

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Eighty-Second Session
March 7, 2023**

The Committee on Growth and Infrastructure was called to order by Chair Howard Watts at 1:33 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 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:

Assemblyman Howard Watts, Chair
Assemblyman Max Carter
Assemblywoman Jill Dickman
Assemblywoman Danielle Gallant
Assemblyman Bert Gurr
Assemblywoman Heidi Kasama
Assemblywoman Elaine Marzola
Assemblywoman Brittney Miller
Assemblyman Cameron (C.H.) Miller
Assemblywoman Sarah Peters
Assemblywoman Shondra Summers-Armstrong

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May, Vice Chair (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II, Assembly District No. 36
Assemblyman Reuben D'Silva, Assembly District No. 28
Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy, Assembly District No. 22



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jann Stinnesbeck, Committee Policy Analyst
Jessica Dummer, Committee Counsel
Kathy Biagi, Committee Secretary
Garrett Kingen, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Andrew LePeilbet, Chairman, United Veterans Legislative Council; and Commander,
Department of Nevada, The Military Order of the Purple Heart
Beth Schmidt, Director-Police Sergeant, Office of Intergovernmental Services,
Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Doug Goodman, Founder and Executive Director, Nevadans for Election Reform
Sean Sever, Deputy Administrator, Research and Project Management, Department of
Motor Vehicles
Katie Brandon, Public Health Intern, Fines and Fees Justice Center
Adrian Hunt, Police Detective, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas
Metropolitan Police Department
John J. Piro, Chief Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public
Defender's Office
Erica Roth, Government Affairs Liaison, Deputy Public Defender, Washoe County
Public Defender's Office
A'Esha Goins, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Jodi Hocking, Founder/Executive Director, Return Strong
Christine Saunders, Policy Director, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Annette Magnus, Executive Director, Battle Born Progress
Emily Persaud-Zamora, Executive Director, Silver State Voices
Amy Koo, Acting Deputy Director, One APIA Nevada
Sondra Cosgrove, Executive Director, Vote Nevada
Jagada Chambers, Rights Restoration Coordinator, Silver State Voices
Sarah Wochele, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Briana Escamilla, Director of Regional Organizing, Planned Parenthood Votes
Nevada
Kerry Durmick, Nevada State Director, All Voting is Local
Lilith Baran, Policy Manager, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada
Jessica Munger, Program Manager, Silver State Equality

Chair Watts:

[Roll was taken. Committee protocol and rules were explained.] We have two items on our agenda today, Assembly Bill 195 and Assembly Bill 203. We will get right into our agenda for today. We are going to take the items out of order and begin with Assembly Bill 203. I will open the hearing on A.B. 203. Welcome, Assemblyman.

Assembly Bill 203: Revises provisions relating to special license plates. (BDR 43-118)

Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II, Assembly District No. 36:

It is my absolute pleasure to be here today to present Assembly Bill 203 regarding specialty plates for veterans, specifically our Gold Star families and our Purple Heart veterans, like my colleague here, Assemblyman D'Silva. As you can see from the list [[Exhibit C](#)] and our amendment [[Exhibit D](#)], there are a number of cosponsors on both sides of the aisles in both houses. I will give you a little bit of background information. As you know, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) currently issues several specialty plates. I am sure some of you received them, had them taken away from you, and are going to receive some new ones here shortly. Among these plates, Mr. Chair, I believe you are familiar with the classic plates for the classic vehicles. A number of us are familiar with the Vegas Golden Knights and the Raiders, especially if you live down south.

Today, we are here to talk about our decorated veteran plates. Honoring our veterans is critical. Many of you know the suicide rate of our veterans is pushing 19 percent in the state of Nevada, which is higher than the national average. One way that we honor our veterans, especially our decorated veterans, is having specialty license plates which several of our veterans take as a symbol of pride. A number of our veterans do not like to discuss it. Those who do are very appreciative of what we offer, and we as a nation are grateful for their service and sacrifice and their families' sacrifices. We do not want to just honor our veterans, but also honor the family members of people who have died in the line of duty or as a result of injuries in the line of duty. These families have given the ultimate sacrifice and they should be honored and loved. Again, special plates and other forms of recognition of their service are a constant reminder of their courage and selflessness that our veterans and their families have sacrificed.

Mr. Chair, I keep harping on these classic plates, but most of you know those classic plates can be personalized, but our decorated veteran license plates cannot. That is part one of why we are here today, to allow for these decorated plates under A.B. 203 to be able to be personalized. Part two of the bill, and our proposed amendment [[Exhibit D](#)], would be to exempt these decorated plates from parking fees within any state or other political body within the state other than the United States government. The big item, and why this bill was brought forward to me, is that a couple of my friends are Purple Heart veterans and they also happen to be disabled veterans. With disabled veterans and a few of the other decorated license plates, they are exempt from paying for parking at the Harry Reid International Airport or the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. But with the Purple Heart license plates, they were not. They were actually caught off guard. We are disabled veterans. We do not understand. We get free parking with those plates but not with these plates. To me, A.B. 203 is to say: Do you know what? You are right. We should honor all our decorated military the same, including their families with the Gold Stars and the Fallen Military. We have a list of plates in front of you [[Exhibit C](#)] including Congressional Medal of Honor, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Ex-Prisoner of War, Fallen Military, Gold Star, Pearl Harbor Survivor, and Purple Heart to try to include them in the exemption from having to pay for parking at state and local government facilities.

The third part of the bill is another item that has come up from my constituents. It is going to impose criminal penalties for those who try to gain these license plates to skirt the law. They want to get free parking. I am pretty sure most of us know parking at the airport can get expensive over the weekend or the week as we leave our vehicles there. But when it comes to providing false information for obtaining veteran plates, that is stolen valor and should not be acceptable. We need to have penalties in place to ensure that people do not try to skirt the system and use the system to obtain free parking without actually being a veteran.

Lastly, I have section 12, subsection 2 in the proposed amendment [[Exhibit D](#)] you have in front of you. It was at the request of the DMV. As many of you are aware, we are in the process of spending tens of millions of dollars to upgrade the DMV system, which will then allow them to have the ability to implement the personalized license plate along with everything else they need to do. They asked that the implementation of the personalized plates section be put off until such time as the information technology is completed. The director feels confident they can implement this and make the transition to the new system. Currently, it is projected to be July 1, 2025, which is fiscal year 2026 when that system should be up and running. But rather than putting a date certain in the bill, we have worked it out with the Legal Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau to where we can have language placed in here when the system is up. We all know there are delays and hope the DMV system is not delayed, but we also know there are unforeseen circumstances that can and have come up. We want to give that leeway to the DMV so we can implement this when the system is there.

Mr. Chair, with your permission, I am now going to turn it over to my colleague, Assemblyman D'Silva, to provide a little bit of insight not only on the bill but on the Purple Heart veterans.

Assemblyman Reuben D'Silva, Assembly District No. 28:

I will be very brief. I have to present to the Education Committee, my own committee, shortly. I do want to say that when it comes to our veterans, I think this bill is doing one thing that really is exemplary of what we as a state, as well as a country, should be about—recognizing the sacrifices. I had the honor of serving alongside Assemblywoman Marzola's younger brother. My first combat mission in Iraq was with Sergeant Marzola outside of the wire. I remember that mission very distinctly. My first time seeing blown-up vehicles along a convoy pathway that we were tracking was on that mission. My first time hearing of casualties that we were taking was on that mission. My time in Iraq was a very formative time period in my own development. It really instilled in me a commitment to service. It is why, in the end, I am here, because of this commitment to serve not just my community, my state, my country, but my fellow Americans.

This bill is small in nature, but we think recognizing veterans with the license plate is very meaningful to the veteran community. We are talking about veterans who have received some very distinguished medals: the Bronze Star, Silver Star, the Purple Heart. For those of you not familiar with the Purple Heart, you get a Purple Heart by being injured in combat. You had to have been shot, blown up, stabbed, taken actual physical bodily wounds from

the enemy. I myself took a bullet to my arm in Fallujah, Iraq. I have not talked too much about it, amongst my colleagues even, but I am disabled. I cannot use my left hand. I cannot supinate—cannot really use my fingers. I became a combat-disabled person at the young age of 22. These small recognitions are very meaningful to us as veterans and as a veteran community.

I think it is also important to recognize the fact that this bill will be extended to the family members. We are recognizing the actual sacrifices of family members who, I will say, serve alongside us. You know, it is our parents, our guardians, who are constantly worried as to what is happening to us while we are overseas. I remember my own mom called my unit and I got yelled at by my staff sergeant because I had not called my mom in two weeks. It goes to show that they are worried about us, and that is not even talking about the children of vets who are active duty as they are deployed. Those of us who were wounded had to go through the arduous process of recuperation. I was going through rehab at Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego for 14 months. They reconstructed my arm. It was very painful and my family members took time off work to be there with me as I was going through this rehabilitation process.

So, the bottom line of what I want to express to you all here today is that it is important to recognize our veterans. It is important to recognize the sacrifices of family members. I do wholeheartedly want to support this bill as a Purple Heart recipient myself, and I want to thank Assemblyman Hafen for bringing this bill forward to you for consideration.

Assemblyman Hafen:

Thank you, Assemblyman, and thank you for your service.

Chair Watts:

We will open it up to questions from the members of the Committee.

Assemblyman Gurr:

You mentioned stolen valor. How are we going to be able to protect against that?

Assemblyman Hafen:

Currently, my understanding is when there is stolen valor, and please correct me if I am wrong, the Federal Bureau of Investigation does an investigation. They are the ones who are in charge of prosecuting it. What we are trying to do, and this is currently under statute, is applicants sign a DMV document claiming to be a veteran, a Purple Heart veteran, or a family member. But there are no penalties if they fraudulently do that. In this bill, in the various sections, you will see that there are penalties that are put into place of fines up to \$1,000 in the event somebody does do that. I lightheartedly said that we have had other issues with other plates where people are using it to skirt the system. That is one of the reasons I am including this. We do not want the stolen valor to be something where everybody goes out and gets a plate because they just want to get free parking. We do not

want that to happen because we want to honor our veterans, especially our distinguished veterans, with this as a way of saying thank you. I hope that addresses your concerns. Does my colleague have anything else to add?

Assemblyman D'Silva:

One thing that is important here is when it comes to identifying yourself as a veteran, one of the basic documents you can use is DD Form-214. The way the DMV processes that, they are given a piece of paper and they then can give the person a plate. It will say what kind of awards you received. I think it is pretty easy to fraudulently get one of these license plates in that case. I think this is why you need to have some of the safeguards in place. Stolen valor is a very important issue in the veteran community. My particular concern is the fact that these are state funds with which we are dealing. When we talk about airport parking fees, city parking fees are monies that go toward public service and the public utilization. That is why I think it is important to have some kind of safeguard in place to address the issue of fraudulently claiming to be a veteran, especially when it comes to the utilization of public funds.

Assemblyman Hafen:

If I could just add to that, the DMV does require the DD Form-214 when you go in to try to get the plates. This is an additional safeguard in addition to that to make sure people are not fraudulently obtaining these plates.

Assemblyman Gurr:

I certainly appreciate the answers. That is one of the most disgusting things that could happen is people stealing the valor and it really upsets me. I appreciate what you are doing.

Assemblywoman Dickman:

I want to thank Assemblyman D'Silva for your service. I had no idea what you have been through. Thank you both for bringing forth this bill, and it is my honor to sign on to it because it is so important we pay special tribute to people who have sacrificed so much.

Chair Watts:

Additional questions from members of the Committee? Seeing none, I do have one question. Could you repeat for the members of the Committee those who currently qualify for the exemption from parking? Then who would be covered under this bill? Related to that, I know you have previously done some work around the percentage of plates and perhaps that is a question best left to the DMV. But if you have a sense of what percentage of vehicle plates would be covered, I think we would appreciate that.

Assemblyman Hafen:

I do have some of those numbers here. When you look at the different individual plates, and I will start with the Pearl Harbor plates, in 2021, it amounted to 0.12 percent of the total vehicles that are on the road. Sadly, I believe that number is coming down in the last two years. In regard to the Fallen Military, in 2021 there were a total of 24 plates. I am trying to see if I had any of the other ones. If I cannot find them right now, Mr. Chair, I will provide

you further data, but that gives you a small sample of the limited number of plates we are referring to. I believe the Purple Heart is probably the larger of the decorated plates. We are still not talking about very many in that group. In regard to the various plates, I can tell you off the top of my head, the various disabled veteran plates currently get free parking. Under certain circumstances, I believe the Ex-Prisoner of War (Ex-POW), the Purple Heart, and there is one other one that currently receives free parking at various locations. I will now read you the list of the ones we are trying to expand this into [\[Exhibit C\]](#). Obviously, first and foremost, the Purple Heart is expanded to all the Purple Heart plates, not just the limited ones that we currently have. It would include the Congressional Medal of Honor, Silver Star, Bronze Star, all of the Ex-POWs, the 24 Fallen Military, the Gold Stars, and the roughly thousand of Pearl Harbor Survivor license plates.

Chair Watts:

Thank you very much for that. We will follow up and I am sure we can get some additional details on those statistics from the DMV, but it is very helpful, especially with all the different references and statutes, to have that clear on the record. I want to express my appreciation for your efforts to ensure we are not creating any more loopholes when it comes to specialty license plates. Seeing no other questions, we will move on to testimony in support of [A.B. 203](#). Anyone wishing to provide support, come forward.

Andrew LePeilbet, Chairman, United Veterans Legislative Council; and Commander, Department of Nevada, The Military Order of the Purple Heart:

I am the state chairman for the United Veterans Legislative Council representing the nearly 279,000 veterans in our state. When you include their immediate families, that is a half million Nevadans, about 16 percent of our population. I am also the state commander for The Military Order of the Purple Heart. Those are all of us who did not duck enough. As the Assemblyman said, I have holes in me as well. I was temporarily paralyzed from the waist down, and I say temporary. They got the shrapnel in my spine, but that is another story for the future. The big thing about this bill for us is the Gold Star families. All our vets are proud to carry the plates they have on their vehicles now. The Gold Star families are somebody we are missing; they paid the ultimate price. Their children, their parents, their spouses, died for our country. At a minimum, they should be getting free parking everywhere and helped everywhere we can. I cannot imagine the suffering and pain for them, so the United Veterans Legislative Council and The Military Order of the Purple Heart totally support this bill.

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

We support [A.B. 203](#). Assemblyman D'Silva spoke about his commitment to service. Service is the underlying tenet of so many of the men and women who work for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and who have also served our country, some of them as active military members and some today as reserve officers. We thank the Assemblymen for bringing this bill and we support it.

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

I was not planning on testifying with this bill, but I am doing so as retired Army. Whenever I see somebody who says they are a proud military mom, dad, or parent, I always go up to them and say thank you. We get thanked for our service, but military families serve just as well. Military members could not do what they do without the support of their families. The fact that this bill extends these privileges to the family is something so well deserved. I hope you will support it.

[[Exhibit E](#), [Exhibit F](#), [Exhibit G](#), and [Exhibit H](#) were submitted in support of [A.B. 203](#) and are included as exhibits for the hearing.]

Chair Watts:

Anyone else wishing to provide testimony from any source in support of [A.B. 203](#)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to provide testimony from any source in opposition of [A.B. 203](#)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to provide testimony from any source neutral to [A.B. 203](#)?

Sean Sever, Deputy Administrator, Research and Project Management, Department of Motor Vehicles:

We are neutral on [A.B. 203](#) and did provide a fiscal note with impact on the original bill which has not yet appeared on the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System. We did meet with the bill sponsor to let him know we appreciated his reaching out to us. We greatly appreciate his working with us on the implementation of this bill-to-be after the DMV finishes its transformation and moves most of our services online. The only way we are going to be able to get through our transformation is to save projects for our new information technology system and not have to add them both to the new and the old systems. We do agree with the proposed amended language and think we will be able to revise our fiscal note to a much lesser impact now.

Chair Watts:

Thank you, Mr. Sever. I am not going to put you on the spot right now, but if you could follow up with some information to the Committee members on the scope of the plates that are under consideration, that would be really helpful. And again, if you happen to know off the top of your head, that is fine. Otherwise, you can follow up. There is a question around after this bill passes, if it passes, are there any other remaining specialty plates that cannot be personalized?

Sean Sever:

I will follow up with you on that. There are 56,002 military plates currently in Nevada, and I can also get you a breakdown of that as well.

Chair Watts:

We appreciate that, thank you. Is there anyone else wishing to provide testimony from any source neutral to [A.B. 203](#)? [There was no one.] Assemblyman Hafen, would you like to give any closing remarks?

Assemblyman Hafen:

I was able to pull up the data from January of 2021 at least. In addition to the 24 Fallen Military, there are 55 Purple Heart motorcycles and 180 Gold Star families. The larger number of the license plates would be the Purple Heart veterans, which at that time was 1,200. Again, when you total up all of the different plates that are included in this, it is roughly 1,500 license plates which was 0.15 percent of the total number of license plates in the state in 2021. I hope that satisfies. If you would like further information, I am sure the DMV would be happy to give you more current information.

Again, I just want to say thank you to all of you for allowing me to be here today. It is an absolute honor to present A.B. 203, especially with my Purple Heart colleague sitting next to me. I look forward to continuing to honor our servicemen, our veterans, who have given so much to this nation.

Chair Watts:

Thank you very much. With that, I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 203 and open the hearing on Assembly Bill 195, which revises provisions governing certain fees for driver's licenses. Welcome to the Committee, Assemblywoman Hardy.

**Assembly Bill 195: Revises provisions governing certain fees for drivers' licenses.
(BDR 43-636)**

Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy, Assembly District No. 22:

I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to present this important bill today, Assembly Bill 195, which revises provisions governing certain fees for driver's licenses. I will give you a little bit of an introduction and a personal connection to this bill. I became interested in the topic of recidivism in 2015, when my youngest daughter took her first criminal justice course at University of Nevada, Las Vegas and did a report on the topic. Later as I ran for office and began to serve my community, I started to look into what practical measures can be taken to assist those coming out of prison, so they have the tools they need to reenter their communities and lessen the likelihood of reoffending and being incarcerated again.

Recidivism is a complex issue, but there are practical, commonsense measures that can be taken to help prevent and reduce it. One of these measures is providing formerly incarcerated individuals with the ability to obtain a driver's license. Identification is essential for accessing services, employment, and housing. Without it, many individuals struggle to reintegrate into society. Providing them with a form of identification (ID) can help them overcome these barriers and facilitate their reentry. Additionally, obtaining a driver's license can be a critical step in helping individuals find and maintain employment. Transportation is often a significant challenge for people who have been incarcerated, and a driver's license can provide them with greater mobility, independence, and access to the job market. Overall, providing formerly incarcerated individuals with the ability to obtain a driver's license is a practical measure that can make a significant impact on reducing recidivism and supporting successful reentry into society.

Under current Nevada statute, there is a possible waiver of fees to furnish duplicate licenses and the cost of producing a photograph to a person who was released from prison; a county, city, or town jail; or a detention facility within the 90 days immediately preceding the person's application for a license. Under certain circumstances, the person may have to reimburse the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for certain portions of the fee. However, in Nevada, there are still many individuals released with only their prison ID, which is not accepted as a valid form of identification for transactions such as rental applications, job applications, bank accounts, and other essential steps to reintegrate into society.

Therefore, I introduced A.B. 195, which is based on similar legislation passed in Delaware. If we go to section 3 of A.B. 195, it is adding three transactions that would require the DMV to waive the fees for: one, furnishing an original or renewal driver's license; two, reinstating a driver's license; and three, providing a photograph for a driver's license, including any reimbursement if a person submits documentation verifying the person was released from prison within the year immediately preceding the person's application for a driver's license.

Section 1 of A.B. 195 requires the DMV to waive the \$25 for the driver's license examination not more than one time for a person who submits documentation verifying they were released from prison within the immediately preceding year.

Section 2 of the bill provides an additional exception to the penalty for any person whose license expires during a period of incarceration if the person submits documentation verifying they were released from prison within the immediately preceding year and the person completes a renewal application within one year after his or her release.

Again, I am a proponent of practical, commonsense measures we as lawmakers can enact to assist individuals with reentry and success. That concludes the presentation of the bill. I am open to questions, and I just want to note the DMV is here, and they may, if I cannot answer the technical aspects of that portion of the bill, be able to address those. I will answer the rest to best of my ability.

Chair Watts:

Thank you for your presentation of the bill, Assemblywoman. We will open it up to members of the Committee for questions.

Assemblywoman Summers-Armstrong:

Thank you for this wonderful bill. I know we have been trying to implement the REAL ID process, and I am trying to figure out how this will work with obtaining a REAL ID. There are some other specific requirements. Will this be used if the person cannot meet the requirements of a REAL ID? Will they still be allowed to get a regular driver's license? Are those still available?

Assemblywoman Hardy:

That might be a good question to ask DMV—if they are still issuing driver's licenses and IDs other than the REAL ID and how long that will continue. As you mentioned, when you get the REAL ID, you have to provide certain documentation. So, I would definitely look into that because we want these individuals to be able to have a driver's license or other valid form of ID. If they are not initially able to get the REAL ID, what would that look like? I appreciate that question.

Chair Watts:

I assume Mr. Sever will be taking notes. We will follow up with him as well.

Assemblywoman Dickman:

Thank you, Assemblywoman Hardy, for bringing this bill. It is so important to help people not slide back. I have a quick question. In section 2, subsection 4, it states the active-duty military, when they come back, have 30 days. How did you arrive at one year for those released from incarceration?

Assemblywoman Hardy:

As I said, this was based off similar legislation passed in Delaware. To go off those parameters and to give them time, I felt that a year was fair. I am open if we need to shorten that time, but I wanted to be able to give people ample time to do this, and I think a year is fair.

Assemblywoman Dickman:

I feel that if they are not down a path sooner than a year, the recidivism might be happening anyway. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Chair Watts:

It is always helpful to look at what else is in statute. I think there will be some other people who might want to consider expanding the time frame for some of these other populations as well.

Assemblyman Miller:

Thank you for bringing this bill. I appreciate commonsense solutions that make things better for folks who need a second chance in life. My question is, I know we are talking specifically about driver's licenses, but what about folks who did not have a driver's license? Would they be able to also get a basic state-issued identification card?

Assemblywoman Hardy:

That question is one that I have talked with many groups and individuals about. Not everybody drives. Not everybody is interested in driving. So, how can we help those individuals? I am certainly open to that. Is working with the DMV on that something that would delay what this bill is trying to do, or is it something we can incorporate as we roll this bill out? I certainly would want those people who just need an ID to be able to get that as well. I am definitely open to discussing that.

Chair Watts:

Additional questions from members of the Committee? Seeing none, I have a quick question. I appreciate that you mentioned some of the existing statutory language in section 3 of the bill that also references folks who have been in county, city, or town detention facilities. I see most of the language that is proposed for inclusion in this bill specifically references the Department of Corrections (NDOC). You know and I know that those stays in those local jail facilities are short, but sometimes there can be a lengthy term of incarceration that could lead to folks falling into similar circumstances. I am wondering if you have contemplated that and if you would envision applying that more broadly than only folks just released from NDOC custody?

Assemblywoman Hardy:

Yes, this is another topic I have been having conversations about. I specifically spoke with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. They could address this more in detail. To your point, some of those people stay longer in some of these facilities. Would it be worthwhile to expand that? The feeling was that the majority of those people are there for such a short time, it would not be beneficial to expand what this bill is trying to do. Again, they can give you more information as to whom they talked to in the local facilities regarding that. Yes, it is a great option and I have considered that as well.

Chair Watts:

Seeing no other questions, we will move on to testimony in support of A.B. 195.

Katie Brandon, Public Health Intern, Fines and Fees Justice Center:

I am the public health intern at the Fines and Fees Justice Center and a master of public health student at the University of Nevada, Reno. We are in support of A.B. 195, and we would like to thank Assemblywoman Hardy for bringing this bill forward. In Nevada, where public transportation options are limited, having a driver's license is key to accessing transportation. Here in Nevada, people are released from prison with a minimum of \$25. We hope that people have more than that, but inmates' savings are consistently depleted by paying thousands of dollars for medical care during their stay in prison. As a result, many people are released with that minimum, only \$25, to try to access housing, food, medical care, and transportation. The fee to get a driver's license, \$41, is nearly twice that \$25. Exempting recently released people from these fees would remove a significant barrier to accessing a driver's license. Having a driver's license increases access to transportation, which is key to preventing recidivism.

We recently conducted a survey of nearly 400 currently incarcerated individuals in Nevada and over one-third of them cited lack of transportation as a reason for their incarceration. By helping people get driver's licenses, we can lower their risk of reoffending and returning to prison. Access to transportation is also a social determinant of health. Increasing access to driver's licenses increases a person's options for housing, work, child care, and food, which all promote health. Extensive research has shown that people who are incarcerated are more likely to have high blood pressure, asthma, cancer, arthritis, tuberculosis, hepatitis C, HIV, and other chronic health issues. All of these conditions require extensive, regular in-person

medical care, which is so much easier to access when you are able to drive when you are released from prison. We urge your support on this bill to increase access to transportation, reduce recidivism, and promote health among previously incarcerated individuals. Thank you.

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

We support A.B. 195 to help the Nevada Department of Corrections facilitate and assist released inmates to reenter society. A valid driver's license is a necessity to secure a job, housing, and bank account, to name a few. Our goal should be to position released inmates for success upon release. A valid driver's license would help that tremendously. Although this bill is focused on the Nevada Department of Corrections, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department has similar programs and resources at Clark County Detention Center to assist released inmates which have helped them successfully reintegrate into society. Personally, this bill affects me. I remember vividly as an adolescent my father who was incarcerated and the many hardships he faced trying to get back into society to be productive. We appreciate Assemblywoman Hardy for bringing this bill forward.

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

One of our goals when we do this job is hopefully never to see another person get arrested again. This bill is a very easy step to make sure that somebody gets back on their feet once they have served their time. We are grateful to Assemblywoman Hardy for bringing this bill forward. We urge your support.

Erica Roth, Government Affairs Liaison, Deputy Public Defender, Washoe County Public Defender's Office:

I echo the sentiments of my colleague, Mr. Piro. Forty-one dollars may seem like nothing, but that can literally be life or death for one of our clients when we are talking about getting them back on their feet. So, we thank the Assemblywoman for bringing this forward and are in full support.

A'Esha Goins, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I want to thank Assemblywoman Hardy for bringing this bill. This is personal for me. I have a brother who was incarcerated, and one of the things I remember is my father dropping everything to ensure that my brother had ID so he would not have to be afraid of being stopped or not having proper identification. I do not drive, but I can understand the importance of driving and having the driver's license. For my brother, that was the number one thing my dad did not want him to be on the streets without. This eliminates the process of that concern for formerly incarcerated persons and also allows them an opportunity to get their dignity back. I think one of the things we forget is our formerly incarcerated sisters and brothers are people and allowing them the opportunity to have identification or to have a driver's license promotes that and allows them to reenter back into society. I support this bill, and I urge you to support it. Thank you.

Jodi Hocking, Founder/Executive Director, Return Strong:

Return Strong is composed of families of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people. I am going to step out of that role a little bit today and give you more of a personal scenario. I think this might help answer your question about why one year. As a community, I think it is important to be setting people up for success and removing barriers that cause difficulties in reentry. One of the things is the financial burden on families. When my husband came home in 2018, he had been incarcerated for 19 years and we had to purchase everything that he potentially needed: shoes and clothes. He needed a driver's license. He needed everything and it was all on my income and I was already raising kids, grandkids, and everything else. Removing that barrier is huge for families and the person. What also happened was it took almost six months for him to be able to get his driver's license because he had been incarcerated for so long that he could not identify. He was incarcerated under an alias, so when he came out, we had to start right from a birth certificate but he could not be found. That led to like a depression, which honestly—he is back incarcerated now. I feel like had we really set him up for success, we may be in a very different situation. So we are in full support of A.B. 195 and we really thank Assemblywoman Hardy for bringing it here.

Chair Watts:

Thank you so much for sharing your story with us.

Christine Saunders, Policy Director, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada:

I am here in support of A.B. 195. We want to echo the sentiments of everyone who testified before us. Easing the ability to get a driver's license will help people be better able to reintegrate into society, attend necessary appointments, access housing, get a job, and much more. We urge your support of this bill.

Annette Magnus, Executive Director, Battle Born Progress:

We are here today in full support of A.B. 195. Individuals who are reentering society should not have to pay fines and fees as they work to establish their lives. After incarceration, this bill makes our system more equitable because it will help individuals who are already struggling with basic necessities. An added expense tied to getting your driver's license back, or any kind of ID for that matter, is not necessary and honestly is prohibitive. Many people cannot afford the fees as they are reentering society. We should support these individuals, as they are members of our community. That is why we are here today, to urge your support for A.B. 195. Additionally, we want to extend a sincere thank you to Assemblywoman Hardy for bringing this important bill forward.

Emily Persaud-Zamora, Executive Director, Silver State Voices:

We are here in strong support of A.B. 195. Two sessions ago, the Legislature took an important step by reinstating the voting rights of formerly incarcerated Nevadans, and it is our belief that A.B. 195 builds on this progress as it has the potential to make a significant difference in the lives of formerly incarcerated community members. When people are released from prison, many are denied a wide range of resources because they lack an ID or updated driver's license. Having a driver's license ensures they have access to essential resources such as housing, a better job, bank accounts, and the ability to register to vote.

and cast their ballot. Formerly incarcerated Nevadans, however, still face obstacles and limitations that not only prevent their full integration into our communities, but also perpetuate their disenfranchisement, and a lack of a driver's license can lead to further restrictions and hardships. We urge your support for A.B. 195. [Written testimony was also provided [Exhibit I](#).]

Amy Koo, Acting Deputy Director, One APIA Nevada:

We are a nonprofit here in Nevada that advocates for the growing Asian, native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community. It is already hard enough for those of us who are returning from incarceration to reintegrate into society. This is an easy way for us to make it a little bit easier for those who have already served their time. We urge your support for this bill. Thank you, Assemblywoman Hardy, for bringing this.

Sondra Cosgrove, Executive Director, Vote Nevada:

I am speaking in full support of A.B. 195, and I thank the Assemblywoman for bringing this bill. This bill addresses what the Corrections Director, James Dzurenda, says is the number one reason why people recidivate—they cannot integrate back into society. Everything, as the Assemblywoman said, that you do on a day-to-day basis is going to need an ID. When you are continually being told that you do not exist because you do not have an ID, as was also said, that can cause people to have mental health problems. I am also here testifying as David's mom because my son has mental health problems, and my son would have been in jail if he did not have a mom who could get him an ID and could make sure he got services. The people we see who are homeless and the people we see who are drug addicted do not have that mom, so it is important if somebody does not have someone else who can pay the \$41, who can drive them to get the test and take care of them. That somebody will help make sure they do not fall through the cracks. As executive director of Vote Nevada, I thank the Assemblywoman and support this bill. More importantly, I support it because I am David's mom.

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

Assemblywoman Hardy and all those testifying in favor have brought forward all the arguments on how this bill would help prevent recidivism. During the 2019 Session, the Legislature passed a bill, and it was signed into law, restoring the voting rights of those released from prison. Well, they cannot vote or register to vote unless they have an ID. So this is a big commonsense solution to follow with restoring those rights, actually making it easier for them to exercise their right to vote.

Chair Watts:

Seeing no one else in Carson City, we will go down to Las Vegas for testimony in support.

Jagada Chambers, Rights Restoration Coordinator, Silver State Voices:

I am here testifying in complete support of A.B. 195 and appreciate Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy for bringing the legislation. Any fee waiver designed to relieve our formerly incarcerated brothers and sisters of one less burden in reacclimating back into society is an easy support for me. This legislation is something that will undoubtedly have a positive

impact on a group of individuals whose struggles are monumental upon reentering society—struggles that I have firsthand experience conquering.

In my professional space as the rights restoration coordinator, I have spent hundreds of hours at the Department of Public Safety, Division of Parole and Probation offices. A lot of our Nevada Department of Corrections folks come home from prison directly to those offices. I know there are hindrances of not having their driver's license. That is commonplace, from the transportation hurdles to DMV scheduling complications, and most importantly, the financial bondage of the majority reentering society. Assembly Bill 195 has the potential to help your incarcerated constituents believe in community support for their return.

This is a monumental step in helping our brothers and sisters know this body specifically believes in their coming back home. Whether folks comprehend or not, this legislation is a quality step toward ending the revolving door of incarceration. The empathy it takes to provide assistance to those coming home from incarceration can and will go a long way. It is my hope that this Committee on Growth and Infrastructure supports this legislation and, in turn, supports the mothers and fathers, daughters and sons leaving the Department of Corrections on their way home. Thank you so much. [Written testimony was also submitted [Exhibit J.](#)]

Chair Watts:

Is there anyone else wishing to testify in support of A.B. 195 by phone?

Sarah Wochele, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a social worker and I previously worked on legal defense teams with amazing people who were unfortunately caught up in systems of punishment using a model known as holistic defense. I also love someone who is currently incarcerated and serving a 20-year sentence. We know that many formerly incarcerated people say themselves that not having a driver's license or ID is one of the biggest problems with reentry. As we have heard today, a valid ID is pivotal in order to acquire many other elements of reentry that have proven successful at reducing recidivism. It is one thing to have the option in Nevada to have one's license reinstated; but the reality is when there are fees associated with doing so, it stops being an option if one needs financial means to access it. When we keep these fees in place, we limit people from being able to obtain necessary documents to access other necessary things like employment, opening a bank account, renting an apartment, buying a car, even responsibilities associated with being a parent.

Depending on how long someone was locked up, the spectrum of anxiety associated with reentry can be tremendous. Structural barriers to reentry are worse than this. I had a friend who was locked up in Lewisburg Penitentiary who talked a lot about what we might do as smaller anxieties of release. He talks about his first time, post-release, at checkout counters, unsure of the proper way to check out because of new technologies, being unsure about how to interact with the person at the checkout counter as he was suddenly unsure about small talk and the regular steps for the checkout process, feeling the panic of uncertainty rise within him. There are so many unseen battles like this one that recently incarcerated people face in

getting their lives back. The panic of uncertainty shows up at multiple points, and these are often symptoms of structural barriers. Spending money on bus fare to go to the DMV, hoping to obtain your necessary ID only to find that you are expected to pay money that you need for food and public transit is an instance where this reentry panic rises up for many. For the person who finally receives a job offer despite navigating discrimination from countless potential employers, they panic wondering how they will be able to fill out the paperwork and still be hired without their ID and then not have a license to drive to get to their job. Currently, we are setting people up to fail. People navigating the uncertainties of reentry need our support. Please support A.B. 195. It offers one piece of structural stability for recently released people. Thank you.

Briana Escamilla, Director of Regional Organizing, Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada:

I am calling on behalf of Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada in support of A.B. 195. For the sake of time, I will just say that we echo the sentiments of our partners who have already testified and thank Assemblywoman Hardy for this bill. Thank you for your time.

Kerry Durmick, Nevada State Director, All Voting is Local:

My organization exists to expose and dismantle threats to voter freedom in order to make voting safe, fair, and accessible to build a democracy for us. All Voting is Local is also a member of the Latin Nevada's Vote Coalition, a coalition of pro-voter organizations. Assembly Bill 195 will enable previously incarcerated individuals to access a Nevada driver's license without having to worry about financial constraints for at least a year. It will help individuals to obtain the necessary identification documentation that is required to apply for housing, fill out employment verification documents, fulfill parental duties such as registering their child for school, and more. Additionally, they will be able to register to vote online and cast their ballots as their first time as Nevada voters. Every Nevada voter should be able to make their voice heard without barriers. We ask the Committee for their support of A.B. 195. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lilith Baran, Policy Manager, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada:

I would like to echo the sentiments of everyone before us. It is exciting that this would reduce significant barriers that are seen constantly when people are being released, as well as when we are interfacing with unhoused individuals. According to the Prison Policy Initiative, 27 percent of formerly incarcerated individuals are unemployed, which is five times higher than the unemployment rate. Having an ID or driver's license is essential to being able to obtain gainful employment. Also, according to the institute, 40 percent of people who are incarcerated have family members who are entirely dependent on them for transportation, so we really urge you to support this bill. Thank you.

Jessica Munger, Program Manager, Silver State Equality:

We are in support of A.B. 195 as it decreases barriers that exist for formerly incarcerated people to obtain their driver's licenses and register to vote. Assembly Bill 195 will help

people better integrate back into society, engage in the democratic process, and have an ID to drive or use otherwise to become gainfully employed and find housing again. Silver State Equality thanks Assemblywoman Hardy and the Committee.

[[Exhibit K](#) was submitted and included as an exhibit for the hearing.]

Chair Watts:

Do we have any other callers in support? [There was no one.] Do we have anyone wishing to provide opposition testimony to A.B. 195? [There was no one.] Finally, we will move on to testimony in the neutral position on A.B. 195. Welcome back, Mr. Sever.

Sean Sever, Deputy Administrator, Research and Project Management, Department of Motor Vehicles:

We are neutral on A.B. 195 and did provide a fiscal note with impact on the original bill which is on the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System. We did meet with the bill sponsor and appreciated that, and also appreciate her reaching out to us. The proposed changes in the language would result in a loss to the DMV for fee revenue for license issuance, renewals, and reinstatements, as well as card production fees that cover the cost of card creation. It is simply a fiscal impact to the DMV and does not involve computer programming, fortunately. Thanks, and I can answer those DMV questions if you like.

Chair Watts:

Thank you. That would be great. One more that I have is just a question around the existing statute on photography vendors. They have the ability; they may waive fees. I was wondering what happens in practice. Do those vendors waive the fees in those circumstances or do they not?

Sean Sever:

I will have to get back to you on that one. I can answer the previous two questions. First of all, the REAL ID: Offenders, as long as they have the required documents, can get a REAL ID and those documents are listed on getrealnevada.com. The REAL ID deadline is now May 7, 2025. The second question is that we are open to adding IDs to this bill as well. Just keep in mind that could increase the fiscal impact to the DMV.

Chair Watts:

Alright, thank you very much. I will just remind the Committee that any fiscal matters will be resolved in the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means. This is just a consideration of the policy aspect. We do have a question from Assemblywoman Peters.

Assemblywoman Peters:

My question is with regard to the REAL ID and the documentation you need to bring in. It can be a significant burden. I got turned flat-ass around for not having everything I needed because I had changed my name and had babies. Every life choice I have made has made it harder for me. However, it is my understanding that if you were born in Washoe County or

married in Washoe County, the DMV here has a partnership that can look at those records. Can you confirm that and let us know what do you actually have to physically bring in if you were married and/or born in this county?

Sean Sever:

I will have to get back to you on that one question. However, getrealnevada.com is a really good Web page where you can type in all of your information. It asks you questions, and it tells you which documents you need, according to your stature.

Chair Watts:

Thank you. If you can provide that follow-up information, we will appreciate it. Anyone else wishing to provide testimony in neutral on A.B. 195? Seeing no one, Assemblywoman, would you like to make any closing remarks?

Assemblywoman Hardy:

Thank you, Chair Watts and Committee for hearing this bill. I want to thank everyone who came out in support and shared their personal stories of how this could have helped their loved ones and family members and how going forward this can help individuals who are in this situation. In my conversations with those involved in the criminal justice reform community, it became evident that getting a driver's license, a simple if inconvenient errand for most of us, was made exceptionally difficult for those being released from prison. Just when these folks are looking for a hand up, they run into a major obstacle. I think the least we can do is offer to give them that hand so they may be successful, reenter their communities, and further their progression. I liked one comment. One of the callers said this gives them a piece of stability to help them rebuild their lives and the lives of their families. So, I thank you for your time, and we will get you any additional information you asked for, and I hope that you will support this bill.

[[Exhibit L](#) was submitted and included as an exhibit for the hearing.]

Chair Watts:

Thank you. With that, I will close the hearing on A.B. 195. Members, that brings us to the last item on our agenda today, which is public comment. [There was none.] Our next meeting is March 9, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. With that, we are adjourned [at 2:42 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Kathy Biagi
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Howard Watts, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is a document titled "List of Specialty Veteran License Plates," submitted by Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II, regarding Assembly Bill 203.

[Exhibit D](#) is a proposed amendment to Assembly Bill 203, dated March 6, 2023, presented by Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II, Assembly District No. 36.

[Exhibit E](#) is a letter dated March 4, 2023, submitted by William "Bill" Dolan, Commander, Disabled American Veterans, in support of Assembly Bill 203.

[Exhibit F](#) is a letter dated March 5, 2023, submitted by Steve Cottrell, Boulder City, Nevada, in support of Assembly Bill 203.

[Exhibit G](#) is a copy of an email dated March 7, 2023, submitted by Gerald S. Mayes Sr., Veteran's Affairs Chair, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in support of Assembly Bill 203.

[Exhibit H](#) is a packet of four emails in support of Assembly Bill 203.

[Exhibit I](#) is a letter dated March 7, 2023, submitted by Emily Persaud-Zamora, Executive Director, Silver State Voices, in support of Assembly Bill 195.

[Exhibit J](#) is a letter dated March 7, 2023, submitted by Jagada Chambers, Rights Restoration Coordinator, Silver State Voices, in support of Assembly Bill 195.

[Exhibit K](#) is a copy of an email letter dated March 7, 2023, submitted by Nicolette McDermott-Ketchum, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada, in support of Assembly Bill 195.

[Exhibit L](#) is a proposed amendment to Assembly Bill 195, submitted by Steven Cohen, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada.