music; we love the same things and hobbies. That is one of the programs that has really been thriving for our agency.

At headquarters, we have a section which is outreach for our youth. I have worked with Officer Arnold Parker many times, going into high schools and talking to kids about life choices. We are definitely out there as an agency. We are progressive in getting out there, trying to work with our youth, and trying to bridge that gap. I know DREAM is in two area commands now. The plan is to expand it to all ten area commands. We look forward to that in the future.

Assemblyman D'Silva:

My second question pertains to the Northeast Area Command. Actually, you have your whole delegation in this room, including Assemblywoman Mosca, who just walked in here for a presentation. I think the only person missing is Assemblyman Yurek. There have been conversations about getting officers out on the streets, walking the streets—the beat, so to speak. I know this is something commonplace in cities like New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and even Los Angeles. I was wondering if there are any efforts being made by Metro particularly in the northeast part of town.

Beth Schmidt:

One of the challenges we have is the vast area we cover. We realize you need to have police out there in neighborhoods that are vulnerable before problems happen. As an agency, we are very good at getting out there. Most police agencies are. When there has been a crime, something that has happened, there is that responsiveness. We are trying to incorporate more of exactly what you are saying, which is getting out ahead of the curve and developing the relationships. Having worked as a community policing sergeant, I can tell you that is where we do our best work, when I can get those officers out there and get them out of their car. As a supervisory group and as leaders, what we are always pushing is, Get out of your car. You need to talk to people; we need to interact. Just as humans, we need to interact. Yes, we have a new captain, Captain Noel Roberts, who has been over the Northeast Area Command for about two months now. That direction and those conversations are being had with our officers and our supervisors.

Adrian Hunt:

We also have COP teams. They are specifically geared to go out to communities in areas that are vulnerable and give resources. We do things in the neighborhoods like Coffee with

a Cop. We do things like Paws with Patrol. We also do engagement with the youth with Ice Cream with a Cop. We will hire an ice cream vendor and have the youth hang out and eat ice cream with us. These are some of the things our COP teams are doing out in the city.

Assemblyman Nguyen:

Kudos to you for being very precise and having great points we can take notes on. We were looking for the stats you have on the demographic of your force—uniform and civilian staff members—in terms of the diversity we have in Clark County. I am so proud to serve my Assembly District 8, where 38 percent of our residents are AAPI [Asian American and Pacific Islander]. I did not see in the slides, but I was wondering if you had the demographic of the 5,800 folks in Metro. The second part of that question is, do you have folks with language capability in those hard-to-find languages outside of the Latino community? I just want to see if you have those stats.

Beth Schmidt:

Our force right now is 54 percent white, 22 percent Hispanic, 9.5 percent Black, 6.5 percent Asian, 5.8 percent identifying as two or more races, 1.6 native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 0.6 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native. We know we have work to do. I am very pleased; I talked to one of our recruiting sergeants recently. He told me that one of the recent—maybe the most recent—academy class we have is 50 percent Hispanic.

We are seeing that we also need to find ways to attract more women. There is my experience as a woman and as one of the leaders on the Women of Metro, which is a group that we try to mentor. One of the things we are doing is, on our business cards, every single person has the QR [Quick Response] code, which takes you to our recruitment site. Everybody is a recruiter. We know we have work to do.

Historically, agencies tend to look elsewhere. Sheriff McMahon is saying we need to look internally, within the valley, within the state. We need to look in our community. To Assemblyman Carter's point, we need people who come out of our community. But how do you do that? It does not just magically happen. We have to put in the work to do that. We have to mentor people. We have to sell the department, the career, and the job.

Chair Torres:

Assemblyman Nguyen, we are short on time. We have a bill presentation after this, and I have a number of questions left. If you do have additional questions, make sure you meet with them after. We can also have the Committee send them out. If you want to send them our way, we can ask for that clarity and send it out, and then get it to all the members of the Committee.

Assemblywoman González:

I will keep it short and focus on one of my questions. You mentioned your use of force policy updates depending on the incidents. I was curious if you could speak to the most recent incident that occurred that made you all change your policy and the details of how that works. What did that look like? You also mentioned that de-escalation and community

policing are a national policy. Could you go into a little more detail on what that looks like and what makes it a national policy? What are you doing that is attracting national standards, if you will?

Beth Schmidt:

Our policy and procedure are constantly changing. When that happens, it is pushed out electronically. We have a portal that we all have to go into and read. There are tests, so you know the new policy. I am going to try to be as brief and concise as I can. Can you ask that again?

Assemblywoman González:

When discussing use of force in your presentation, you stated it was a national policy, that you are on a national platform for this policy. Then you stated that when infractions happen, when you have incidents of use of force with officers, you then take that internally, review it, and then change your policy. What is your use of force policy? What are the de-escalation tactics you are using? Could you give me a little more detail? As a follow-up, if it is changing so often, how are you all training officers so they are on the most updated policy? Where do they find that?

Beth Schmidt:

We require supervisory presence and leadership, so it is not an excuse to say, I did not read the policy, or I do not understand the policy. That is done in briefings and conversations as soon as policy changes.

What are some of the things we do? Let us talk about the elephant in the room: three years ago, George Floyd. How does something like that happen? Then, three years later, Tyre Nichols was pulled out of a car and murdered. How does that happen? We look at those incidents, but we also look at our own incidents to say, What are we doing right? What are we doing wrong?

We throw the word "de-escalation" around a lot. Look, at times it is very scary to be a cop, to come upon these situations. You are not born with this confidence. You are not born with this innate ability to approach these situations. Oftentimes, as a patrol supervisor, I would get on the radio and say, Take a deep breath. Take a deep breath; slow down. That is a literal part of it, trying to trigger people and remind them: Slow down, think about what you are doing, gather the resources, do not force the situation. That is the mindset we come from.

All of those discussions are on a daily basis because no one gets up in the morning wanting to hurt someone else. We want to do the right thing. We have found that incorporating de-escalation has been critical to changing policing nationwide. Yes, we are a leader when it comes to use of force. However, what we see in incidents across the country where people die is, that is not universal. Not everyone is embracing this and training this, but we continue to try to be one of the gold standards. Other departments come to us.

Christopher M. Ries, Police Detective, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:

Our use of force policy is always on our website, lvmpd.com, as well as a five-year use of force report. We update that every year for the previous five years for use of force complaints and whatnot. On top of doing reports, you can look at that.

Chair Torres:

Could we get a copy of the report and policy sent to the Committee for easy convenience?

Christopher Ries:

Of course.

Assemblyman Hibbetts:

Do you know your vacancy rate for commissioned officers?

Beth Schmidt:

I do not. But it is not good, and we are down hundreds at this point. I do not want to give you the wrong number on that. I understand that it is changing. It is incredibly important to our sheriff to fill those spots because we cannot properly police our community—I should not say we cannot—we need those officers to achieve what we are trying to achieve in the community.

Assemblyman Hibbetts:

When you get those numbers, could you provide them to the Committee staff, please?

Beth Schmidt:

Absolutely.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Thank you, again, for the presentation and some of your answers you have shared with us. My question actually has to do with budget technology. For personal disclosure, at one time, I worked for the District Attorney's (DA) Office, and this question happens to be a concern I have. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department does charge about a \$280 per hour fee for body cam footage. You give this service to the DA's Office, along with the Public Defender's (PD) Office. This is free. I do not know if this is because of statute or not. But for the general public—say I, as a citizen, want footage of what happened in whatever incident. I have to pay \$280 per hour for that. When did this policy happen? And why?

Christopher Ries:

I am not sure when the policy became effective. I do know that we update that policy. In July, I believe we update the monetary cost of it. The unredacted version of the video does get taken to the PD's Office and the DA's Office. The issue comes in when a citizen requests it. Then, we do have to redact that footage. We cannot in good conscience show the inside of somebody's house or birth dates. The redaction of it is what costs the money. We have two squads with two sergeants, as well as lieutenants. The fees are there because it costs us

quite a bit of money. We also have civilian staff that can do reports and whatnot. We welcome any feedback. If there is any way that we can save money for the department and the citizen, we certainly welcome that feedback.

Assemblywoman Taylor:

I noticed on one of the slides [page 13, [Exhibit D](#)], you proudly talked about being one of the first large agencies to embrace body cameras. I certainly want to applaud you for that. Do you audit that footage at all for compliance or to make sure they are being used?

Beth Schmidt:

All three of us have worn body cameras. I started in that trial process. When you first wear it, for the first couple of days, you are aware of it. After that, you are not, and you just do your job. Yes, there is an auditing process. We also have a standard for what percentage of the time we expect an officer to use the camera because there are times when it needs to be turned off. We have a robust policy on body-worn cameras. We are actually above our percentage of what we hold our officers to. I do not want to misquote the numbers, but I will get those to you.

As far as going through the footage, we do not go through it; we do have a policy that we do not go willy-nilly through the body-worn camera footage. The cameras are used mainly in internal affairs. I was there when the cameras started coming in, and it really changed the way we conducted our internal affairs. The reality is, if the citizen alleges you did something, and what you did is a violation of our policy, it is black and white. You did it. We are thankful to have those cameras to help us hold people accountable. At the same time, sometimes we find that what was alleged did not occur.

Assemblywoman Duran:

Thank you for your report; it was very informative. During the 81st Legislative Session, this Committee asked about the relationship with Metro and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and what contracts exist. We were told there were no formal agreements, and there was no formal communication between law enforcement and ICE. However, over the last year we have seen different reports regarding Metro's role in deportation. Can you clarify what the relationship with ICE is? Sometimes on the campaign trail, that statement can differ. We would like to know your official stance on that, please.

Beth Schmidt:

I will be very honest with you. I am new to this position, and this is an incredibly important point. We do not have a relationship with ICE; they are not in our jail. But let me get a clear answer for you and a clear statement. Would that suffice? I do not want to say what I think; I want to say what I know. I do need to consult with our agency.

Assemblywoman Duran:

That would be fine. We have so many visitors from out of state. It affects not only the citizens of Las Vegas, but visitors that come to Las Vegas as well.

Chair Torres:

I would add to that request that we also get a copy of any formal contracts and procedures—if there is no formal contract, what does that look like? We have individuals on the campaign trail saying they are responsible for the deportation of thousands of individuals, but this body testified in the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs in the 81st Session and said they played no role, that there was no interaction. There is clearly some miscommunication. I want to identify exactly where that is, because it is unfair to this Committee that this department can come and say one thing is occurring, but we are hearing a different thing from our constituencies. We are hearing a different thing on the campaign trail.

Our expectation is this is a relationship of trust, and this department comes to this Committee to speak honestly about what is happening. I understand you all were not here during that session. It was not you all that were the face of this organization. But additionally, it is frustrating as a legislator, when you are trying to create policy that impacts this state, for this department to come and make fools of this Committee, which is what happened in 2021. I hope it never happens again. If we can get all of that information, that would be very helpful.

Beth Schmidt:

Absolutely. We will get you that. I am the face of the agency here, and I will get you that information.

Chair Torres:

I do not believe there are any other questions. I look forward to continuing to work with you in this Committee. Next on our agenda is Assembly Bill 82.

**Assembly Bill 82: Designates World Esports Day as a day of observance in this State.
(BDR 19-695)**

Assemblywoman Erica Mosca, Assembly District No. 14:

I am excited to be here today to present Assembly Bill 82. I will provide a brief introduction. Then I will yield to my colleagues who represent the three constituent groups this bill is coming from: young people, industry, and families.

We are simply asking for a day to recognize esports in our state. As someone who believes deeply in student voice and advocacy and has done my work in education for the past 15 years, I am proud that A.B. 82 is my constituent bill and gives legitimacy to people who are supporting young people creatively in ways that most relate to them and that support intentional workforce development. I am also proud to support my district in east Las Vegas, which you would be surprised to know houses one of the largest esports businesses, Genre Sportswear, here in Nevada.

What is esports? I had to get that answer, too, when I started this a few months ago. My colleagues define esports as the pinnacle spot for the current and future pipeline of the video game workforce. Kindergarten to 12th grade, from Clark County to Churchill County to Washoe County, and northern and southern Nevada colleges, have students who are playing video games as a team sport. They gain workforce development and win scholarships.

Yes, I know promoting video game usage and even asking for a day in Nevada to align with World Esports Day sounds strange, but the education in the community that comes from this sport is inspirational, and it empowers young Nevadans with productive, team-based extracurricular activities with positive outcomes.

This bill establishes a day of observance. There are currently 27 in our state. These days are brought forward to bring awareness to fellow Nevadans. If you have already learned something new today, that is why we are asking for this day—to bring awareness to an asset that exists within our community.

Hieu Le, President and Founder, Nevada Esports Education League, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Nevada Esports Education League is currently Nevada's only student-based nonprofit. We are not here in support or against the recognition of the Esports Day bill, but we are here to bring grassroots data on Nevada esports from the previous years.

Esports is more than competitive gaming. As Assemblywoman Mosca said, it is community education, workforce development, and STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics] building for Nevada economics. Our statewide data we currently have is that over 165,000 members within the community—all over Nevada, from ages 15 to 50, males and females, over all diversities—have been interested in esports and have participated in it.

Nevada also has 60-plus local esports organizations, ranging from colleges, high schools, businesses such as the one that Assemblywoman Mosca mentioned, and local government. Forty-five high schools around the Las Vegas area are involved in local esports leagues, and 12 are within the northern Nevada community. We even have one in Elko at Great Basin Community College that participates in esports. By having this day, we can see huge growth in education for esports. We also support five national esports events, such as the Amazon's AWS re:Invent, ESports Bar Association, and CES [Consumer Electronics Show], which calls Nevada home.

Finally, we have fundraised about \$21,000 through video games and esports with local charities during the COVID-19 pandemic online.

Nevada Esports Education League participates in the City's Esports [Business] Summit, Pokémon GO Clean Up the Parks, and northern Nevada Esports Break the Internet [at the University of Nevada, Reno]. We will see huge growth over the next year of 100,000 esports participants in Nevada.

Michael Cox, Co-Owner and Chief Operations Officer, Las Vegas Inferno, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I just wanted to thank you all on behalf of Las Vegas Inferno (LVI) for allowing me to present and contribute to this bill for the state of Nevada for the official Esports Day. We are the homegrown and professional esports organization founded within the City of Las Vegas. Our involvement here today on behalf of the many contributors presenting for A.B. 82 is to tell you it has been our priority, since the inception of our organization, to bring a wide range of professional and career opportunities to our community through the means of esports and content creation.

With the inception of Esports Day for the state of Nevada, LVI will strive to provide and make public even more of the endless possibilities within our many diverse and rich communities through the future-proof status that is the esports and content creation industry overwhelming the current workforce in today's modern industry.

With our many direct relationships with the educational institutions, communities, and charity organizations within the City of Las Vegas—and the tens to hundreds of thousands of direct community members of our own through individual platforms, such as Twitter and Discord—we have a super diverse range of fans and loyal community members. They are from many diverse communities, such as Latinas and Asians, many of those being, between women and men, through a higher percentage of women, actually, within our community.

As Las Vegas Inferno strives to become a staple performing organization in its entirety of esports, our main priority is to bring the foundation to the City of Las Vegas to become the esports capital of the world. With that comes more economic and career opportunities. Internally, LVI wishes to be the biggest contributor to those expansions with the many projects we have on deck over our next five years.

In conclusion, our goal is to facilitate those who have become professional gamers at the top of the pyramid, but we also wish for those who are pursuing traditional education routes to have flexible options within the esports industry. For example, if you are going for a marketing degree or a traditional graphic design degree, we want to facilitate and showcase that even those routes can lead into a career and home within the esports industry. Las Vegas Inferno would like to take into consideration future employment with our own organization. Again, thank you for the opportunity to present our case to you.

Edward Thompson, Workforce Development Specialist, Youth Development and Social Innovation, City of Las Vegas:

I am speaking to you from a personal place this morning in regard to esports. As a husband and a father of five boys, I have experienced firsthand how esports helped my children manage through the pandemic. If you have children, we can all relate to the idea that each child is different—different interests in clothing, music, food, and hobbies. But the common denominator for my household has been esports. During the pandemic, we used the time to

compete, socialize, or just spend time with one another. Our boys used it to also build communities with others all around the world who were going through various challenges during the pandemic. It helped them cope with the madness. They still talk to the community of young men and women built through the pandemic to this day.

I also work at the City of Las Vegas as a workforce development specialist at the YDSI [Youth Development and Social Innovation] program. I develop programs that create opportunities for young adults—and adults—by training and providing new career opportunities in various fields. One of the career fields I have a true passion for would be esports and the transferable skills that come from it.

In the underserved neighborhoods I serve, esports has brought hope and opportunity to our young men and women in this community of bright individuals. Just as sports and music were used as a means to change the trajectory of their lives from negative to positive, esports has become a means to a positive change, not just in the area of competing but in the transferable skills learned in this career field. These are transferable skills such as teamwork, leadership, communication, strategic thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, analytic skills, cyber skills, the ability to multitask, dexterity, improving processing ability, and improving reaction times. Again, hope and opportunity—esports has provided more than just an avenue to kill time. It has helped save lives.

Chair Torres:

That concludes the presentation. At this time, I will open it for any questions from the Committee members.

Assemblyman Koenig:

They mentioned earlier that esports affects the ages of 5 to 50. I am a little bit older than that. My son and my son-in-law play all the time. They have talked me into playing. It is a good way for me to get together with them. Even spread out throughout the United States, we can get together and do this. I have a pretty mean Nasus Top Lane, and I have a pretty good Blitzcrank to support. It is a lot of fun.

Chair Torres:

Assemblyman McArthur, you look like you wanted to comment on esports as well. No, he does not think so. I think he is still working through the definition of esports. Are there any additional questions? [There were none.] I will ask if you can clarify or expand on the definition of "esports," so we know exactly what that looks like.

Assemblywoman Mosca:

Assemblyman Koenig, I learned something new about you. This is a very good question because there are two different types of esports, and that is important to understand. The one piece of legislation that came last session was for gaming esports. This is different. If you know the HyperX Arena, that is gambling.

This is really for young people who play video games. Then they have a tournament. If you have ever played Mario Kart at home, if you now play it streaming together, you can actually compete against each other. Young people have come together with thousands of people, according to my colleague down south, and they compete against each other. It is a video game tournament. They do it at the collegiate level as well. A great item that comes from it is scholarships. Winners usually win scholarship money.

Chair Torres:

I am hoping there is an Esports Day at the Legislature sometime soon, so we all get to play. I know Assemblyman McArthur and I were going to race in Mario Kart. I think I can beat him, even though he has been driving forever. I do not believe there are any additional questions from this Committee, so we will open it for individuals wishing to testify in support.

Raymond Wu, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a political science major at the University of Nevada, Reno. I am in support of this bill because esports was able to provide me with not only competition but a community to be a part of when I did not have one in school. Imagine that typical kid—the last pick in a basketball game, the one that was always picked on, the brunt of every joke, the kid in the back of the classroom. I was pretty much that kid.

When I had no place to turn in school, I turned to esports games like CS: GO [Counter-Strike: Global Offensive] and League of Legends. I found that instead of being the last pick, I was always one of the first. I was recognized for my skills instead of being bullied. I was able to become somebody, when in school I was a nobody. I was able to find some of the greatest people I have ever met in my life, who are still some of my closest friends now, through this community I was able to build up through this process, through esports.

This community is only starting to grow. I started off in middle school and back then, nobody really knew about esports. Now I am talking about esports at the Nevada Legislature. Imagine how many other kids like me were able to find a home, a community, a group of friends, and a sense of belonging. I was able to go through this process. Imagine how many more people in the state of Nevada are going to be able go through that and how important it is for them to have a day to recognize their skills, their dedication, and their passion. We do not have a Super Bowl. We do not have the NBA [National Basketball Association] finals, but we can have this day for ourselves, at least within the state. That is why I believe this bill may seem minute to a lot of people, but for those who truly care about it, it would mean the world for them. That is why I am in support of the bill.

Lorenzita Santos, Community Engagement Director, One APIA [Asian Pacific Islander Americans], Nevada:

I want to say our organization is dedicated to maximizing the participation of Nevada's vibrant Asian Pacific Islander community, and it is a powerful force in elections in all levels of political processes. You might be asking, why am I talking about this? Through our

continued outreach and collaborations with Asian American and Pacific Islander small business, restaurants, and organizations, we got to know a lot of folks and their personal stories—esports plays a critical, cultural, and educational role for many of our community members. Even during the election, our organization has worked with partners to mobilize events around the esports community for the election. By recognizing Esports Day as a state holiday, we recognize the impact of esports in our community.

Paul J. Moradkhan, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs, Vegas Chamber:

I would like to thank the bill sponsor for bringing the bill forward. The Vegas Chamber is in support of A.B. 82. As many of you know, the Chamber is heavily involved with tourism in our community, and we believe this is a growing segment in the tourism sector as we continue to diversify what that definition means in Clark County and throughout the state. As you have heard from the subject matter experts and the students, it is also a place of community for them to engage and build, to contribute, grow, and become stronger in the personal aspects of their lives. We believe this is a great option for our community as we move forward, strengthen that role in tourism, and provide another segment of the population with engagement in our tourism sector.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

We are in support of this bill. You have heard all the good things that esports do for young people. It is a niche for some of our students who have not excelled in football, basketball, baseball, and all these other things. We appreciate that this bill has been brought forward, and the proclamation will draw attention to esports.

Roi Tristan, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am currently a University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) graduate student attending UNLV for the MBA [master of business administration] program. I am from Assembly District 16. I would like to say I am in full support of the bill, purely because we have a simple issue that could be solved by recognizing esports in the state. Clearly, because we are fighting for support and as everybody else before me stated all the good we do, our good could be doubled if we are recognized officially by the state. To be honest, what better way than to get visibility than through a proclamation? If this bill is passed, then it is going to be significantly helping us to get more visibility, which means we can climb and then surely be a foot closer to the national stage. Moving forward, if this bill is passed—and hopefully it will be—our visibility will be increased, and we will be helped in our efforts towards spreading the goodwill and the good work of the esports community that affects everybody in the state, including small businesses and large corporations. Pretty much anybody that works in the entertainment industry can see the benefits and the good the esports community does. That is all.

Jairo Urcuyo, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Las Vegas Inferno, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Las Vegas Inferno is the official esports team in Las Vegas. I wanted to call in and testify on behalf of the bill. I definitely think it is a great idea. It is something that we have been striving for the past three years from our mission statement in the workforce, whether it be

from graphic designing or photography. I come from CSN [College of Southern Nevada] myself. I graduated from Sierra Vista High School in Las Vegas. I found esports as a passion. It actually took me into college itself. If I had not found esports, I would have never gone to college in the first place. It is very important to develop esports in Nevada even more now that we are doing this and bring in the next generation and help guide them into the right career path. The community keeps supporting the community as a whole, and that is all I wanted to say.

Genaro Grillo, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a computer science student at UNLV. I am supporting this bill because esports has changed my life multiple times. First of all, it has given me a lot of social skills. It has really helped me out—to speak more with people, get more friends, and improve the way I behave with other people. By playing video games, I have gained very important economic support to be able to continue my education. It also teaches me how STEM is a very important field that I want to keep on track. That is why I am studying computer science.

Chair Torres:

Is there anyone else wishing to testify in support of A.B. 82? [There was no one.] I will open it to anyone wishing to testify in opposition to A.B. 82. [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to testify in neutral to A. B. 82? [There was no one.]

Do you have any closing remarks, Assemblywoman Mosca?

Assemblywoman Mosca:

I want to thank the Committee for listening and learning. I also thank all the supporters who took time to participate, especially our young people who are showing what is possible for our state. I will leave you with this: World Esports Day was established in Europe, and if Nevada has a proclamation, we will be the first state to adopt it. Thank you so much for considering it.

[[Exhibit E](#) and [Exhibit F](#) were submitted but not discussed and are included as exhibits for the hearing.]

Chair Torres:

I will now close the hearing on A.B. 82.

[Public comment was heard.]

Members, any remarks? [There were none.] We will be meeting on Monday at 10 a.m. We will have a bit of a late start this President's Day. We will see you all here on Monday at this time. This meeting is adjourned [at 10:59 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Lindsey Howell
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Selena Torres, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Washoe County Sheriff's Office: Assembly Committee on Government Affairs," dated February 16, 2023, presented by Jason Walker, Sergeant, Administrative Division, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office and Mary-Sarah Kinner, Government Affairs Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office.

[Exhibit D](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Presentation to Assembly Government Affairs: Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department," dated February 17, 2023, presented by Beth Schmidt, Director-Police Sergeant, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (Metro) and other Metro staff.

[Exhibit E](#) is a document titled "AB 82 Recognition of Nevada Esports Day," dated February 17, 2023, submitted by Assemblywoman Erica Mosca, Assembly District No. 14.

[Exhibit F](#) is a letter dated February 16, 2023, submitted by Seth Schorr, Chief Executive Officer, Fifth Street Gaming, Las Vegas, Nevada; and Chairman, Downtown Grand Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas Nevada, in support of [Assembly Bill 82](#).