MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Eighty-Third Session
March 17, 2025

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Vice Chair Duy Nguyen at 8:07 a.m. on Monday, March 17, 2025, in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 1 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, 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/83rd2025.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Venicia Considine, Chair
Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Max E. Carter II
Assemblymember Rich DeLong
Assemblymember Reuben D'Silva
Assemblymember Rebecca Edgeworth
Assemblymember Tanya P. Flanagan
Assemblymember Heather Goulding
Assemblymember Bert K. Gurr
Assemblymember Linda F. Hunt
Assemblymember Jovan A. Jackson
Assemblymember Venise Karris
Assemblymember Heidi Kasama

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblymember Danielle Gallant (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Assembly District No. 14

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alex Drozdoff, Committee Policy Analyst
Sarah Delap, Committee Counsel
Judi Bishop, Committee Manager

Nikki Peterson, Committee Secretary
Mary Whalen, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Gloria Caoile, Private Citizen, Henderson, Nevada
Erika Watanabe, Chair, Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, Service Employees International Union Local 1107; and Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Sally Balecha, President, Desert Mountain Region, National Federation of Filipino American Associations
Edelweiss Solano, Director of Family Services, Asian Community Development Council
Jacqueline de Joya, President, National Federation of Filipino American Associations Nevada
Caitlin Gatchalian, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Cynthia Guinto Deriquito, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Ruby Scaglione, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Felipe Danglapin, Chief Operating Officer, Service Employees International Union Local 1107
Susie Martinez, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Nevada State AFL-CIO
Margie L. Gonzales, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Geneva "Geny" Evangelista-Del Rosario, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Amy Nicolas, representing Filipino American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Nevada
Ron Sumbang, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Minddie Lloyd, Chair, Bamboo Bridges
Joseph Graham, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Liz Sorenson, President, Nevada State AFL-CIO
Russ James, Private Citizen, Sparks, Nevada
Adam Mack, representing International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 363
Laura Martin, Executive Director, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Maria Teresa Hank, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Matthew Winterhawk, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Pat Spearman, Private Citizen, North Las Vegas, Nevada
Leah Elmquist, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Andrew LePeilbet, Chairman, United Veterans Legislative Council
Charles Zemp, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Lynn Chapman, Private Citizen, Sparks, Nevada
Clara Thomas, Private Citizen, North Las Vegas, Nevada

Vice Chair Nguyen:
[Roll was taken. Committee protocol and rules were explained.] Welcome to today's meeting of the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs for the 2025 Legislative Session. Chair Considine is on her way from the airport so she will take over when she gets here.

Today, we will hear two bills. First, we will hear Assembly Bill 83, which designates Larry Itliong Day as a day of observance in the state, followed by Assembly Bill 342, which designates the month of March as Women Veterans History Month.

Now, I am going to open the hearing for Assembly Bill 83. To present this measure, we have our esteemed Assemblymember Mosca.

Assembly Bill 83: Designates "Larry Itliong Day" as a day of observance in this State. (BDR 19-99)

Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Assembly District No. 14:
For Assembly Bill 83, we are going to go behind the why of this and the impact of designation days [page 2, Exhibit C]. Who is Larry Itliong? If you do not know that answer or had to look it up, that is why we are having this bill. Then we are going to hear from our amazing community and labor impact before we quickly go over the bill.

As you know, we have our support pillars [page 3]. This goes under our community support pillar, and we do not see it as a problem, we see it as an opportunity to support the largest Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) population in our state, and October 25 is Larry Itliong's birthday.

We are excited we could designate the day [page 4]. You might say, What is the impact of designation days? Do they even make a difference? Last session I had Assembly Bill 82 of the 82nd Session and we had World Esports Day. I can tell you that we have been able to organize and have huge events, as you see on this slide, because it gives folks a chance to say, Wow, the Governor, our Legislature really care so much about these issues that we have a day unto ourselves. These are two pictures of pretty huge events over the past two years because we were able to designate a day.

Now, it is Monday morning, so you might enjoy seeing a four-minute video [page 5]. I am going to show you a four-minute video [Exhibit D], so you can hang out and learn about Larry Itliong. Then we will hear briefly from our two speakers; we will go over the bill and answer any questions.

[Video was shown.]

If that is your first time learning about Larry Itliong, I will say—because I always will be honest—that as the first Filipina, I actually did not know who Larry Itliong was until I watched this video at the Filipino Film Festival three years ago. We have been working on how we can make sure everybody knows about our important history. Now I will hand it over to my two guest speakers.

Gloria Caoile, Private Citizen, Henderson, Nevada:
I am a proud, proud, proud resident of Nevada. I retired after 33 years of dedicated service to the labor movement with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal

Employees. I am a founding member of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, a constituency group in the AFL-CIO. Additionally, I served on boards of several civil rights organizations, including the Filipino American civil rights advocates, and I am a proud, founding member, founding executive vice president, of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations.

Three years ago, I received the Larry Itliong Award in Carson, California. Today, I cannot help but reflect on that day and tell you how proud I was to be there and recognize the fact someone really cared about us. I am here testifying in support of A.B. 83, requesting and presenting to the Governor to proclaim October 25 as Larry Itliong Day in Nevada.

Asian and Pacific Islanders constitute 10 percent of Nevada's 3 million residents, with eligible voters increasing at twice the rate of the voting population. Filipino Americans—the largest segment—are particularly proud of Larry Itliong. He serves as a symbol of resilience and advocacy for Filipino Americans and Asian and Pacific Americans. Nevada has a proud history as a union and labor state, where the rights of workers are respected and upheld. Establishing Larry Itliong Day in Nevada will be a fitting tribute to the legacy and a recognition of the values we hold dear. It would serve as a reminder of the importance of solidarity, justice, and the ongoing struggle for fair labor practices.

Establishing Larry Itliong Day is more than a tribute to one individual. It is an acknowledgment of the significance of multicultural solidarity in pursuing social justice. Larry Itliong was a champion, not for just one person, but a whole country when somebody stood up to say, I have a voice, I am using it, please hear it. By recommending and commemorating his legacy, we honor our past and reconfirm our collective and our commitment to justice and equality. I respectfully urge you to support the passage of A.B. 83.

Erika Watanabe, Chair, Asian Pacific Islanders Caucus, Service Employees International Union Local 1107:

Greetings. I am a health care worker in Las Vegas. I am a proud member of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1107, and I am a proud Army veteran. Today, as we honor Larry Itliong, I am reminded of something he always taught and reminded us, that organizing is not an act of charity, but an act of justice. When Larry faced racism, exploitation, and brutal working conditions, he organized, built alliances, and demanded change. That should be an everyday lesson for all of us and the labor movement.

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) workers have always been an integral part of this country, but today we are the fastest-growing workforce in every sector, from health care to tech, to hospitality and service industries. That is why the future of the labor movement largely depends on these workers' leadership, visibility, and solidarity. For the labor movement to build that power and dynamic future, it means understanding and encompassing the full richness of AAPI identities and experiences. It means addressing and organizing around barriers AAPI workers face, from language to immigration justice, to fighting against the surge in anti-Asian hate. It means creating leadership pathways for unionized AAPI

workers, not just in their workplaces, but in the halls of our union offices. It also means supporting and resourcing AAPI organizations and worker centers, building power within the communities.

So let us honor Larry by committing ourselves to finish what he started: to build a labor movement where all workers, regardless of race or background, have dignity, respect, and the power to shape our own futures. For all of us in this room, that means finding the courage and conviction to build a labor movement that not only represents or organizes AAPI workers, but celebrates our diversity and our strength. So, happy Larry Itliong Day to all of us.

Assemblymember Mosca:
The goal of the bill is to make sure our Filipino and Filipina community have a way to organize, as well as our labor community, to acknowledge the impact Larry Itliong has had in our country and in our state [page 8, Exhibit C]. It [Nevada] has one of the largest Filipino communities in the entire country. The bill just says we hope October 25 can be proclaimed Larry Itliong Day. With that, we are happy to take any and all questions.

Vice Chair Nguyen:
Are there any questions from the Committee?

Assemblymember Flanagan:
In having the observation on October 25, I just want to get on the record what you are hoping that will look like when it does occur across the state.

Assemblymember Mosca:
I am going to let our two community champions answer that question.

Gloria Caoile:
What we expect of the day is really a recognition of the longtime effort of one person who spoke up and changed the face of the labor movement. He was bold, he was proud, and it really signifies that any one person in this state, or in this country for that matter, can really speak up and let their voices be heard.

Earlier today, I heard Vice Chair Nguyen say sometimes our opinions are not of one and the same, but I think we all need to hear everybody's way of expressing themselves and understanding what they are asking for. When you speak up and it is not for you alone, I think it carries much weight. This proclamation really signifies the hard work a lot of folks need today—to be inspired, that they can be heard, and that they have someone to look up to. By proclaiming this day, we were heard, we are going to be heard. Today, we are heard, and it is a giant step for all of us.

Assemblymember D'Silva:
I just want to get a better understanding about the context as to how this bill came about. Can you describe that on the record? I think it is an important story to tell; the conversations you had with the community, and what kind of organizing efforts took place to get us to this moment.

Assemblymember Mosca:
I know that is really what is important to all of us up here, talking to our community and representing what they want. The Filipino community, I am very lucky to be the first Filipina to ever be elected in the State of Nevada. It is so inspiring because I am not here because of me, I am here because of them, all the people who are here, all the people who have been here before me. When they said this is what they want, then this is what I worked on.

We have had multiple meetings, we have gone to multiple events, and every time we are at an event I show this video. The best part is, I ask people, Who learned about Larry Itliong? How about today? Who learned about Larry Itliong from the video? That is how we know we are spreading the word. The fact that I did not even know who he was until my mid-thirties makes me feel like gosh, what can we be teaching our young people, our students, and folks in our community so they know we are not just nurses, we are not just J-1 teachers, which people think of us as, but we have lots of ways the Filipino community contributes. I know we are going to hear a bill about Cesar Chavez, and we respect Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, but we do not get to hear about Larry Itliong. I think that is what our community has asked for, and through, as well, SEIU 1107.

Erika Watanabe:
As a proud veteran and as a Japanese American whose family was interned in this country, to not be taught that in school, to not be educated—my grandfather fought in the 442nd [442nd Regimented Combat Team]. That is weight I carry every day to carry this on to our members. When our members, from the different industries that SEIU covers, are held down, are told their voice does not matter, and to be able to educate somebody on Larry Itliong that organized, that got together, that uplifts, that is the weight that I carry and that is what I want to educate our youth on. That is what SEIU 1107 and our caucuses are all about.

Assemblymember Hunt:
When I saw this—you know me, I am labor through and through—I got to do my research the other day and it was so amazing. You said something very profound; you said it is about what the community wants. I saw several dates that were monumental: September 8 is when he first started organizing them, where he led the Filipino farm workers in the Delano Grape Strike, which was a historical labor movement. Then also October 25 was a great creation of the union. I was trying to figure out how you arrived at that date, the 25th, as opposed to the 8th. I know in 1959 they did not have documentation. I was looking at that and it was so interesting to me. I mean, this was huge.

Assemblymember Mosca:
I so appreciate it, Assemblymember Hunt, that you really were looking into it and was just as inspired as I was when I learned about it. There is one other state that has Larry Itliong Day; we are just doing what they are doing, and they chose this because of the importance of October 25. Also, October is Filipino American History Month. So that is what it is, because October is Filipino American History Month. We feel like it is really important, we can use it as a way to get everyone together.

Gloria Caoile:
The importance of it, as Assemblymember Mosca said, is really because of October being a very important month for us. It is not just about celebrating this, but in Nevada, there is no place in the education system, or in the health care system, and in small businesses, where you do not really find a Filipino American who is really working so hard to make ends meet, and to be proud to be a Nevadan. This is such a symbol for everybody, and it would not just resonate in the Filipino American community or the Asian Pacific Hawaiian Islander community, but really in every community. It will say we also have a chance to be recognized. We have a chance to really belong, to be part of this great state.

Assemblymember Hunt:
My follow up is *salamat po*.

Gloria Caoile:
And mine is *walang anuman*.

Assemblymember DeLong:
You had mentioned one other state has recognized October 25. What is that state?

Assemblymember Mosca:
The first Filipino to ever be elected in the state of California is Rob Bonta. He is now the Attorney General of California. It was his bill when he was an assemblymember.

Vice Chair Nguyen:
Do we have any other questions from any of the members? [There were none.] We will now hear testimony on the bill. First, we will hear testimony in support of Assembly Bill 83.

Sally Balecha, President, Desert Mountain Region, National Federation of Filipino American Associations:
I strongly advocate for the establishment of Larry Itliong Day in Nevada. Larry Itliong's tireless effort in championing labor rights and social justice have left an unforgettable mark on our history. This day will honor his legacy and also inspire our community to continue striving for justice for all.

Edelweiss Solano, Director of Family Services, Asian Community Development Council:
I am the senior director at the Asian Community Development Council, which I am very honored to be part of. I am in support of Assembly Bill 83. Larry Itliong's legacy has inspired our movement in advocating for the AANHPI community here in Nevada. I have seen, firsthand, how his contributions have motivated our community to stand up for what is right. Establishing Larry Itliong Day would help us educate our community and our families on standing up for what they believe in, and to continue his legacy in generations to come.

Jacqueline de Joya, President, National Federation of Filipino American Associations Nevada:
We promote the well-being of Filipino Americans throughout the United States. There are approximately 4 million Filipinos in the United States, 270,000 in Nevada, the largest Asian ethnic group. I am here today in support of A.B. 83. This bill would significantly impact my community. As president of National Federation of Filipino American Associations Nevada**,** I am honored to support the establishment of Larry Itliong Day in our state. Larry Itliong's legacy as a labor leader and advocate of Filipino American rights is an inspiration to us all. Recognizing his contributions through this special day will not only honor his memory, but also educate future generations about the significant roles Filipinos and Filipino Americans have played in our nation's history. I support A.B. 83, and I strongly urge you to please do the same.

Caitlin Gatchalian, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
[Introduction was spoken in Filipino.] I am here in strong support of A.B. 83 to recognize Larry Itliong Day. [Read from Exhibit E.] Larry Itliong is a pioneer, a fearless labor organizer, and a champion for workers' rights. His leadership in the 1965 Delano Grape Strike was instrumental in securing better wages and working conditions, not just for Filipino farm workers, but for generations of laborers across the country. Yet his contributions, and those of thousands of Filipinos who stood alongside him, have been largely overlooked in our history books.

As a Filipino American working in the political space, I understand how vital it is to see ourselves in the history we learn and the movements we support. When we recognize Larry Itliong, we affirm the legacy of AAPI leaders who fought for justice before us. We remind future generations that they, too, can lead, organize, and demand change. By passing A.B. 83, we ensure Larry Itliong's story is not forgotten, and we honor the sacrifices made by those who came before us.

This is more than just a day of recognition; it is a reaffirmation of our place in history and our role in shaping the future. I am happy to support Larry Itliong Day and think of my daughter, that she will not have to struggle or feel so alone in these spaces the way I did, not knowing her history and having to work so hard to find it. This is for all the young Fil-Ams [Filipino Americans] who want to be seen, and for our elders and ancestors to continue to be remembered. May we always honor them. [Closing testimony was spoken in Filipino.] Thank you all very much. Also, Chair of AAPI Dems, ditto.

Cynthia Guinto Deriquito, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a board member of the U.S. Filipino Veterans Group and representing several hundred field vets members. I wholeheartedly endorse the establishment of Larry Itliong Day in Nevada under A.B. 83. Larry Itliong's dedication to justice and equality resonates deeply with the mission to support and advocate for Filipino veterans. This day will serve as a powerful reminder of the enduring impact of his work and the importance of continuing his fight for the rights of all Filipino Americans. Thank you, *salamat po*.

Ruby Scaglione, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
Today, I stand before you to advocate for a cause that is not only important to me, but also vital for our collective understanding of history, justice, and community. I am here to speak about the significance of recognizing Larry Itliong Day. As a Filipino business owner in Nevada, I am proud to support the initiative to establish Larry Itliong Day.

Larry Itliong's leadership and perseverance in the face of adversity are qualities that inspire me in my own entrepreneurial journey. This day will not only celebrate his achievements, but also highlight the contributions of Filipino Americans to our community and economy. By designating Larry Itliong Day, we send a clear message. We recognize and celebrate the contributions of immigrant workers and the vital role they play in our economy and society. This day will serve as a reminder of the ongoing fight for workers' rights, and the importance of advocating for social justice. In closing, recognizing Larry Itliong Day is not only about honoring a hero of the labor movement, it is about acknowledging the struggles of all workers who seek fairness, dignity, and respect.

Felipe Danglapin, Chief Operating Officer, Service Employees International Union Local 1107:
I live in Assembly District 16 and Senate District 10. I serve as the executive director of the Las Vegas Filipino Short Film Festival and as chief operating officer for SEIU Local 1107. I am here today in strong support of A.B. 83.

As already mentioned during the presentations and other testimony, Larry Itliong was a pioneering force in the American labor movement. However, his contributions had been largely overlooked in our history books. It is time to correct our history and recognize Larry Itliong's immense contributions to the labor movement. By commemorating Larry Itliong Day, we take an important step toward acknowledging the full history of the American labor movement in honoring the Filipino workers who helped shape it.

In June 2022, we established the Las Vegas Filipino Short Film Festival, and our mission is to bring Filipino stories on the front [unintelligible]. At our inaugural festival, we honored Larry Itliong by showcasing a video—the one that you have seen—and sharing his story. What became clear during this event was, many in our community were not aware of who Larry Itliong was. This is precisely why we need to establish Larry Itliong Day: to educate our community and ensure future generations know and honor his legacy. Establishing Larry Itliong Day in Nevada is more than just a symbolic gesture. It is a testament to our

state's dedication to diversity, inclusion, and recognition of individuals who have fought tirelessly for social justice—

Vice Chair Nguyen:
Please wrap up your comments.

Felipe Danglapin:
In conclusion, I urge you all to pass A.B. 83.

Susie Martinez, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Nevada State AFL-CIO:
I am here on behalf of 120 unions and over 150,000 members; we are in full support of A.B. 83. We have certainly come a long way with these labor leaders who have helped us, but unfortunately, here in the state of Nevada, we still need help. Our farm workers are still not being treated the way they should be treated. I asked my community who are here with us, our Filipino community—thank you so much for bringing this to our attention—please stand in solidarity with us. We are still trying to get some legislation passed through this legislative session. Again, I stand in solidarity, sister, with you, and I stand in solidarity with you, that we pass this legislation. Thank you, we are in full support.

Margie Gonzales, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am the founder and executive producer of the Las Vegas Filipino Short Film Festival and also currently the government relations director of the Filipino American Media Association of Nevada. I am here in full support of Assembly Bill 83.

Larry Itliong's story is an inspiration to our young people everywhere. His determination and leadership show one person can make a significant difference. Honoring him with a special day would encourage our youth to learn about and follow in his footsteps. I strongly urge your support and approval of A.B. 83.

Geneva "Geny" Evangelista-Del Rosario, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am the president of the Las Vegas Professionals Lions Club and a zone chair 4B for Nevada California Lions District 46; also, a member of several organizations supporting and advocating for our community. I am here to support Assembly Bill 83 for students to learn about Larry Itliong's role in the labor movement. It is very crucial for understanding the history of workers' rights in America as relevant to our state, the state of Nevada.

This day, October 25, is very important to dedicate to Larry Itliong. It is his date of birth, which is also very significant. A day dedicated to his memory would provide an excellent opportunity for educational programs and discussions in schools. I strongly urge your support of A.B. 83.

Amy Nicolas, representing Filipino American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Nevada:
I own my small business here in Las Vegas, Nevada. I do sell real estate here and around Clark County. I am also representing the Filipino American Chamber of Commerce of

Greater Nevada. I am here in support of Assembly Bill 83. Larry Itliong's advocacy for fair labor practices has benefited not only workers, but businesses, by promoting a fair and just working environment. Celebrating Larry Itliong Day would honor his contributions and inspire our future generations. I strongly urge your support of A.B. 83.

Ron Sumbang, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am the current chair of ECHO Adult Residential Care Providers of Nevada, the biggest organization of care homes. I am also the president of the Society of Ilonggos in Las Vegas Abyan kag Kasimanwa (SILVAK). I am also a board member of Ilocano-American Association of Nevada and an officer of Santa Maria Ilocos Sur Association of Nevada. I am here in support of Assembly Bill 83.

Larry Itliong's efforts to improve working conditions have had a positive impact on the health and well-being of countless workers. Recognizing his contributions with a dedicated day would highlight the importance of safe and fair labor practices. I strongly urge your support of A.B. 83.

Minddie Lloyd, Chair, Bamboo Bridges:
I am the chair and cofounder of Bamboo Bridges, which focuses on families who are trafficked and are faced with domestic violence.

First, I am so proud to call Nevada my home, and I am so proud of our communities who have come out in support for Assembly Bill 83. Larry Itliong was a pioneer in our labor movement, fighting tirelessly for the rights of farm workers. His efforts have had a lasting impact on labor laws and workers' rights. Recognizing his contributions with Larry Itliong Day would be a powerful acknowledgment of his work. Thank you so much and we urge you to please support A.B. 83.

Vice Chair Nguyen:
We are going to the phone right now. Is there is anyone else who would like to testify in support of A.B. 83?

Joseph Graham, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:
I am the chief steward for Communication Workers of America 9413. I strongly urge the Committee to support this bill.

Liz Sorenson, President, Nevada State AFL-CIO:
I strongly support A.B. 83 and I urge this Committee to do so as well.

Russ James, Private Citizen, Sparks, Nevada:
I am with the Nevada AFL-CIO, here in support of A.B. 83 and I urge the Committee to also support A.B. 83.

Adam Mack, representing International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 363:
We strongly support this legislation and urge the Committee to do the same.

Laura Martin, Executive Director, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada:
We fully support A.B. 83.

Maria Teresa Hank, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a union member of Transport Workers Union of America Local 556. As a proud Filipina who was born in the Philippines, and as someone who did go to D.C. to actually help induct Larry into the Labor Hall of Fame, I strongly urge the Committee to support A.B. 83. Thank you, *mahalo*, and *salamat po*.

[Exhibit F, Exhibit G, Exhibit H, and Exhibit I are letters submitted in support and will become part of the record.]

Vice Chair Nguyen:
We will go ahead and switch over to testimony in opposition to A.B. 83. Is there anyone who would like to testify in opposition to A.B. 83?

Matthew Winterhawk, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am opposing A.B. 83. Itliong had no direct impact on Nevada. His work was in California, not our state. Prioritizes foreign influence over American achievement. We should celebrate Nevada's own workers and labor history, not foreign activists. Politicizes the history for identity-based pandering. It specifically cites the Filipino American community growth as a reason to create this day, but Nevada has an entire month dedicated to that. The state-recognized days should be for all Nevadans, not ethnic group pandering. This is a slippery slope for more foreign recognition. If this passes, what is next—days honoring labor unions, foreign political figures, non-American activists? Nevada first, American first, no to A.B. 83.

As I see everyone with no religion, God, skin color, or race, I would think that it would be wise to move forward as we have seen our country divided by these exact panderings. I urge lawmakers to reject this unnecessary form of recognition and say no to A.B. 83. We are Nevada, not California, and I am really tired of seeing this move towards making Nevada California.

[There was no further testimony in opposition.]

Vice Chair Nguyen:
Is there anyone who would like to provide neutral testimony on A.B. 83 in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the phones? [There was no one.] We would like to invite Assemblymember Mosca back for closing comments.

Assemblymember Mosca:
First, I want to thank our community who came out, whether it is in Las Vegas, here, or on the phone, and continue to come out; as well as our labor community. We really appreciate you. It is funny, I was actually thinking about this yesterday: we were one of the folks who were on a flight that got to Reno but then got turned around with all four of us, so we drove the nine hours—when you have two young kids—up here yesterday. It was a great drive because I love Nevada. When we were in Mineral County, we went to McDonald's, of course, you probably know where that is. I had a long talk with the kids and my husband about the fact that in Mineral County, more than half of their staff are Filipino teachers who are here on the J-1 visa. They had nobody to teach in Mineral County until they were able to get teachers here, more than half of the teachers.

When we think of the Filipino contribution, I understand the criticism. I take that and I get it, but I think a lot about my husband who is in the military, both my grandpas who were in the military. That is the only reason I am here. We think a lot about how we have to celebrate all of our community and all of our Nevadans. There are a lot of Filipino Americans, as well as those who are not Filipino, who are part of our labor movement and just want to make sure we are celebrating those who have done the work before us.

I thank you so much for considering this. Filipinos have made an incredible contribution to our state, and I appreciate you, Committee, for hearing this bill and all bills this session.

Vice Chair Nguyen:
We will now close the hearing on A.B. 83, and we will take a one-minute recess.

[The Committee recessed at 8:59 a.m. and reconvened at 9:01 a.m.].

[Assemblymember Considine assumed the Chair.]

Chair Considine:
I will now open the hearing on Assembly Bill 342, which designates the month of March as Women Veterans History Month. To present this measure, we are excited to have former Senator Pat Spearman, who will be speaking to us from Las Vegas.

Assembly Bill 342: Designates the month of March as "Women Veterans History Month." (BDR 19-459)

Pat Spearman, Private Citizen, North Las Vegas, Nevada:
Today is Saint Patrick's Day, and although I did not have a solid green, I tried my best to get close to green. I hope you can see this color because I was able to match it all the way. Some people do not see color, but many times when that happens the socks do not match, shoes do not match; but color is important because I believe what it does is it magnifies and differentiates all of God's diversity in creation. I just want to say that, and those who do not see color, it is really a shame because the world is a very colorful place.

I served as State Senator representing Senate District 1 in Clark County for 12 years from November 2012 to November 2024. I am also a veteran and served almost 30 years in the military. I am excited to be back in the Legislature this morning to present Assembly Bill 342, which designates the month of March as Women Veterans History Month.

I would like to first provide a little background on this bill. The recommendation came from the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs, and I had the honor of serving as chair of that committee this past interim. Veterans are one of the key populations of focus within this Committee, and one topic we particularly focused on this interim was women veterans.

Various presenters in this area discuss the specific issues and concerns facing women veterans, such as the lack of recognition. A 2023 *RAND Health Quarterly* issue notes, for example, that women service members tend to face increased scrutiny while serving, but when they transition to civilian life, they become invisible, not recognized as veterans in the same way as their male peers. Furthermore, women service members are often confronted with sexual violence with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). On average, one in three women veterans tell the VA health care provider about experiencing sexual harassment or assault while in the military. Although I did not experience sexual assault, I did, on several occasions, experience sexual harassment—and I was an officer; I came into the military as a second lieutenant, and I was fortunate to retire as a lieutenant colonel—but in each and every one of those ranks, I did experience some sort of sexual harassment.

We know our women veterans face horrors, hardships, and challenges. As we work to address these systemic issues, it is critical we recognize our women veterans, their needs, and their immense contributions to this country. This necessity led the interim committee to the recommendation that would become Assembly Bill 342, which I will now briefly summarize.

Assembly Bill 342 designates the month of March each year as Women Veterans History Month here in Nevada. It requires the Governor to issue an annual proclamation encouraging the observance of Women Veterans History Month. The proclamation must, without limitation, call upon the news media, educators, and appropriate governmental officers to bring women veterans history and contributions to the attention of Nevada residents.

From the Revolutionary War to today, fighter pilots, those in combat—yes, combat—women have proudly served in the U.S. military for over 200 years. On March 21, 2023—since the Al Qaeda terrorist attacks on September 11, more than 300,000 women have been deployed to Iraq. More than 200 have lost their lives in the War on Terrorism [Global War on Terrorism] or received permanent physical, emotional, and mental trauma as a result of their service. Many of the service women killed were deployed in harm's way and most were killed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). If you will allow me, Madam Chair, I just want to say IED is a really nice way of saying they were killed by a bomb that exploded in very close proximity to their physical location.

If you can just imagine taking a tomato, pouring some ketchup on it, pouring some mayonnaise, doing some other things with it, then setting it in a plate and then stamping it with your fist—that is what someone looks like when an IED kills them.

I take the time to say that because I need us to understand every woman who has ever served in the military served because we wanted to—none of us were drafted. We served because we wanted to, we went where they told us to go, we did what they told us to do, and many times it was at our own physical peril, not just from enemy forces, but from the enemy within. Twenty-three of the deceased were mothers, one or more of them had children under the age of 18. One female soldier died in the arms of her soldier husband, who was stationed nearby, after her body was shattered by an explosive device she was attempting to disarm. The Service Women's Action Network reported well over 1,000 women were either maimed, killed, or otherwise disfigured since September 11, 2001.

In 2017, I had the privilege of meeting Corporal Lena King. Mrs. King was a member of the 6888th Postal Battalion [6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion], the only all-female unit deployed to Europe during World War II. They were sent there to unclog the mail that had been piled up over a few years. She said there were airplane hangars full, several of them. All they could see was just mail, mail, mail. Every time they opened up a door, mail would fall out. They were sent because, when mail does not reach those who are overseas—I do not know how many of you have ever served overseas, but I did—every time I served overseas, it was the connection; it was mail that was a connection to our families and our friends that really kept us going. As Kerry Washington said, when she was playing the part of Major Adams, "no mail, low morale."

Mrs. King was very proud of her service, and she spoke of what it felt like to be sent overseas. To be sent overseas, not because they thought they could do the job, but they were sent overseas to perform this impossible task. At the time of World War II, our country had not advanced in knowledge enough to understand everyone is important to the survival and the success of the human race. They were sent, not because they could do it, but they were sent to prove that Negro members of the Women's Army Corps were substandard.

She kept telling me, as we sat down and talked—and I had an opportunity to talk with her several times—she said, Major Adams kept telling us we would get tired, and they sent us someplace, we had to clean it up; it looked like it had been bombed and we cleaned it up and after we cleaned it up, we did not get a chance to rest. We had to go right to work. We worked 24/7 and some of us worked double shifts because we knew how important the mail was. She said, Major Adams kept saying, This is our mission and we will not fail. Whenever she said that she smiled; and she said, But when we came back, nobody said anything. She said, We got off the plane and it is life as usual for most people; but we always remembered, and we remembered losing a couple of our members of our battalion. She would say, Senator, it is an honor for me to be telling you this story; and I would say, With all due respect, Corporal King, it is an honor for me to hear your story, because if it were not for you, there would be no me.

I was honored to share her 99th birthday celebration. I remember sitting in the front row with some of the producers of *The Six Triple Eight*, and I see a very tall gentleman walking down the aisle. He walked right past all of us and walked up to a place where Mrs. King was sitting. He knelt down on one knee and he said, Our country did not honor you when you all came back, but we are going to honor you by telling your story; I promise you, we will not forget. That gentleman was Tyler Perry. He came back to Las Vegas once the film was completed and watched the finished product with Mrs. King. Unfortunately, Mrs. King passed away two weeks before her 100th birthday.

If you have seen *The Six Triple Eight* movie, that is Mrs. Lena King at the very end telling the story. She was a Nevadan, a Las Vegas resident. One of the things she asked before she passed away was, When the movie comes out, make sure there is a special showing in my adopted hometown. That is what they did. Mrs. Lena King, only one of thousands of women who have served honorably in the United States Armed Forces.

Today, less than 2 percent of the population has ever worn a uniform. Of that 2 percent, less than that have been women. We served. We did not ask for special treatment. As a matter of fact, we never got it. We served and our promotions came, many times, at a great consequence to ourselves. This is but a small thing we can do for women veterans here in Nevada. If we cannot do this, I do not know what we can do to honor them. But for God's sake, let us please honor Mrs. Lena King who was our resident in Las Vegas, Nevada. Let us honor her by passing this bill.

Chair Considine:
Are there any questions from the Committee?

Assemblymember D'Silva:
Colonel Spearman, it is always good to see you. When it comes to somebody who can stand for the epitome of women veteran leadership—how you yourself served in the armed services and went on to a distinguished career in public service as a school board president and a state senator, and, still, with the many civic and community organizations you are involved with—I just want to say thank you for your commitment and for your service to this nation and to the state and to this community.

My question is focused, on the record, to discuss how and why this bill is important to the notion of visibility, especially with a group as important as women veterans, who have been here since the beginning, since the Revolutionary War itself. Can you discuss the notion of visibility, and its importance vis-à-vis this bill?

Pat Spearman:
I always ask people, even before I was in the Senate, I always ask people, Can you describe a veteran to me? Just close your eyes and tell me what you see. They would say, I see a guy in a uniform. I say, You can stop right there. See, that is the problem. People immediately see the guy in the uniform, but they do not see the women in uniform. In the most recent three years, I think it was, there has been a campaign that says, I am not invisible.

When we talk about services and programs for women, do you know it was not until 1987, I think it was, that the military even had maternity uniforms? How about that? It was not until after the Vietnam era that they started assessing us into combat and combat support roles. The career that I had in the military was the Military Police Corps, which is a combat support company. We are the ones who secure the runway, the pathway; we are the ones who secure the perimeter anytime there was something going on. Once, we were deployed to Cuba, and I was a company commander, I was not getting ready to leave my unit because I was a woman. Get out of here. I have been training for this.

It is important to bring this bill and to do this because many times we are invisible. The programs and things we have for veterans—I look around, not just Nevada, but I look around the country—and housing programs, they are built, and they are fabulous, but they are all built for guys. I have said to people before, Women are not going to come and stay here. They said, Why, we have got room? That is not the point. The point is that most women in the military have suffered some type of sexual harassment or assault, and they are not going to be in an environment where there are all men. We need to make sure we have accommodations for women. When we stop and look at even health care, it was not until about 15 years ago—as a matter of fact, I will say a little bit after the Iraq War started—that they started paying attention to the specific health care needs of women.

Absent a bill like this, people will continue to close their eyes and describe a veteran as a guy in a uniform. We are not asking for much, just to be recognized.

Assemblymember Flanagan:
Thank you, former Senator Spearman—you used to be my senator—for bringing this forward. My question is, since March is already Women's History Month, I am wondering, with the request to have veteran women singled out, why not November when Veterans Day is recognized, to shine an additional spotlight on women during the month of November? Why do you feel this is needed in March when it is already Women's History Month?

Pat Spearman:
During our hearings in the interim committee, several women came forward—many of them combat veterans. We could do it in November. You say maybe it is redundant to do it in March, but the point they made was, Yes, we have Women's History Month, but it is important within that to recognize that women served as well. All we are asking for is recognition during Women's History Month.

There are some people who say, Why do we need black history? Why do we need Latino history? Why do we need any other kind of history? This is a way for us to recognize the service of women veterans. I used to ask people if they would just come with me, just one day, and shadow a woman veteran. Assemblymember D'Silva, thank you for your service, Purple Heart; I am sure you served with women.

All we are asking for is not redundant. It is a carve-out to say, Yes, it is Women's History Month, but it is also important to recognize the contributions of women veterans. Right now,

for the most part, we are invisible. There are some people who do not think it is important to do that, but we served as well.

When I was at the Pentagon, my team was on duty when Tammy Duckworth's chopper was brought down. We got the information real time. It would be difficult for anyone who has never been in combat to understand the trauma, and then the disappointment. Trauma because this happened, but disappointment because most people do not even recognize that women did not have to serve. Our team was on duty when she lost both of her legs, and it was not just her. There were other people on the chopper; some of the women on their way home after 18 months of duty in Iraq. Committee members, I do not see this as redundant. I see it as an opportunity to say thank you to our women veterans.

Assemblymember Jackson:
My question is, how will this information, or facts, be collected about women veterans? I know that movie came out just recently, and that is where I learned about other women who worked in the mail room. Where will this information be gathered to recognize these women and collect these facts?

Pat Spearman:
There are several ways we can get it. The Department of Veterans Services has gathered a lot of information, and—I believe she will be on the phone a little later, Sergeant Dixie, who served during the Vietnam era as a first sergeant in the Military Police Corps—then stories of people, stories of women who have served and putting that on the record. History is something that not only is lived but it is shared, and all we have to do is start talking about it, recording it, writing it down, and ask people, Can you remember us?

Can you remember us? Look, we are not asking for a parade. We are just simply saying it is Women's History Month, but can you please also honor during this month, women veterans? Even some women do not honor our service, and I think it is important everyone honor the service and sacrifice of our women veterans. We are not invisible.

Chair Considine:
There are no additional questions from the Committee. We will move on to support of Assembly Bill 342.

Erika Watanabe, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am proud to stand before you as a veteran of the United States Army. My last duty station was with the 16th MASH [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital] out of Fort Riley, Kansas. I am a proud veteran of "The Big Red One," also. I served my country with pride and dedication, just as generations of women before me have done, often quietly and without recognition.

Women have stood on the front lines, piloted aircraft, commanded troops, and served in every capacity imaginable. Yet, their contributions have too often been overlooked; their stories untold. That is why I am here in support of this bill to establish Women Veterans History Month. This bill is not just about honoring the past, it is about educating the present

and inspiring the future. Recognizing Women Veterans History Month would provide an opportunity to share the powerful legacies of courage, service, and sacrifice women veterans represent. It would help shine a light on those who broke barriers and continue to serve our nation with distinction.

As a woman in uniform, I often felt invisible, but recognition matters. It validates the hard work, the sacrifices, and the unique challenges women face in military service. Passing this bill would send a clear message that we see our women veterans; we honor them, and we are committed to ensure their contributions as part of our shared history. Thank you for considering this important step forward. I urge you to support this bill, not just for women who serve, but for those who will.

Leah Elmquist, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am a resident of Assembly District 35. I am a founding board member of the National Association of Asian American Professionals in Las Vegas, and I served in the United States Navy for ten years. I was boots on the ground in Iraq as a Lioness, an early iteration of the military cultural support teams in Haditha; and a gunner on a convoy security team. I am also a survivor of military sexual trauma.

As a female veteran, especially as an Asian American woman, I am often overlooked and feel invisible, as Colonel Spearman mentioned. I cannot tell you how many times I inquired about a military veteran discount, and I am asked who is my sponsor, where is my sponsor? Most women, and I feel especially as an Asian woman, I am assumed to be a dependent of someone. This bill would uniquely recognize our service, because we serve too. I support A.B. 342, and I respectfully urge you to do the same.

Andrew LePeilbet, Chairman, United Veterans Legislative Council:
I would first like to say a salute to Colonel Spearman—we are here together again, Colonel. It is a pleasure to see you and hear from you.

We have tens of thousands of veterans in the state of Nevada who are women. As the father of four daughters, you noticed I asked the ladies to go first. I did not want to get in trouble with those girls at home. Then I realized I am looking at some of you here, and for over 13 years now, we have wanted to have a Women Veterans History Month. For 13 years that I have been involved. It has been on the priorities of our veterans for those 13 years; it is in our top list of priorities every session I have been around. It is time we do that.

It is true, our women do not get recognized. Currently there is somewhere between, depending on the unit, the military, and the various branches, 16 to 25 percent of our veterans are women and are active military; 16 to 25 percent, that is a huge element. I am sitting here today because some nurse saved me. I was sent to a medevac [medical evacuation] hospital twice in Vietnam, but I am sitting here because some nurse was there. We only had 8,000 nurses in ten years in Vietnam. Some of those nurses were in three or four tours, when we were going home after one tour. Yeah, we only lost eight nurses in that ten years, but how many veterans, men and women, are still alive because of those nurses?

Now, that is one job. I am telling you the one job because it affected me directly. Today in our military, and the last 25 years, they are driving trucks, they are fixing trucks, they are doing admin, they are doing signal, and they are doing PSYOP [psychological operations]. As Colonel Spearman pointed out, there are also military police. They are a broad section of our military. We highly endorse this bill and recommend you all vote for this bill to recognize our women vets. They are in the shadow, still. Our public has no idea there are so many women who are keeping our military going, there are so many of them. The United Veterans Legislative Council wholly endorses this bill.

Charles Zemp, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:
I am a member of the Bricklayers and Allied Craft Workers Union, and we support Assembly Bill 342.

Lynn Chapman, Private Citizen, Sparks, Nevada:
I am a 50-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary and as a caveat, my dad was in World War II. He was stationed in the Philippines. I start by saying I know and have known many women veterans. I found some interesting information on the Internet about women in the U.S. military. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, more than two million women veterans live in the U.S. today. In the year 2000, women veterans were just 4 percent of the veteran population, but by 2040, they are projected to make up 18 percent of all veterans, making them the fastest growing group of veterans.

Navy Captain Rosemary Mariner was one of the first eight women selected to fly military aircraft in 1973, and a year later became the Navy's first female jet pilot. At her gravesite service in February 2019, nine female pilots from Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia performed the "missing woman" formation for their predecessor, the first all-female crew to do so.

Dr. Kamin Samuel was the U.S. Navy's first black female helicopter pilot; TV star Bea Arthur, of the Golden Girls, was a truck driver in the Marine Corps during World War II. Honoring women who worked hard to achieve their goals in helping to protect and serve their country is a goal our state can, and should, achieve by passing A.B. 342.

Clara Thomas, Private Citizen, North Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am in support of A.B. 342. As an honorably retired United States Air Force veteran serving 16 years at Nellis Air Force Base as an air traffic controller, it is with honor the service I was able to perform for nearly 20 years in the United States Air Force. This bill would enlighten just about everyone in the state of Nevada, the service that women, all women, not only black women, but all women in the military deserve that honor.

When we, on November 11 to be specific, say thank you for your service, it would also be honored in March to say thank you to the women who serve, not only as air traffic controllers, as nurses, as maintenance, flight lines, aircraft pilots. This is an honor for the state of Nevada to recognize the women who served alongside their male counterparts. With honor, I can say I served, and it is a pleasure to support this bill.

[Exhibit J was submitted but not discussed and will become part of the record.]

Chair Considine:
We will now move to testimony in opposition of A.B. 342. Is there anyone wishing to testify in opposition to Assembly Bill 342?

Matthew Winterhawk, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
As a fellow Nevadan, fellow American, son, nephew, and grandson to many different gendered military officials, I oppose A.B. 342, which mandates Women Veterans History Month in Nevada. While we have honor and respect for all veterans, this bill is another unnecessary, identity-based designation that does nothing to actually support veterans. It is purely symbolic with no funding or actual benefits for women veterans. Nevada already recognizes veterans through multiple state and national observances. This forces political messaging without providing any real support to women veterans. Instead, we should focus on better VA [audio was lost] assistance.

Real veteran support comes through action, not through proclamation. We are urging all lawmakers, in honor of all veterans in this battle-born Nevada state, to reject A.B. 342 with the utmost expression in disgust. Separate whom the men and women are in our armed forces.

Chair Considine:
We will now move on to testimony in neutral. Is there anyone who wishes to testify in neutral on Assembly Bill 342? [There was no one.]

I would like to invite the presenter back for some brief final comments.

Pat Spearman:
I want to say thank you for this opportunity to present the bill. When we heard from veterans—men and women—they felt, as I do, it is important to make sure we honor and acknowledge women.

I am a life member of the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars]. I remember, a few years ago, former Senator Woodhouse and I presented a bill to make sure there was funding for victims of military sexual trauma (MST) in Veterans Treatment Court. Why did we have to present a bill to make sure there was money there? Because there was nothing there for women veterans who were suffering MST. Yes, we are battle born, but women veterans did not talk about it; we be about it. We had an opportunity to sit back and criticize, but we chose to serve.

At one point in time people used to say, Well I do not know why women would want to serve. We want to serve because we love our country. We love our country. Nevada was the first state, after 40 years, to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. We got it started in 2017. I looked and I did not see another state that had honored women veterans. Nevada ought to lead the way again. We ought to lead the way again. I am the daughter of military veterans,

but I am also a military veteran because I was not afraid to serve. I did not want to ride in on my father's coattails. I was not afraid to serve. Battle born, yes; battle born ready; battle born tough.

Chair Considine:
I will now close the hearing on Assembly Bill 342. Our final item on the agenda is public comment. Is there anyone who would like to provide public comment today?

Matthew Winterhawk, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I would like to mention that over the past two weeks of public comment, I can definitely see that there is something afoot pushing us to be further and/or closer to California and the Californian policies that have divided, distracted, and destroyed that state. As every bill comes across, whether it is a Senate bill or Assembly bill, I am more and more in fear that we have been taken over by legislation and leadership from California, and the bills that are going through right now mimic the exact legislation responsible for destroying an entire state, one of the largest states in our union. I would really like Nevada not to continue this path of destruction. That is my public comment for today.

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Chair Considine:
Our next meeting will be Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 8 a.m. in Room 4100. That concludes our meeting today. The meeting is adjourned [at 9:45 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

_____
Nikki Peterson
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

_____
Assemblymember Venicia Considine, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
A.B. 83	C	Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Assembly District No. 14	PowerPoint presentation titled "Assembly Bill 83"
A.B. 83	D	Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Assembly District No. 14	YouTube video titled "Music Video: Our friend, Larry Itliong"
A.B. 83	E	Caitlin Gatchalian, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada	Written testimony in support
A.B. 83	F	Sue Burtch, Executive Director, Nevada Chapter, National Organization for Women	Letter in support
A.B. 83	G	Tatiana "Tia" Smith, Policy Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada; and Kaylah Maese, Civil Rights Analyst, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada	Letter in support
A.B. 83	H	Mathilda Guerrero Miller, Government Relations Director, Native Voters Alliance	Letter in support
A.B. 83	I	Amy Koo, Political Director, One APIA Nevada	Letter in support
A.B. 342	J	Matthew DeFalco, Executive Board Member, Nevada Veterans Caucus	Written testimony in support