MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Eighty-Third Session
February 5, 2025

The Committee on Judiciary was called to order by Chair Brittney M. Miller at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 3 of the State of Nevada 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 Brittney M. Miller, Chair
Assemblymember Elaine H. Marzola, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Lisa K. Cole
Assemblymember Joe Dalia
Assemblymember Cecelia González
Assemblymember Ken Gray
Assemblymember Alexis M. Hansen
Assemblymember Melissa R. Hardy
Assemblymember Selena La Rue Hatch
Assemblymember Cinthia Zermeño Moore
Assemblymember Hanadi Nadeem
Assemblymember David Orentlicher
Assemblymember Erica P. Roth
Assemblymember Toby Yurek

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cesar Melgarejo, Committee Policy Analyst
Aaron Klatt, Committee Manager
Traci Dory, Committee Secretary
Claudia Pierrott, Committee Secretary
Lola Works, Committee Secretary
Ashley Torres, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Aaron D. Ford, Attorney General
George Togliatti, Director, Department of Public Safety
Kristi Defer, Senior Fiscal Officer, Director's Office, Department of Public Safety
Erica Souza-Llamas, Administrator, Records, Communications and Compliance Division, Department of Public Safety
Sheri Brueggemann, Deputy Director, Department of Public Safety
Tamrah L. Jackson, Chief, Division of Parole and Probation, Department of Public Safety
Joshua Martinez, Captain, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Darin Balaam, Sheriff, Washoe County
Jason Walker, Lieutenant, Patrol/Operations, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office
Steven Johnson, Director, Forensic Science Division, Washoe County Sheriff's Office

Chair Miller:
[Roll was called. Committee protocol was explained.] Good morning, everyone. I love to respect everyone's time who worked hard to get here on time. I am going to open today's meeting. Welcome to the second day of the Assembly Committee on Judiciary. We have on today's agenda a number of presentations, the first one being from the Office of the Attorney General. We are going to begin with a presentation from Attorney General Aaron Ford and Chief of Staff Teresa Benitez-Thompson. Please approach. We will give you a few moments to get settled, and then when you are ready, please begin.

Aaron D. Ford, Attorney General:
I am accompanied by my Chief of Staff Teresa Benitez-Thompson, and we are delighted to be here to give you a quick overview and presentation on the Office of the Attorney General. I am thankful to the people of Nevada for granting me an additional four years to serve as their attorney general. I do not take lightly the continued trust that Nevadans have granted me to ensure that their public safety is taken care of and to seek justice for all.

Today, I will introduce you to the Office of the Attorney General. We have been allotted 15 minutes for today's presentation, so I will be succinct and focus on the office highlights. I remain resolute in my leadership and governance over the Nevada Attorney General's Office with its 155 driven attorneys, 62 dedicated investigators, and 200 outstanding support staff across 23 divisions enforcing the breadth of Nevada law [page 2, Exhibit C].

We are united under a common belief, and if you were to ask any of them, they would tell you that our job is justice. As the state's chief law enforcement officer, the attorney general represents the people of Nevada. We represent the people's best interest before state and federal trials and appellate courts in criminal and civil matters. We also serve as legal counsel to state officers, state departments, most state boards, and commissions as well. Additionally, my office works with our local, state, and federal law enforcement partners to protect the public. I invite you all to read our *2022-2024 Biennial Report*, which can be found on our website at ag.nv.gov.

Every attorney general brings their own perspective as to how we should be protecting and improving the lives of Nevadans [page 3]. The overarching theme that I have used and that I have said is our intention to do our job, which is justice. To guide my decision making, I frame my administration by a set of policy priorities. These priorities do not override our statutory obligations. Rather, they serve as a lens through which we view our work. I refer to these priorities as the five "Cs": constitutional rights, criminal justice and reform, consumer protection, client service, and community engagement. Each of these Cs serves as the moral compass through which our office operates, and it guides the ways in which our office can serve Nevada.

I begin quickly by speaking to criminal justice and reform. Ensuring public safety and reform are not competing values [page 4]. They are not mutually exclusive. I believe in accountability for those who harm others as well as a justice system that is comprised of human dignity and fairness. I am proud to say that my staff and I have successfully prosecuted dangerous criminals, ensuring a safer Nevada for all. Between 2022 and 2024, the Investigations Division of my office reviewed more than 8,000 complaints concerning cybercrime, fraud, human trafficking, missing children, and public integrity concerns. Many of those reviews turned into active investigations and subsequent prosecutions. For example, we conducted operations to capture people who prey on our youth. We also prosecute individuals for crimes associated with what we call "john" stings. In one recent sting, a registered sex offender communicated with a decoy to purchase sex. After being told the decoy was 15 years old, he agreed to meet at a prearranged location to complete the transaction. The perpetrator was subsequently arrested, and then it was discovered he was on probation for possession of child sexual abuse material, or "CSAM," as we call it. He will be serving 28 to 72 months in prison.

Attorney General investigators also participate in the Southern Nevada Human Trafficking Task Force operations with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Attorney's Office, and local law enforcement agencies. Attorney General investigators tackled deceptive fraud in the Latino community through investigations into *notario* operators, persons who pass

themselves off as attorneys and defraud their victims of significant financial sums by promising to help them in acquiring permanent residence or other immigration benefits. It is an important job we do, especially in this day and age.

This past biennium, we established the Victims Services Unit. Thank you to the 82nd Legislature for granting our request for two victim witness advocates. The first time our office has ever had any, which was a surprise. Their mission is to provide support, advocacy, and empowerment for victims of and witnesses to crimes investigated and prosecuted by the Nevada Office of the Attorney General. Additionally, we prosecute financial fraud including scams, insurance fraud, workers' compensation fraud, securities fraud, mortgage fraud, sex trafficking, cybercrimes, public integrity cases, and crimes that occur in the Department of Corrections' facilities.

On to consumer protection [page 5, Exhibit C]. I will always stand up against corporations that engage in deceptive trade practices and anticompetitive measures which harm Nevada's hardworking families. Some highlights from the past two years include providing advocacy for ratepayers before the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to ensure that our ratepayers receive reliable utility services at a reasonable cost. Enforcing the Nevada Deceptive Trade Practices Act, for example, I obtained a $2 million settlement with Walmart to ensure that prices listed on the shelf match the prices being charged at the checkout counter. That was a complaint I received directly from a Washoe County, Reno constituent, and we were able, again, to obtain $2 million to settle that type of issue.

As chairman of the Attorney General Alliance, which is a nonpartisan, bipartisan association of attorneys general throughout the entirety of the country, I launched the "Empowering Consumers Through Education" initiative. It is a comprehensive strategy addressing consumer protection by focusing on the evolving challenges faced by consumers in today's complex landscape. I was chair last year. I just completed my term, and that was a very successful initiative. I continue to hold the pharmaceutical industry accountable for devastating harms that opioids have caused across Nevada's communities. I am proud to say that we stand now at over $1.2 billion—with a "b"—in recoveries. The biennial report I referenced says $1 billion; it is $1.2 billion now. Transparency of those dollars is paramount to me, and this past year my office worked with the Department of Health and Human Services to produce a data dashboard so that members of the public can track the flow of those dollars. Lastly, non-opioid settlements from the past biennium totaled over $28 million, and that is on page 20 of our biennial report.

My next "C" is client services [page 6]. I require my administration to operate with a customer service mindset. I am mindful that our clients, the Executive Branch agencies, are subject matter experts and that the Office of Attorney General is there to assist them in lawful execution of their respective statutes and when required, prosecutions of those laws and

collections of fines. For example, our Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) obtained judgments in criminal and civil cases totaling over $13 million. That is on page 22 of our biennial report. This money is returned to the Medicaid system for use in providing needed medical services to impoverished Nevadans.

Additionally, the MFCU obtained 38 convictions and an additional 17 civil settlements between 2022 and 2024. We have protected the stellar reputation of the state's most important industry by assisting the Nevada Gaming Control Board and pursuing discipline against licensees who failed to maintain safe and lawful establishments or did not ensure proper transfers of interests in gaming operations. This includes resolving a disciplinary action against a high-profile gaming executive in July of 2023 with a stipulated settlement accepted by the Gaming Control Board, which imposed a fine of $10 million.

In notable victories, *Sullivan v. Lincoln County Water District* is a landmark water case where we successfully defended the State Engineer's authority under Nevada statutes to combine multiple groundwater basins into one based on a shared source of water. The attorneys in the Office of the Attorney General provide thousands of hours of counsel to our Executive Branch agencies.

Moving to constitutional rights [page 7]. Protecting your constitutional rights remains a paramount importance to me and to my administration. Upholding democracy and protecting access to fair and free elections is a keystone of my administration. To this end, we prosecute felony voter fraud cases in Nevada and defend against attacks to interrupt procedural ballot counting. Let me talk about two recent actions that I have taken, the first of which is me joining with 17 other states and challenging President Trump's executive order purporting to end birthright citizenship, an action that violates the *U.S. Constitution*, the constitutional rights to which all people are born to in the United States are entitled. We prevailed on an order in court to stop that from proceeding, pending this trial. Again, it is an immediate example of protecting constitutional rights.

Secondly, I joined a coalition of states to request a temporary restraining order to prevent the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) from enacting an indefinite pause on federal assistance. This litigation is critical to the state of Nevada because 32 percent of the state budget comes from the federal government and is for the state's health care, education, law enforcement, fire disaster relief, and infrastructure—again, coming from federal grants and awards.

I am going to go off script really quickly because we were doing a rural tour just last week. I drove from here to Elko. I was going to cowboy poetry. We stopped in Fernley, Winnemucca, Fallon, Lovelock, and we ended up in Elko. I spoke with some of your constituents specifically about how that impact of the OMB lawsuit would have affected their ability to provide services to victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault. They were

devastated by the prospect of that money being turned off and not being able to serve their constituencies and their clients. I am proud to say we have restored some sense of safety to them, and they know that this Office of Attorney General is going to push back against [unintelligible] overreach from any administration, including this current one.

Now to the last "C," community engagement [page 8]. Our Constituent Services Unit received thousands of communications—calls, letters, and emails—from concerned Nevada residents. Some residents called to express their views, others called to file complaints or request investigations into fraudulent business dealings. Over the biennium, there were more than 16,000 constituent services requests made to our office. During the past biennium, our Office of Military Legal Assistance (OMLA) provided support to over 1,900 veterans and military spouses. The OMLA maintains a monthly "ask a lawyer" event at the North Las Vegas Medical Center to provide free, no appointment necessary legal consultations. My Investigations Division and I hosted the first ever OAG [Office of the Attorney General]-sponsored Community Cadet Academy at the Richard Steele boxing gym in North Las Vegas. Approximately 50 kids participated. Additionally, our investigators and their families participated in an Earth Day clean up event at the Valley of Fire State Park.

Investigators and support staff in northern Nevada participated in the Carson City Sheriff's Night Out. My staff continues their ongoing involvement in the Police Athletic League of Southern Nevada food distribution event, a community service event in which free food is handed out to Las Vegas area residents at the Clifford O. Findlay Middle School. Food is provided by Three Square.

At this time, I want to thank our law enforcement officers for the continued community involvement and the work they engage in daily to make our community safer. I also want to take a quick moment to offer condolences to our colleague in North Las Vegas. I just got goosebumps saying this out loud. I am wearing our shrouded badge. We lost an officer; please keep North Las Vegas and the family of the officer in your prayers and let us thank them for their services all the time.

Lastly, the Office of Attorney General supports community nonprofit organizations, local law enforcement agencies, and state-specific endeavors through $13 million in grant projects.

Moving past the five Cs, as I get ready to close, I want to highlight programs housed within the Office of Attorney General [page 9, Exhibit C]. Our domestic violence ombudsman serves as a liaison with all state and local partners on issues related to domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. They also serve as a state-level coordinator with oversight of many programs and initiatives including the statewide Committee on Domestic Violence and Nevada VINE [Victim Information and Notification Everyday]. Our Office of Military Legal Assistance, as I have indicated, provides pro bono legal advice to veterans and military families in civil matters. Our Grants Unit manages federal grants and awards. We administer millions of dollars of grants—that could have also been affected by the lawsuit we engaged in—to law enforcement agencies and community organizations engaged in supporting victims of domestic violence and assault. Our office provides staff support for

the Nevada Advisory Council for Prosecuting Attorneys, the mission of which is to, among other things, provide communication, training, and foster competency among the prosecutors in the state of Nevada. Please reach out to me if you want to know any more information about those programs.

Madam Chair, you requested an update on Senate Bill 35 of the 82nd Session [page 10]. As you recall, there was an extensive dialogue about that piece of legislation, which was the one related to decreasing the levels intended to constitute trafficking in fentanyl. My office worked in conjunction with the Senate Majority Leader to lower the trafficking thresholds for fentanyl from 100 grams to 28 grams. In my assessment, this bill has been a productive tool for law enforcement as they work to stop the trafficking of fentanyl in our communities. We can get you specific numbers from different agencies on the numbers of prosecutions they have been able to encounter, and we will circulate that to the Committee.

For the Committee's awareness, I am providing a list of the legislation [page 11] that we are also presenting, which hopefully will be heard at some point in this Committee. Madam Chair, this concludes my overview, and I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.

Chair Miller:
Thank you so much, Attorney General Ford. We do have a number of questions, and they are not necessarily pertaining directly to your presentation, although we do appreciate your presentation and overview of the office. We have some questions about just general awareness of what comes in and out of your office.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:
I appreciate all the work that you are doing to protect Nevadans across the state. One thing, as a teacher, I am very interested in is our youth. I know you have done work on social media and harms to our youth in social media, and I just wondered if you could speak to some of those legal challenges and what you are working on in that area.

Attorney General Ford:
I have two responses to that. The first of which is, we are in litigation right now. About a year ago, my office sued five social media platforms: TikTok, Instagram, Meta, Facebook Messenger, and Snapchat. We are in litigation right now, particularly to hold them accountable for the negative impacts that their algorithms have caused to youth in our state. Just two to three days ago, we prevailed at the Nevada Supreme Court on a motion to dismiss based on what they call "personal jurisdiction." They are trying to escape the jurisdiction of this state, and we have been able to defeat them at every turn. We will be proceeding to trial in those areas. I will not be able to speak too much more about that, but we are in litigation against those five entities. Thanks to you, we were able to obtain outside counsel for that because it is a circumstance where we needed extra resources, and you guys have afforded us that.

We also have a bill that will be presented. I think it is probably going to the Commerce and Labor Committee as opposed to here: Senate Bill 63. It is a youth online safety bill that likewise attempts to put some guardrails around the ways in which social media can interact with our youth, again, to protect the mental health and the negative impacts we have seen in that regard. Those are two responses that I can offer. I am happy to follow up with you offline about further details to the extent you require that.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:
Thank you so much. I would love that, and I just appreciate all of that work from you, and thank you for your answer.

Assemblymember Moore:
I do have a question around the investigations and fraud investigations. How do you become aware of any fraud issues happening—especially in the Latino community, which tends to not want to go to law enforcement—to make them aware of any issues that they may be having, especially with *notarios*? There are a lot of *notarios* in my district.

Attorney General Ford:
It is a great question, and it is certainly a struggle, frankly, to be able to get information from communities that perceive law enforcement as a threat in and of itself, which is the reason why one of my Cs is community engagement. We are actively involved in every community, including the Latino community, doing activities, and we have expressed that we do not inquire—I will just say this out loud—of immigration status when a victim comes to us. We are the attorney general for the entire state, and it is my job to protect everyone who lives in this state. We believe that has enabled members of the communities you have discussed to reach out to us directly. Sometimes we hear directly from them via complaints we have talked about that are called in or sent via email. Sometimes we hear about it through anonymous complaints, and that requires a little more investigatory work. Sometimes we just learn about it firsthand because we are in the communities, and that is a non-exhaustive list of ways in which we learn about these.

We also work with, for example, the Mexican Consulate. She and I literally just did, *en español, algún comerciales*, "some commercials in Spanish," informing the community about *notario* fraud and the resources that our office offers. We have a lot of partnerships in that regard. In the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, we work to try to ensure that people know their rights in that regard. That is some of the ways in which we are able to get information out there and to respond in due course.

Assemblymember Gray:
I hope you are not cringing. I am not going to ask any tough ones today, but I appreciate a lot of what you do there, Attorney General, especially on the fentanyl front. A couple quick questions though. One is about "johns," which are a huge problem in our state, whether they are Nevadans or whether they are coming from out of state. You know, what happens in

Nevada should not just stay in Nevada. After looking at the penalties for it, it is really nothing more than a citation, and families never hear about it. What I am wondering is what are your thoughts on increasing the penalties for that?

Attorney General Ford:
I do not know if I have a response ready for you in that regard. You know, we would have to work with our partners, talk to law enforcement to ascertain whether they in fact view it as an issue that we need to address. But let us be clear: on the john sting front, my office is very engaged and active on ensuring that we are able to get these predators off the street. We have active operations out of our office with our joint task forces, with members of this audience right now, working with them to ensure that we are able to try to address some of these issues. But to your question about increasing penalties, I would love to hear from you about what your thoughts are in that regard, and we can discuss it further.

Assemblymember Nadeem:
My question is regarding the birthright citizenship. Thank you for your efforts. You, with other attorney generals, have blocked it for now. I want to know what is the path going forward?

Attorney General Ford:
Let me back up, if I can, to offer a little bit of background about this birthright citizenship scenario. What I have said, generally speaking, is Mr. President has the ability to enact his policies, and I will not get in the way of those unless they are violating the law and the *U.S. Constitution*—period, point blank. If they are, we are going to engage to protect the residents, those who are present in this state. Birthright citizenship was the first circumstance in which it happened. Frankly, six hours into being inaugurated he issued a proclamation, an executive order, purporting to end birthright citizenship, which is in the *Constitution* under the Fourteenth Amendment, saying that if you are born on this soil, you are an American citizen.

It is a right born out of a case called *Dred Scott*, where descendants of African people who had been enslaved were denied citizenship. They said in that case, our U.S. Supreme Court, said that Black people could never be citizens of this country. In fact, Black people had no rights that the white man was bound to respect. That is where this conversation about birthright citizenship began. I take it personal, frankly, as a Black man, when we talk about rewriting the *Constitution*, but also because of the fact that 30 years later, 40 years later, after the Fourteenth Amendment was passed and the Civil War was fought, there was another case where a child of Chinese immigrants, who was born in this country, was denied his birthright citizenship and he had to sue. The Supreme Court then said, referring to his parents, who were denied citizenship for other discriminatory animus reasons during the 1890s, that it does not matter what their status was. He is born here, and he is a citizen. That was really the last debate we had around this.

When, via executive order, he says he was going to limit birthright citizenships and deny to those who were born to folks who were undocumented, we sprung into action. We went to court and got—virtually immediately—a temporary restraining order to stop it from going into effect. He had already put in a 30-day time frame for which it was going to go into effect. It was not going to happen immediately, but it is stayed now, pending the duration of the trial we are going to undertake. Eighteen attorneys general and I sued in Massachusetts, four others sued in Washington, and both of those courts have entertained this. We have a hearing, in fact, tomorrow, I believe, in Massachusetts. It has [unintelligible] the litigation process, but in the meantime, it will not be enforced until a court makes a determination.

Incidentally, the court in Washington, the judge who had been on the bench for 40 years—a Reagan appointee—said it was one of the most egregious examples of nonsense he had seen brought before him and even asked the attorney for the Department of Justice, Did he stand by what was in that complaint as if he was about to sanction him? He did not. But this is blatantly unconstitutional and we are going to stand up against unconstitutional acts irrespective of who is in power. That is the summary I can provide for you at this juncture. Happy to talk to you further offline.

Assemblymember Hansen:
Glad to hear you took a trip through part of my district—love those counties and the rurals. That brings me specifically to a very pressing issue I think all of us have been made aware of that is unfolding in Pershing County and Lovelock, regarding the broadband contractor, Uprise Fiber, and the Department of Transportation (NDOT) contract for $14 million. The contractor was given about $9.1 million up front—which in the contracting world is a little unusual before any work was done. It is about oversight and jurisdiction. That is the issue. Maybe if you could touch on it here on the record so we can have some clarity. It involves some federal money. The state was given the money. The state, through a contract that NDOT had, giving this contractor—kind of carte blanche—not a lot of oversight. That is the concern. Who is checking? I know your office is aware of this, but we have subcontractors who are constituents, who have not been paid, and it appears this individual who got the money, we are worried he has absconded and is a flight risk. We have done what we could, but I am wondering what jurisdiction the Attorney General has over this very complicated matter that is extremely distressing.

Attorney General Ford:
Senator Hansen actually reached out to me about this specifically. I am going to be very circumspect with how I talk about this because it is a pending issue. I will say that we have been made aware of it. The Department of Transportation is a client of ours, and we advise the client. I give advice; they take it or they do not. That is what lawyers do. We give advice; we do not make decisions in that regard. Where we are at this juncture is quite aware of the circumstance. There very well may be overlapping jurisdiction. You have indicated it was federal funds. I know that other of my law enforcement colleagues are also engaged in or at least know about this, and I cannot speak to what they are doing in that regard, but we are aware of it, Assemblymember Hansen. On this record, I cannot say anything about what may be happening or what may not be happening.

Assemblymember Hansen:
I can appreciate the spot you are in, which would make me rhetorically say, Chair, I have been in support of an ombudsman. I think you have a bill along those lines for ombudsman. I guess the issue is, when we have got all this state interaction, who is watching who and who does the public come to who is more of an independent third party? Because I think maybe that would be a relief for you, for us, to have some sort of an independent third party that is not interconnected with the state the way we all are.

Chair Miller:
My bill is actually not for an ombudsman. Assemblymember Gray, did you have another question?

Assemblymember Gray:
I just wanted to touch on asset forfeiture. I am a big proponent of it, but recently there has been one, at least one, high-profile case here in Nevada that just really does not seem like it fit the criteria and put a veteran in a really bad position. Are you creating any other kind of oversight for that to make sure that people do not get caught up in stuff like that again?

Attorney General Ford:
If I could ask clarification, Assemblymember Gray, you are saying you are in favor of asset forfeiture?

Assemblymember Gray:
Absolutely. But I think if there is any kind of question at all, there needs to be an independent third party, off the highway, that takes a look at it.

Attorney General Ford:
You and I, respectfully disagree. I am against civil asset forfeiture as a personal matter. That said, we have been engaged in a high-profile case where this veteran you are talking about had monies taken from him, and we have litigated that case. I think it is resolved, and I cannot, frankly, off the top of my head, remember exactly where we are in that regard. But can I circle back with you? We can talk off the record about that because I do not know if I have enough information to be able to respond at this juncture.

Chair Miller:
Thank you for that, Attorney General. I believe that concludes all of our questions for you today. Thank you so much for your time and your presentation. We will move on to our next presentation. We have a presentation from the Department of Public Safety. Joining us is Director George Togliatti and Deputy Director Sheri Brueggemann. We also, I believe, have the senior fiscal analyst with us. You can introduce everyone in your presentation. When you are ready, please proceed.

George Togliatti, Director, Department of Public Safety:
With me this morning I have Deputy Director Sheri Brueggemann on my left, and Senior Fiscal Officer Kristi Defer, who will make our presentation. With us as well are a number of our division chiefs and subject matter experts, who will be able to answer any specific questions you may have. We also have Kim Yoko Smith, who is our public information officer, who is also part of the presentation.

Kristi Defer, Senior Fiscal Officer, Director's Office, Department of Public Safety:
I will be presenting an overview of our departmental operations, staffing, and legislative initiatives. For the sake of time, I am going to run through these slides relatively quickly [Exhibit D]. I know we are only slotted for 15 minutes and we are a very large, diverse department. We have over 1,300 employees in multiple divisions and offices.

Chair Miller:
I will let you relax for one moment. I will cut you off at 20 minutes so you have a little buffer. This is for all of you as well because, you know, attention spans really start to wane by the time we get to slide 49.

Kristi Defer:
The first slide is our organizational chart [page 3, Exhibit D]. I know you have seen it before, but it always helps to put a face with the names. There is a lot of years of experience, and our outstanding leadership has a lot of years of experience in their respective fields. Our director's office, and that is budget account 4706, establishes policy and provides direction and support services for the divisions and offices of the department [page 4]. We have within that the human resources unit, which supports the department with recruitment and selection, workplace safety, employee management relations, and background and polygraph services.

We have our fiscal and administrative services unit, and that provides services to the department to include accounting, fiscal oversight, budgeting, payroll, evidence oversight, and contract management [page 5]. And finally, we have the research, planning and technology unit—or as we call it, "R and PT", because we love our acronyms—which provides support for department-specific equipment, mainly to law enforcement. We have body-worn cameras, in-car cameras, tasers, and radios. They also provide research, and implement and maintain our departmental software, our CAD software, and Brazos citation software. They also assist the department with managing our departmental public records request FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] software tracking system.

To touch on our marketing and recruitment efforts, I know everyone knows that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) particularly has struggled with hiring and retention in years past [page 6]. That is specific to our sworn and dispatch classifications at this time. We are pleased to discuss our progress in these areas and wanted to show that, first of all, the departmental sworn separated versus hired ratio—this is the first time since 2017 that we have had more hires than separations. We are very excited about that. We attribute these numbers to our All-Star marketing campaign that was initiated in mid-2024 with an ARPA [American Rescue Plan Act] grant.

While we have made strides in hiring and retention, our vacancy rates overall, to include both sworn and civilian positions, continues to be a challenge [page 7]. I would like to point out our high vacancies in our Records, Communications and Compliance Division, largely due to the struggle that division is having with hiring and retaining dispatchers.

As I mentioned, the All-Star campaign has increased our applicants for sworn positions by nearly 71 percent from 2023 to 2024 [page 8]. This has been accomplished by aggressive nationwide social media advertising and ensuring that all potential candidates are engaged and guided throughout that hiring process. The All-Star staff has been amazing to help augment the number of applicants we are able to bring in ourselves organically. The increase in applicants has resulted in 294 candidates passing both the background, written, and physical examinations [page 9]. That is a 38 percent increase in candidates passing both examinations. We are very excited at the volume and quality of the applicants we have received from this marketing campaign.

Next, we have our evidence vault, which is responsible for receiving, tracking, and maintaining evidence for the Nevada State Police [page 10]. The evidence vault has three main vaults and ten interim locker locations across the state.

The Office of Professional Responsibility, or OPR, is charged with the investigation of complaints regarding an employee's conduct of our policies as well as other law enforcement operations [page 11]. It is the repository for all of our departmental complaints and use-of-force incidents.

The DPS Training Division is responsible for the training of incoming cadets in their northern and southern academies and the continuing education and career development of both civilian and sworn personnel through recertification, training and tracking, and non-law enforcement training for sworn and civilian staff [page 12]. The division also supports the Department in its recruitment efforts.

Nevada Highway Patrol Division is, of course, responsible for the safety of our Nevada roadways and keeping everyone safe through data-driven enforcement, education, and strategic partnerships [page 13]. The Highway Patrol is comprised of three main budget accounts. First is budget account 4713, and the strategic priorities include enforcement of traffic and criminal law, crash investigation, and targeted high-risk enforcement. Next, the interdiction program, budget account 4705, is our K-9 and specialized units, trained to detect and disrupt organized crime, including human trafficking, drug smuggling, and illegal weapons movement [page 14]. Finally, the third is the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program, or MCSAP, which is budget account 4721 [page 15]. With 18 full-time employees, they ensure that commercial drivers and vehicles operate safely and in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Next is our Nevada Parole and Probation Division [pages 16 and 17]. The Parole and Probation Division protects our communities by conducting investigations for the district courts, pardons boards, and parole board. The division also monitors and enforces the

supervised individuals' compliance while on parole and assists with integration back into society [page 18]. They wanted to share that they have made significant progress from 2023 to 2025 regarding caseloads and actual staffing [page 19]. Some of the rural areas show lower numbers, but that office is managed by only two officers. When they take that into account, it is essentially doubling the percentage that they show on this [page 19].

The Investigation Division provides criminal and administrative investigatory response to local, state, and federal law enforcement and criminal justice agencies throughout the state of Nevada [page 20]. We wanted to touch on some of the specific work that they do. The digital forensic unit created by the division handles digital evidence. This is a critical component today of almost all of our criminal investigations. They also handle major crime investigations, drug enforcement, vehicle theft interdiction, and polygraph services [page 21].

The division also oversees the SafeVoice Program on behalf of the Department of Education [page 22]. It conducts criminal investigations related to bullying and operates the call center, which receives and vets the reports that come in via mobile app and web browsers. Finally, the Nevada Threat Analysis Center, or NTAC, is the federally designated Fusion Center to work on deterring, detecting, preventing, and mitigating terrorism and criminal activity [page 23].

The Records, Communications and Compliance Division consists of two main budget accounts [page 24]. The first one is the Records Bureau budget account 4709. It is the Central Repository for Nevada Records of Criminal History. I wanted to point out some legislation: Bill Draft Request 25A6553321 [*sic*], that provides for a blanket authority for employers, licensing authorities, and volunteer organizations to conduct fingerprint-based background checks to voluntarily participate at no cost in the Rap Back [Record of Arrest and Prosecution Background] Program; Senate Bill 26, which "revises provisions authorizing certain entities to obtain information relating to the records of criminal history of persons responsible for the safety and well-being of children, elderly persons, and people with disabilities in the state."

The Records Bureau consists of the Nevada Criminal Justice Information System Compliance Unit, Civil Name Check Program, and Uniform Crime Reporting. They have the state Sex Offender Registry, Point of Contact Firearms Program, and Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence reporting program [page 25]. The other main budget account is 4702, which is the Dispatch unit. It consists of 65 position control numbers. Just for reference, in calendar year 2024, they received over 1,461,007 calls for service [page 26].

The Office of Criminal Justice Assistance, or OCJA, provides assistance in attaining and administering federal funds in order to enhance the criminal justice system in keeping Nevada a safer place for residents and visitors [page 27]. They obtain, administer, and subgrant to state and local government and agencies grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice.

The State Fire Marshal Division protects life, property, and environment from fires and hazardous materials in the state of Nevada [page 28, Exhibit D]. This is accomplished by performing fire and life safety inspections, building plan reviews, investigation services, and training and educational services. They are primarily fee-funded through revenues they receive through permits, licenses, and plan review fees. A budget account that falls under the fire marshal is the State Emergency Response Commission, or SERC, which provides grant funds to emergency response to hazmat incidents and to combat terrorism [page 29].

The Capitol Police Division ensures the safety of all state employees and visitors through proactive law enforcement, community engagement, and strategic partnerships [page 30]. The division is responsible for safeguarding the governor's mansion and hundreds of other state facilities.

The Office of Traffic Safety's mission is to eliminate deaths and injuries on Nevada's roadways so everyone arrives home safely [page 31]. The office is the federally recognized highway safety office for the state of Nevada and administers federal and state safety grant funds. Additionally, the division manages and reports on crash and citation data and manages statewide traffic safety programs [page 32]. To note, the office has sponsored Assembly Bill 55, which is a bill to update and clarify collection and reporting of traffic crash data.

Our final slide [page 33] is with K-9 Skip from Las Vegas. That concludes our presentation today. I thank the Chair and Committee for the time and opportunity, and we welcome any questions you have.

Assemblymember Orentlicher:
I have a question about something that came up when I was working with the Board of Medical Examiners on the licensing approval process. A doctor wants to come to Nevada, has to submit their fingerprints, and they can do a fingerprint card and mail it in. But apparently if they want to do the LiveScan fingerprints, they cannot be sent from out of state. I learned that that is commonly true. I could only find one state that accepts LiveScan from out of state. Could you explain the rationale behind not accepting the LiveScan fingerprints?

George Togliatti:
Erica Souza is our administrator of our records management and handles all those types of details.

Erica Souza-Llamas, Administrator, Records, Communications and Compliance Division, Department of Public Safety:
You are correct. Each individual LiveScan requires vetting and technical connections, and to meet state and Federal Bureau of Investigation federal security policies, they do require on-site audits and vetting. Just to be able to go out nationwide and allocate those types of resources, number one, we do not have the resources for it, and number two, we do not have

the budget to send the resources out. It does take quite a bit of technical assistance from OCIO [Office of the Chief Information Officer] to help establish those network connections individually with each LiveScan. That is the reason we cannot accept LiveScan from out of state.

Assemblymember Hardy:
I wanted to talk a little bit more about your vacancy rates and hiring. I know in the state we have had a history of people coming to this Department and then leaving, specifically officers. We have tried to help fix that. I am really glad to see you have been able to increase the hirings with your marketing campaign and such. I think that is wonderful. You touched on it briefly, but maybe talk about it a bit more: that you are seeing less separation. You have been able to hire more, but what do you attribute the people deciding to stay as opposed to, in the past, people have wanted to leave, and how you see the reasons for the change?

George Togliatti:
It has been a struggle over the years. A lot of it has to do with parity with other law enforcement agencies for sure. We also have a situation with the retirement system. As you may be aware, with the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), all law enforcement are on the same retirement program, but we have a different participation as far as the employees' participation, and the counties handle it differently than the state. It has been a bit of a struggle. One of my personal issues has always been the fact that we put some really solid people through our academies. Then, it is almost like other agencies are waiting to get the best of the best and try to recruit our folks once they are qualified as category I police officers.

I can give you some detail on our efforts for recruitment. Our deputy director, Sheri Brueggemann, has done a heck of a job getting involved in getting us some more talent, but also as a backdrop, nationwide we have issues—as you well know—as far as recruiting within law enforcement. As the Attorney General mentioned, we just had a law enforcement officer in North Las Vegas killed yesterday. It is an honorable but difficult job, and we still want to hire the best of the best; we owe it to our community, owe it to you, and we owe it to our employees to not lower our standards on who we hire. Ms. Brueggemann, could you tell them about All-Star, please?

Sheri Brueggemann, Deputy Director, Department of Public Safety:
All-Star is a company the Department of Corrections aligned with early on in the last biennium. When they brought it to our attention, we jumped on board. They have done a great deal in getting us a lot of face time with the public, which is something the state just does not provide for. We do not have marketing to go out and hire the thousands of employees we need. It is just assumed that if anybody needs a job, they go to the application site. So that has driven the applications significantly.

Back to the Director's point on why employees are leaving, in the past, their rate of pay was so low compared to all the locals because they pay so much for their PERS, and the rest of the counties do not. That is the biggest difference between the two. It was getting to the point

after the cutbacks from years ago—this is a long livelihood; it is a career position; it is not a steppingstone—they realized they could retire. In three years, they are going to start getting regular raises because that is guaranteed in their retirement, and they could get another job making twice as much. Instead of waiting 25 years to retire, they are going at 20, or they are going at 18.

We have slowed that. You have slowed that by giving them the money, or a significant raise, for the last biennium. It really did slow that down, and I think they felt more appreciated. They told me that. That finally said to them, You know what we are doing, you know the harm we face; we know we are working hard, and now you are finally giving us credit. Morale-wise, money-wise, business sense-wise, there are so many reasons for them to stay. I am hoping that answers your question.

Assemblymember Roth:
This is in regard to the Parole and Probation department. What I see a lot in my work is a revolving door with individuals who are struggling with homelessness or drug addiction or things of that sort. I see that Parole and Probation is really doing what they can to manage their caseloads. Is the department considering at all using or placing staff, such as a social worker or something like that, to address some of the underlying problems that this population is facing to reduce that revolving door? Is that something that has been looked at before?

George Togliatti:
We have a couple of programs right now, one of which is—we have someone embedded, so to speak, with Hope For Prisoners in Las Vegas. That would be kind of what you are getting at. Hope for Prisoners is a not-for-profit organization that engages people who are just getting out of prison. We engage with them to help in that transition, and we offer some services for them to facilitate them getting to the Department of Motor Vehicles and some other things like that. Tamrah Jackson is the chief of Parole and Probation, and she can give you more detail.

Tamrah L. Jackson, Chief, Division of Parole and Probation, Department of Public Safety:
We have not looked at bringing in staff ourselves. However, we do work with the Department of Health and Human Services to bring in welfare resources as well as other staff who provide some of those services. Again, we do have resource specialists that basically work within the different communities to try and bring in any resources we can to provide those services to our clientele.

Assemblymember Roth:
Would it be possible to get a list of those resources that are being provided?

Tamrah Jackson:
Absolutely. We can put a list together for both, specifically our Las Vegas office and our Reno office, and provide that.

Chair Miller:
Thank you, and please submit that to the Committee so that we can distribute to everyone. Not seeing any additional questions from members right now, I thank you for your presentation and your time. We will move on to the next presentation from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's (Metro) Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. Joining us today we have Captain Joshua Martinez, who is new in this position for us, who will be representing the department up here during the legislative session this year. We also have returning Detective Adrian Hunt and Detective Christopher Ries with us. They will give an overview of Metro.

Joshua Martinez, Captain, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:
To my left, I have Detective Adrian Hunt, who is part of the legislative team, as well as Detective Chris Ries. The vision of Metro is to be the safest community in America. The vision to be realized is injecting humanity into every interaction and building trust with the citizens we serve. As you have heard very often from our sheriff, injecting humanity is the biggest thing for us, and we are changing that mindset within our workforce so we could go out there and create relationships with the community and other groups within the community as well. Community is an important aspect of everything we do within law enforcement.

As you see here, $1.6 billion is our budget [page 2, Exhibit E]. That is the entire budget, which includes detention and other funds. The next slide [page 3] I provided a pie chart so you could see the breakdown of the percentages of the funds and where the contributions come from for our budget.

As everybody is probably aware, we are one of the largest law enforcement organizations within the United States [page 4]. We have 6,285 total positions, and those are broken down as: 4,451 are commissioned; 3,485 are police; 966 are corrections, because we are responsible for running the Clark County Detention Center as well; and 1,834 are civilians.

As you know, our sheriff spoke about the call wait times when they would come into our dispatch center. That was one of his priorities, to address and hire more dispatchers and train folks to be able to reduce those call wait times. In January of 2023, we had 69 call taker and dispatch vacancies, which is a 28 percent vacancy rate. In January of 2025, all call taker and dispatch positions have been filled. We now have 132 police dispatch professionals and 118 other professionals answering 911 calls. We average 2.5 million calls for service and 1.2 million 911 calls per year. Our current 911 average wait times have been reduced to 3 seconds, and 311 average wait times are 4 minutes and 5 seconds. Average response time for priority calls is currently around 7.7 minutes.

Sheriff McMahill has priorities for the legislative session [page 5]. Our priorities are crime reduction, DUI law reform, and traffic reform. In order to reduce the traffic fatalities that we have seen on our local roadways within southern Nevada—the state as a whole has experienced an increase in traffic fatalities—we are looking at other ways to combat and

educate the citizens in our communities. We are looking at automated traffic enforcement during the 2025 Legislative Session. We believe that automated traffic enforcement will help solve the intersection red light running and also help enforce speed-related traffic offenses. Driving under the influence behavior is something that impacts us as well and is a causal factor of our traffic fatalities.

As you can see on this slide [page 6], this is going to be our overall crime numbers for 2024 compared to 2023. We have had a reduction in our homicides; they were reduced by 22.7 percent. Our homicide section has a 92 percent solve rate, and as you can see, the other crime offenses are down as well, and that is our priority—to continue to move in that direction and deploy our resources and work with public policy lawmakers in order to continue to make headways within that trend to stay in that direction. What happens sometimes, we know, is if we take our eye off the ball, then we could lose some ground there. We are trying to, as I said in our vision, become the safest community in America.

Then you can see on this slide [page 7], these are property crimes. As we know, legislatively, we increased the amount it takes to get to a felony threshold. We are here to support anything to address that and reduce what that threshold is, because with retail theft offenses and law changes, we have been able to make a little bit of gains in that. But, of course, that is still something you see on the nightly news that impacts you, as consumers go into your local retail businesses and see more and more products that are locked up. We want to continue to work with policymakers in regard to retail theft as well as other theft offenses.

As I stated before, traffic is a priority for us during the 2025 Legislative Session [page 8]. Our traffic fatalities in 2024 were 146 compared to 152, so 3.9 percent, and last year we had increased by double digits in the percentage category midway through the year. Our traffic section took steps to change schedules, deploy our officers at peak times and hours, do the DUI enforcement every night of the week, and look at other ways to get folks that could draw blood to get a good prosecution on DUIs. With those changes that we have been able to make internally in regard to the deployment of our personnel at the Traffic Bureau, but also taking our area commands and deploying them to traffic enforcement, we were able to turn that tide last year and get a small reduction. But as I said, part of our plan here at the Legislature is traffic public policy in order to help us as a community.

The priority projects the sheriff is working on: one is the Wellness Bureau, which is important for the wellness of our families, our officers, and everybody who is employed by Metro [page 9]. The bureau was created in 2023 and is now fully staffed with clinicians who are currently scheduling over 400 psychotherapeutic sessions per year. Our peer support are making over 1,000 contacts per month. The new wellness building opened in November of 2024, and I invite all of you, if you are interested in taking a tour of our Wellness Bureau, please contact myself or one of the detectives, and we could get you scheduled. If it is something you want to do on your weekends when you go back south, or anybody from the north who wants to see it as well, you are more than welcome to come visit us. It serves our employees, our families, our retirees, as well as working with other law enforcement and fire organizations within southern Nevada. Here, they are treated for trauma, work stress, anxiety,

depression, substance abuse, family conflict, reactions to medical challenges, and more. We have also partnered with ProTeam Tactical Performance. They offer physical rehabilitation as well, because it is important when our officers or employees are injured to provide them the proper physical therapy and medical care treatment to get them back to work in a timely manner.

The Safe Neighborhoods Bureau was created to address the gun violence that we are experiencing within our community. It is made up of our Crime Gun Intelligence Center and the newly created Violent Gun Crime Unit (VGCU). The VGCU investigates crimes in which a firearm is used, especially where an individual has been shot and is expected to survive. If it turns to a fatal type of a shooting, of course, that falls within our Homicide division. The general stats we have since we stood up the Violent Gun Crimes Unit for January through December of 2023: our juvenile firearms arrests were 476, which was 64 percent with prior criminal cases; January through July of 2024: firearms arrest with 281 with 67 percent with prior. Part of our legislative agenda is to try to find a way to deal with gun violence within our communities because we have more and more juveniles who are being found and located in possession of firearms. It is leading to an increase in violence within the youth. We have other slides to talk about that. The juvenile district attorneys have been able to talk to judges, and we have been partnering with them to try to find resolutions to be able to not only take care of this from the criminal aspect, but also take care of this with the community engagement aspect and organizations that are out there, as well as our Clark County partners.

The Hollywood Area Command is coming online. It is going to break ground here shortly. That will probably take a couple of years, and, of course, staffing-wise, but we want to highlight that as well.

Then we have the Joint Emergency Training Institute—we refer to it as the "JETI"—that is by Sunrise Mountain in the Las Vegas area. It provides our active shooter training, our reality-based training, and our advanced officer skills training. Those are all the things that you may have seen in prior newscasts that highlight all of that readiness that we do to prepare for incidences that we have either experienced or we know that we could experience into the future. Then we have the Skye Canyon Substation within the City of Las Vegas—that is in the planning phase—and then the Joint Police and Fire Communication Center, which would be a 911 dispatch center.

We have the Clark County Detention Center, which had 55,740 bookings in 2024 [page 10]. To highlight some of the 2023 legislative things that were passed by this legislative body, we had the medication-assisted treatment program, voting in jails, and pretrial release hearings. These are the figures of the total number of bookings [page 11] and the category of crimes that are there.

The community outreach and the partnerships we do in the Office of Community Engagement is the Youth Interdiction Program, Community Alliances, and Youth School-Based Mentorship Programs [page 12].

And, of course, we are always recruiting [page 13]. If you have any family, friends, or any constituents who are wanting to join law enforcement, to not only be law enforcement officers, corrections officers, dispatchers, but we have a host of civilian positions that support us as well, you could go to LVMPD.com, protectthecity.com, or you could contact one of us up here. We could give you a card. We have QR codes on the back of them to increase our recruitment. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer.

Chair Miller:
I would like to thank you formally because just recently—thank you for your assistance in this—I was able to do a ride-along with Metro police and just so that folks know, when I do something, I do it. It was a Saturday night, second shift, the entire shift in one of the more, I will say, active communities in our county. I was raised by a Detroit cop. It was also very eye-opening, and even from the administrative side—we have questions that are coming, it is going to come on the record about response times to 911. That was also very eye-opening for me to see just how sophisticated and how specific systems have become in this day and age. I was also very fortunate to learn the communication, even at midnight on a Saturday night, that is going on between our youth. What is going on with the school district and our kids, and I do not want to give it away in case they are listening, but things they are doing that they think nobody knows about. When those calls are coming in that we may have a situation, some wellness concerns, because of what the kids are doing—I just was very thankful for that opportunity. With that, we have a number of questions.

Assemblymember Nadeem:
My question is regarding the traffic fatalities. We see that it is increasing. Every day we see fatal accidents, and even on the small roads, now it has become so dangerous to drive. What are the measures? I do not see any. You just mentioned there are measures that you are taking to make it less, but with what is our observation that is increasing day by day.

Joshua Martinez:
You may not see us out there, but we are out there. We will park on the side of the road and we will use our lights to deter. But also, of course, we are going to use our mechanisms like shooting radar. Those are not secrets. Being out there, but also sitting at intersections, just driving around and seeing the infractions that occur just like every other road user. When you are using the road, you see infractions. Same thing in patrol. I have spent 23 years in the agency, 18 of them spent in patrol, driving a black and white. You are going to see the infractions and they are going to happen. I have seen more and more enforcement, actually, just driving around as a citizen, as a road user as well. More people are pulled over on the side of the road and more citations are being issued. Our data shows that number increased over the last year and we could take that increase in traffic citations. I have even talked to our court counterparts over at the City of Las Vegas, and they have seen an increase as well. I am out there trying to explain what we have done on our part to try to change our staffing levels at peak hours to address those.

Assemblymember Yurek:
I look forward to working with you to address a lot of the issues that I know we are still trying to work through in public safety. I also want to just go on record and say thank you for your service. And again, as the Attorney General mentioned earlier, our hearts go out to our brothers and sisters in North Las Vegas who lost an important public servant yesterday, so let us keep them in our thoughts and prayers. Captain, you touched on it in your presentation, but I want to make sure we emphasize it here. I have personally been aware of what Sheriff McMahill has done with that health and wellness bureau. Literally, like nothing I have ever seen in Nevada law enforcement—to address the mental health issues and concerns that have just been so pervasive in law enforcement. I know you are aware and most of the members on this dais are aware, I served for 20 years. It is a very difficult profession, and I just want to commend on the record what Sheriff McMahill has done in that regard.

My question is related to that. Can you share any information about statistics that you are gathering on, for example, something as simple as where are we headed with officer suicides? Are we making a dent in some of the tragedies that occur in the lives of our law enforcement officers and their family members? Are you keeping stats, anything that we can use, as a basis to help further those efforts and share that information with other law enforcement agencies so that they can keep up with what your agency is doing?

Joshua Martinez:
I will reach out to our director at the Wellness Bureau to get some of those data points for you. I could say, because it has been discussed with us from the Sheriff, that 2024 was the first time in many years that we did not suffer a suicide in our agency, either a retiree or somebody who is currently employed. This Wellness Bureau, in the short time that it has been stood up, is playing a significant impact in what our officers are experiencing at a care level every single day.

Chair Miller:
That is a wonderful stat to hear.

Assemblymember Moore:
I have a question around domestic violence. Nevada is constantly on the top of the list in the country for domestic violence cases, and I myself am a domestic violence survivor. What is your response time when there are domestic violence calls coming in, especially when the 911 operator is made aware that there is a gun in the house and there are also minor children involved? How do you prioritize those calls?

Joshua Martinez:
Assemblymember Moore, based off the details we are receiving from the caller, that will categorize the response category. We have categories such as zero, one, two, and three, with zero being the highest. When the informant talks about guns, children in the home, a current occurrence occurring, the suspect or person who is committing the crime is there, that is going to be an immediate response. In cases where you receive things through 911—I personally have worked as a call taker in the building—the dispatchers will start to

communicate verbally across the room, because it is an open bay, to get other dispatchers to do things to assist them, so they could start getting the units and the medical and all the other things that they need there and resources deployed in a timely manner.

Chair Miller:
I want to remind members that you are always welcome to ask more specific questions offline as well, and, of course, the team is up here for the whole 120 days with us as well. We will see them every single morning.

Assemblymember Gray:
Sharing Assemblymember Yurek's comments also about the wellness unit, that is fantastic, and the stats looks like they are bearing out your efforts. You probably will not be able to answer today, but I would like to know, with your gun violence statistics, what percentage of those guns are illegally obtained by the perpetrators? I mean, do any of them have them legally or are they all illegal?

Joshua Martinez:
Assemblymember Gray, we will get you that answer. Speaking anecdotally, the majority of what we have seen are obtained illegally. But, of course, we do have some that obtain them legally—they will purchase it, and they will be the rightful owner of it. Then, unfortunately, they are involved in some sort of criminal behavior.

Chair Miller:
When you are able to give us those numbers, if you could submit that to the Committee, we would appreciate that.

Assemblymember Roth:
My question is in regard to retail theft. I appreciate the statistics you provided in your presentation. I am additionally looking at the very detailed crime statistics the state of Nevada provides regarding everything from property to violent crimes. One statistic that stands out to me is that crime has been considerably on a downward trend since Assembly Bill 236 of the 80th Session was passed, specifically in regard to larceny and theft crimes. In 2024 we had 42,846 crimes in regard to larceny, but if you look back in 2018, prior to A.B. 236 of the 80th Session passing, when that felony threshold was lowered, we had 74,028. With this downward trend in larceny crimes in the state over the last five years, what is the rationale for lowering that felony threshold, especially when we are seeing such an increase in inflation and when we would be then lowering that threshold below Texas, Wisconsin, Colorado, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Rhode Island, Utah, and Massachusetts?

Joshua Martinez:
Assemblymember Roth, the rationale is that you have folks who are coming in, it is not just one occurrence, it is multiple occurrences, and it could be the same person. If they do it and they come in today to your store and they take $500 worth of stuff and they do it again tomorrow, it is still a misdemeanor crime because they are not doing it all—but it is the same

actor, the same person. The stores are seeing the same people. We see that even within the small areas because a lot of these folks, they are going to steal from the area they are at. They are not going to travel far. They are going to their local CVS or Walgreens or other stores. They know what the law is because, obviously, they get consulted, and then all of a sudden, they know if they are over $1,250 in one theft, they are at a felony level, but if they do it multiple times over periods of days, they are under at that misdemeanor level.

Assemblymember Hardy:
Could you touch on, since we talked about it with the Department of Public Safety, their hiring? Where are you? Are you able to recruit? Are you having difficulty? As was mentioned, it is a very dangerous and difficult job. How is that going? Because to your point, the more officers you are able to have on the street, the more that is going to help in traffic and in all these other areas, if we have more officers available to respond.

Joshua Martinez:
We have had success in hiring. We are at full capacity with the positions in the jail, and then we are also close to being full within a few academies. Our separations have reduced significantly over the last two years as well because the workforce has gotten younger. We have had great success in recruitment. We have been able to get folks into our academies over the last couple of years. That is helping us to reduce crime and come up with these numbers of reduction in homicides, sex offenses, and some of the other aggravated assaults you see here because we are able to staff these area commands, and we are able to deploy them throughout the community. We are having success, but obviously, we are always recruiting, and that is why everything we do, we throw that recruitment out there.

Assemblymember Hardy:
We have seen a lot of these wrong-way collisions and fatalities. Could you touch on that because it just seems to be increasing. Do you have any indication of why that is happening? Is it because of DUIs, or there just seems to be getting more and more of these wrong-way drivers on the freeways and such. Do you have anything you could share regarding that?

Joshua Martinez:
I do not know the data, Assemblymember Hardy, off the top of my head, but I know anecdotally that DUI and impairment has led to a few of the wrong-way drivers. As we know, we lost an off-duty officer this year in a collision on Interstate 15, and that person was under the influence. So, obviously, that is a causal factor, and that was investigated by state police.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:
I was very heartened to see these crime statistics, to see that homicide is down 22 percent, motor vehicle theft is down 30 percent. Obviously, we always have more work to do, but clearly something is going right between your work and what we are doing. I just wondered if you could speak to what is informing those decreasing trends.

Joshua Martinez:
I think it is the community engagement aspect, working with the community, being able to engage with our youth, engage with our businesses that are in the community as well as all of our other community partners. Detective Hunt, to my left, works with our DREAM [Discover, Redirect, Empower, Advocate, and Mentor] program. When he was at area command in Summerlin, he worked with the youth there. He still does a lot of work and mentorship with the youth with our Office of Community Engagement. I think that has helped us reduce the crime overall, not only in juvenile population, but in adult population as well. Also working with our NGOS [Non-Governmental Organizations] to be able to address domestic violence, which we know that a majority of the homicides we have seen are domestic violence related. Overall, working with the community, but also making sure we are paying attention to our personnel deployment and where we are putting our cops, as we like to say in our business, You know, it is where we put our personnel that makes the difference. We are data driven at our agency. We have the Fusion Center, that maybe some of you have toured in the past, where you have all of the technology that is available to us as well. That is making a difference, and we are continuing to grow that technology platform as well, on top of all the other things we have done over the years to layer that in.

Chair Miller:
I just want on the record that the only speaker we have had so far has been Captain Martinez from Metro. It is day two; we are all a little rusty, and it is difficult to remember to always state our name before we speak, but just for the record, it has just been Captain Martinez.

Assemblymember Hansen:
Thank you for your service and to your families for the service they provide through you. I want to visit the question of, is larceny down, petty larceny down, in regard to my colleague's question regarding those thresholds and the reforms of 2019? I guess I am trying to understand. Just a personal anecdote, I had a son who worked in asset protection for a major retailer and certainly theft was not down, and they do not go after them. At least for this corporation, as my son would try to rush out the door, literally, their policy was, Do not, it is not worth the danger. The numbers in my mind on the retail theft—we say it is decreasing when we say crime is down, but is it really decreasing or are those corporations not pursuing? Because the thresholds are such that it does not make it worth someone endangering their life over, and they take the hit financially, because we know the millions that these businesses are losing. Is it down because we are locking up things in the store? I really would like to understand. Petty larceny—because we moved the threshold versus a felony—those numbers are down, but is it because people are not committing the crimes? I know that is probably more rhetorical, and you do not necessarily have the data to be able to examine that now.

Joshua Martinez:
I do not want to speak for the retail business. Those are their policies that they decide to enact. But for us, we are keeping accurate numbers in regard to the reports filed in regard to the crimes our officers respond to. But like I said, we work with the community. We have crime prevention specialists within our area commands. Their expertise is to go out there.

They could even go to all of your homes and provide you an overview of your security at the location you are at and provide you with information on things they know are best practices that will help you stay safe and reduce you being a victim of either theft, larceny, or even a violent crime. A lot of that, we refer to it as crime prevention through environmental design; locking up your items could be something that our crime prevention specialist would give. For instance, with the amount of pharmacy robberies that have taken place, we have worked with businesses, as well, to say, Hey, what can you do from a business aspect? If you put some bulletproof glass or some other things that would help, that would reduce the pharmacy burglaries or robberies that occur because you have folks who come in the middle of the night and try to go to the pharmacy, but then you have the ones that come in and use force to take the items. There are a few factors there, but really that partnership and locking it up is just one of those aspects. Like I said, these are reports we respond to.

Chair Miller:
Could you briefly explain—because I know that, as an evaluator myself, numbers can be manipulated and presented however we choose. Factual numbers, right? With statistics, it is often confusing, especially when we are saying that crime is going down, but people, in their experience or their awareness, to them it may seem that it is going up or it is rampant. Could you explain exactly where these statistics are coming from, where you report to on a national level and database? Because again, we all could pull different stats right now to support different claims. Could you explain where you are required to report to, even at the federal level?

Joshua Martinez:
I will try to do my due diligence here on explaining that. We have the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). That is the system we report to at the federal level. The categories of crimes you are seeing here [page 6, Exhibit E], from my time as a detective and being an administrator within an area command, these person crimes are the crimes we report to the federal government in NIBRS. These are vetted, the narratives are read; we have a whole analytic section that handles that. The same thing with the property crimes that I am showing here [page 7]. These are going to be crimes that would be reported to NIBRS as well. Things have changed a little bit so I will just speak to these two slides [pages 6 and 7]. If you want some more information on that, I could contact our analytical section. We have people who specialize in this. They make sure that the numbers are accounted for, and then they report those to the federal government.

Assemblymember Nadeem:
I want to take my question to a further level. Last month—I experienced, I myself experienced—I had to go somewhere, and my Google map told me that there are two accidents on Interstate 215 and three on Interstate 95 at the same time. And even then, when the kids go to school or college, we get so scared to send them because of the road rage. People do not stop at the stop sign, and they rush, everybody is rushing. Are there any measures that you are taking more aggressively to avoid those accidents, road accidents?

Joshua Martinez:
It is the same stuff that I talked about during the presentation—as you know, deployment of the officers who are out there, also using our public information officer to get out there and talk about traffic fatalities. We have made videos with our traffic section to go out there and talk about it as well. When they respond to fatal traffic collisions, they have been doing a YouTube video on scene, similar to our officer-involved shooting videos that we push out after one of those incidents. We could immediately start to educate the public, and hopefully these videos will capture their ability within their own driving behavior to change.

I know what you are saying about kids. I have kids myself and taught them how to drive, and it is very nerve-racking when you are out there. But being in a big city or anywhere you go, defensive driving is the best way to look at it. If you are at an intersection, light turns green, green does not mean go; look to the left, look to the right, and then proceed, in case somebody does not stop for that red light.

Chair Miller:
Without seeing any other questions, I will go ahead and close this agenda item. Thank you so much for your presentation and for responding to our questions. Our next presentation, and our last one for this morning, is from Washoe County Sheriff's Office. Joining us, we have Sergeant Jason Walker. I would like to remind everyone, especially our new members, that Sergeant Walker is also up here full time. He will be here every day and available, and you will get to know him very well.

Darin Balaam, Sheriff, Washoe County:
I want to promote Sergeant Walker. He is now Lieutenant Walker. He was promoted last year.

Chair Miller:
Congratulations.

Darin Balaam:
I have several subject matter experts in the audience, if there are any questions. With that, I am going to turn it over to Lieutenant Walker so he can do our presentation.

Jason Walker, Lieutenant, Patrol/Operations, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office:
I have 19 years at the Washoe County Sheriff's Office. I am happy to be back for my second session and proud to be presenting our Washoe County Sheriff's Office overview to the Assembly Committee on Judiciary. As Sheriff Balaam noted, we also have with me today government affairs liaison, Mary Sarah Kinner. She is my subject matter expert in a lot of things. Along with Sheriff Balaam, I also have our Forensic Science Division director, Steve Johnson, in case there are any questions that I might not know; they can help me out with those.

Moving on with the presentation, Washoe County's two main cities: Reno and Sparks [page 2, Exhibit F]. Townships include Incline Village, which is up at Lake Tahoe; Wadsworth; Vya; and Gerlach, which is in the Black Rock Desert. Population in the current census report is just a little short of 500,000 citizens, roughly a fifth the size of Clark County. It was founded in 1861. It is the second largest county in the great state of Nevada, encompassing 6,542 miles.

A little bit of our vision and mission statement: the Washoe County Sheriff's Office strives to ensure public safety by building trust and creating partnerships within the diverse communities in which we serve [page 3]. We will promote the dignity of all people supported by our words and actions through open communication while fostering an environment of professionalism, integrity, and mutual respect. Our core values are pride, professionalism, respect, integrity, dedication, as well as equality [page 4].

A little more about the Washoe County Sheriff's Office: we provide the law enforcement services for the unincorporated area of Washoe County [page 5]. We are also responsible for operating the only adult detention facility for pretrial detainees as well as sentenced misdemeanants within Washoe County. The agency has an authorized strength of 494 commissioned, 331 civilians, as well as 55 intermittent hourly employees. The agency has approximately 422 dedicated volunteers who donate their time to such programs as our Search and Rescue, Community Emergency Response Team, as well as our Citizens Homeland Security Council. Currently operating on a budget of a little over $152 million, with a little over $4 million in restricted funding such as grants and donations.

Sheriff Balaam is the 27th person elected to serve as a sheriff of Washoe County [page 6]. Sworn into office in 2019, has been reelected to a second term. It is well over 28 years of dedicated service to the Sheriff's Office, serving in all 3 divisions: Administration, Detention, and Operations. In 2023 we released our new strategic plan, which has guided us moving forward over the last several years. The plan is focused on four pillars: protect life in Washoe County, community engagement, leverage technology, as well as professional development of personnel.

The next slides are agency demographics with 61 percent male, 39 percent female [page 7]. The race demographics are listed below that. Next slide [page 8] includes the Washoe County demographics and toggling between the two slides [pages 7 and 8]—having supervised our backgrounds division, I am happy to announce that we are hiring those that work in our community. It was touched on in a couple other presentations that it is tough getting the applications in. Having worked in that backgrounds division, I consider myself the largest cheerleader. I think morale has a lot to do with the fact that people want to come and work for you, as well as word of mouth, how well they are treated at the agency. So again, happy to note that our county demographics closely mirrors the agency demographics.

Our Administrative Bureau is headed up by Chief Deputy Sandra Barboza [page 9]. She is responsible for backgrounds, research and development, records, field services, as well as oversight of the Regional Public Safety Training Center and the Forensic Science Division.

A few of the highlights from our Administrative Division: Again, they oversee the functions, services, and investigations that support all the operational areas of the agencies, dispatch services, conducting backgrounds on all employees, and training as required by POST (Peace Officers' Standards and Training) [page 10]. They also oversee research and development of new technology and management concepts, maintenance and troubleshooting of database systems and computer programs, and coordination of fleet services. Two highlights: in 2023 we moved on to Fleet 3 in a quarter 2 release. What that gave us is ease of video-based evidence dissemination and a more effective workflow between the district attorney's office as well as the public defender's office. It includes Axon Interview. It assembles all our videos and interviews into one complete case. Another large program that we endeavored was our radio system modernization. The Training Compliance Unit upgraded the entire radio system; all handheld and in-car radios were replaced to the newest technology.

Another portion of our Administrative Division is our concealed carry and weapons permitting with a current total in process of 482 [page 11]. Happy to announce that our days to process is down to 40. I believe I put out a stat—I would have to look back at our 2023 presentation—I thought it was a little closer to 70 days. What I can attribute that to, again, with the help of Department of Public Safety (DPS), they have added records personnel, which helps us to match fingerprints up. That was our largest delay. In moving forward, I think that is going to progress to get better.

Chief Martinez touched on NIBRS [page 12]. We are also utilizing the NIBRS reporting, which stands for National Incident-Based Reporting System. We transitioned to NIBRS in 2019. At the end of that year, we were able to successfully meet the reporting criteria to be a NIBRS-certified reporting agency. I believe their reporting criteria was less than 2 percent error rate. It is nice to hit that error rate. Again, looking at all reports, when you report them to NIBRS, they look at it with a fine-tooth comb. We have two staff members who actually looked at a little over 15,000 reports, and we get email after email after email, and they say, We need to change this for this, for the proper reporting. The reporting is to the nth degree with NIBRS. It is actually nice to have those dedicated staff there to help us to report accurately.

Another big portion of our Administrative Division is community engagement, which focuses on a collaborative, community-oriented approach to building strong partnerships and promoting public safety and trust [page 13]. Through the Community Engagement Office, Washoe County Sheriff's Office maintains the consistent presence within the community, both virtually and in person, in addition to the office's law enforcement function. Just touching on a couple of our major community outreach events, there is a Shop with the Sheriff, Christmas in July, Regional Law Enforcement and Faith-Based Community Breakfast, as well as a Guns and Hoses golf event, which is law enforcement and fire department, that benefited the Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation.

Another main bureau that we have at the Sheriff's Office is our Detention Bureau, headed up by Chief Deputy Darrin Rice, and includes Detention Administration, Detention Operations, as well as the Detention Services Division [page 14]. A couple of the stats there from our

detention highlights: one notable unit is our Detention Services Unit (DSU), which was created in 2019. It was formed to establish connections with community providers to enhance release services and increase successful transition back into the community [page 15, Exhibit F]. Our DSU responded to a little over 4,100 requests and sent out 1,580 program applications to our inmate population. We transported 616 inmates to alternative programs of incarceration with our Inmate Assistance program.

Our medication-assisted treatment (MAT) program, which we touched on in the 2023 Session: we inducted 21 new participants from the Washoe County Jail. We also continued 209 MAT participants, and I checked into that because I was not sure on the verbiage. What that means is that we happen to come into the custody of a person who was already on a MAT program. We were able to continue their medication while they were in our care and custody. I think that is notable—MAT programs, we know they are going to continue across the nation. We can see the value in those, particularly to prevent the recidivism. Our MAT participants increased from 130 in 2023 to 198 in 2024. That is a 35 percent increase. Proud to put that out there. Also, with our Detention Services Unit, state social services discharge planners, and programs are listed there for our in-custody inmates.

A couple of our detention stats: our average daily population at one point in time was up to 1,247 inmates [page 16]. That is a handful. As far as our management level goes, it is 72 inmates to 1 deputy. That is our ratio of management. We are direct supervision. There is 112 inmates per housing unit. There are 16 housing units. Our average length of stay is hovering right at 12.5 days. Our total inmates booked was 14,513. You can see that release stat there. It is about 100 more than that. We are at about a break even, and the asterisk there basically says each occurrence of individuals booked. If Jason Walker got arrested five times, that stat is in there as far as being booked and being released. That is what that asterisk is for. To the left of that, you can see our daily population by gender: male, female, as well as a race breakdown below that.

Apologies for the small text on this slide [page 17]. I am not that good at PowerPoint, but it is the best I could do. I highlighted some of those numbers there. With the care and custody of the inmates, it is also the transportation, and let us just break that down to the nth degree. Transportation of inmates to video arraignments, Second Judicial District Court, Reno and Sparks Justice Courts, Incline Village Justice Court, Reno and Sparks Municipal Courts, and any other medical transports. At the top of the slide, you can see it is a little over 10,000. The bottom of the slide there, it is at 15,000. We are moving bodies where they need to go all day long.

Another major bureau that we have is our Operations Bureau, run by Chief Deputy Corey Solferino [page 18]. It is our Patrol Division, Incline Patrol Division, as well as our Special Operations Division. Most of our business and operations come from Washoe County Dispatch [page 19]. That is police, emergency medical service, fire. Total for the year, we are a little over 139,000 calls. Of those a little less than 30,000 for 911 calls, and 109,230 non-emergency calls for Reno Valley Patrol, Incline Patrol, Gerlach Patrol, our Mobile Outreach Safety Team, as well as our special operations teams.

Also in our Operations Division is our Search and Rescue, Regional Aviation Enforcement Unit (RAVEN), which is our helicopter program, as well as our newly created drone program [page 20]. In 2024 our search and rescue calls totaled 273 requests with 85 actual responses. Our RAVEN helicopter program calls for service totaled 51 requests, 38 actual responses, totaling a little over 248 flight hours. They were able to accomplish 54 training flights, 22 patrol flights, as well as responses to 8 fires in the area. Our newly created drone program had 17 requests with 17 actual responses.

In our Patrol Division, we work on a stratified policing model, which incorporates place-based policing, person-focused, problem-solving, and community-based in one methodology [page 21]. We have accountability meetings weekly. It is intelligence-led policing with real-time crime analytics. We look at repeat calls for services, significant incidents, crime patterns, problem locations, and problem areas.

Here is an example of a very recent—we call it a "hot place" [page 22]. One of our local construction companies was getting hit with copper thefts, and you can see the four notes there in that top circle up towards that center right. Those are recent cases. What we do with these hot places, obviously we identify that there is a pattern. This place is being hit with copper thefts. What we do is put directed enforcement in that area to prevent—oftentimes you just put a marked unit there, and crime does not happen. It is sort of like what we were talking about with traffic control. That is a culture change. It is very difficult. I rode a police motorcycle successfully for many, many years, and I will be the first one to say there is never the police around when you need one. But like the captain said, we are out there. You may not see us. We are just sitting right there and you just drive right by. Again, with this bulletin: if there are any known offenders in the area, the list of the cases, and a map with the radius.

Last but not least is our Forensic Science Division [page 23]. They are responsible for 13 of the 17 counties in northern and central Nevada and one county in California. There are local, state, federal, and tribal agencies within these counties. The scope of the services they provide are breath alcohol calibration, controlled substances, crime scenes, DNA, firearms, as well as alcohol and drug toxicology [page 24].

Director Johnson provided me a few of the stats here [page 25]. You can see controlled substances is a major focus there. Our top six identified substances and samples analyzed were methamphetamine, fentanyl and their derivatives, cocaine, cannabis, heroin, and psilocin. It is also responsible for DNA. There were 1,154 assignments created, 1,011 reports completed, as well as testing for firearms through NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistic Information Network), our firearms database, as well as DUI-related toxicology.

Our 2025 Session initiatives are public safety, traffic safety, anything in and around the detention center, as well as the civil process [page 26]. Our 2023 program implementations that we are proud to put into place were: Assembly Bill 139 of the 82nd Session, collecting MENA [Middle Eastern or North African] stats for any subject stops or traffic stops; Assembly Bill 156 of the 82nd Session, which is a continuation of growth of our MAT program success; Assembly Bill 286 of the 82nd Session, which is voting in the jail; and

Assembly Bill 121 of the 82nd Session, which was the mail in the jail as well as medical overnight stays. If there was somebody who was in our care and custody and they were out at a hospital for over 24 hours, they were able to contact, or a supervisor was able to contact, that family member. I do not have the current stats on that; I do not believe we had the opportunity to do that, but it is in place.

That concludes my presentation. Thank you for your time again. I will be here for the duration, as well as Mary Sarah Kinner, and we are happy to take any questions and hopefully provide any answers.

Chair Miller:
Lieutenant, it is always an excellent way to end your presentation by telling the room that you have implemented two of the Chair's bills from last session. Very nice touch. I did also notice that the slide before that got really tiny too. I am wondering if that is a tactic as well, but with that, we will go ahead and begin with our first question.

Assemblymember Roth:
I was hoping you could touch a little bit more on the mental health unit, if you could give a little bit of an overview for the Committee on the successes that the county has seen there.

Darin Balaam:
We have several mental health units, so I will kind of break it up. We have our mental health unit, which we have had for many years, where a lot of the mental health inmates go. But last year, we were privileged to get a grant from the state for a jail-based mental health unit. That unit is very specific—we have changed the color, we have changed the uniforms of the deputies, and we have changed the furniture. We have seven clinicians that are in there, and we have ten specifically trained deputies. We have only been in there about eight months tracking that data. It was a two-year grant that we received from the state, and we are tracking everything from their social interactions, how they are eating, how they are taking their meds, how they are sleeping, what is their hygiene.

What we have seen is, we have about 30 inmates in there now, and a year ago before this program, many of those inmates were only allowed to come out 1 or 2 at a time because of their instability. We are seeing now all 30 are out all the time. They are taking their meds, they are eating, they are socializing. The programs that we are having with our clinicians—when they are not there, our deputies are also giving those programs. We are seeing a great success where individuals who may be coming in with crisis and mental health issues, they are now stabilizing. We do not restore in our detention facilities, so we can stabilize them. Thus, when they have to go to Lakes Crossing Center, if they are ordered over there, it is cutting that stay down dramatically. I know during mental health day, I believe we will be here presenting on that specific unit because we will be looking for future funding on that, and Clark County is doing that as well.

Assemblymember Hansen:
I appreciate the services. We have had such tremendous growth. I know that you have to deal with all of that extra growth and not only law enforcement, you are helping during terrible fires that are in the forest coming into our urban areas, protecting homes from looting, and then of course, even dealing with snow-related issues and the protection and safety of people. You have a very diverse set of problems you deal with.

I wanted to deal specifically with recruitment. I think we have visited the subject before, and I am curious when you talk about community engagement, if you are going into the middle schools, the high schools, trying to see if you can get an interest from young people. The reason I target that age specifically, having had a son pursuing law enforcement, finding out how difficult recruitment was, that California was coming to Nevada—to the university—to recruit. We had a sit down with the chief of police in one of the cities, a big city in California, and asked him, Why are you coming all the way here to Sparks to recruit? He told us frankly, We have really got to widen our net, and background checks are the biggest stumbling block for recruits. Fortunately, our son was able to get through it, and it is pretty rigorous. I am wondering if we are able to get the youth before they—their frontal lobes are not fully developed till they are 25—are we getting in there trying to help the youth know this could be a really great career opportunity but maybe they want to avoid some things that might really work against them, not only in law enforcement careers but in other careers?

Darin Balaam:
What I can say is we are in the high schools. They reach out for their career fairs and we are discussing that. We are in the elementary schools in Sun Valley, hitting them at even a younger age. We are fortunate; several of us, and I am one of them, teach for Truckee Meadows Community College and at the university. I have actually hired three of my students as they got of age, and some of them even as a civilian, because at 18, if you have a high school degree, you qualify for many of the positions on the civilian side. We are in there; we are actively engaging. The one thing I will say about recruitment, I was fully staffed in January on the commission side. Now with the January retirements, I am down by a few, but the best thing last year that I use as a litmus test is 34 percent of all the recruits we brought in last year were referred internally from our employees. That goes back to the culture, I believe, of what we are promoting within.

I will say, I believe it was DPS, the hardest one for us right now to recruit is our dispatchers. We are having a tough time there. They have a very difficult job. The Forensic Science Division is also tough just because they have a long training session. For us, we are in those high schools, we are in the elementaries, and then we have people who teach in the universities, and we also attend their career fairs.

Chair Miller:
Thank you for that comment about dispatchers having a very difficult job. I do not think people realize that the person listening, taking those 911 phone calls, hearing that activity, and hearing those pleas and requests on a regular basis, it is a lot. Thank you for acknowledging that, again, just for the good of everyone so that we are all learning up here.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:
I want to start with a quick shout out to Director Johnson, who invited me to come tour your lab this last year. It was incredible to see the work that you are doing, and I hope you will extend that invitation to my colleagues and see if maybe we can get a group of us to come see what you are doing.

Steven Johnson, Director, Forensic Science Division, Washoe County Sheriff's Office:
Yes, we would absolutely have anybody from this Committee or any other that wants to tour the lab.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:
I just had a question about the crime stats we saw in Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's presentation, that crimes were going down in that area. I just wondered, one, if you could get those stats to us; and two, even if you could tell us anecdotally, do you see similar trends in the Washoe area, or is it different in our area?

Jason Walker:
We are seeing similar trends. We just had our yearly accountability meeting in January because we were a little bit late on that. We are seeing some crime stats trend lower, while we are seeing some other ones trend a little higher. What that does is allow us to tweak our response a little bit, put a little bit more direct enforcement into that. What I can do is get our notes from our year-end accountability meeting and provide that to the Committee, if you all are interested in that. I would be happy to present that.

Chair Miller:
Yes, thank you for that.

Assemblymember González:
I was wondering if you could speak to how many people are currently in jail for failure to appear in court.

Jason Walker:
That is an excellent question that I do not have an answer to. From working in several locations, not only as a patrol supervisor or as a deputy out on the street, as well as working in intake, I did note that in my experience, it might be one-fifth of the population. There are a lot of failure to appear (FTA) warrants are out there. I have been in conversation with a couple of other people who are here as lobbyists, and we are interested in discussing if there is an opportunity for us to make that better. Oftentimes when persons come in for an FTA, it is just because the judge wants to see them. And again, having been on that end, and it could be somebody who we wrote a traffic ticket to that just happened to be driving too fast, and we wrote them a citation that they just happened to forget about, and then having to complete that circle and see them again and arrest them. It is just a regular person like me

that happened to forget their court date. Those are one of those ones that if there is some prevention method that we could prevent them from going down to our jail—not that our jail is not safe, clean, and quiet—but if there is a better avenue to prevent that FTA, we are on board.

Chair Miller:
By FTA, you mean failure to appear?

Jason Walker:
Yes, ma'am.

Chair Miller:
Thank you for that. We all in every committee have people up here from different educational and professional backgrounds and some know the different acronyms and the lingo and some do not. I just wanted to clarify that. I have a final question for you. I am going back to the presentation. Because we are up here asking about data and statistics, when you mentioned NIBRS, that everyone is now just recently transitioning to, you mentioned the 2 percent error. Is that an error on the part of the system or an error on our end, of data entry?

Jason Walker:
The National Incident-Based Reporting System is a lens that seems a little bit different than regular reporting. What I mean by that is, if I arrest somebody for battery, NIBRS reports it a little bit different on the national level. We do not use battery, we use assault. What I mean by that 2 percent error rate is that I will, in my ability, put my report out there, type out my narrative, and it gets sent off to prosecution. The NIBRS professional workers who are on that end look at it, and they might respond back and go, Hey, Walk, you reported this wrong. Instead of code 201, it needs to be code 202; and the reason they are on that end as far as the filter is to ensure that I make sure I report the code correctly. That is what the NIBRS professional staff does. If I can increase them by tenfold, I would. Every time I go down there, they got a stack like this, and I make sure and say hello, just to make sure they get the motivation they need to ensure that the reports we put out are within the acceptable accuracy level.

Chair Miller:
Thank you for that, because you answered my other question, which was how much of it was based on miscategorizing and such. It is nice to hear that there is an actual quality control team of humans behind the scenes who are doing this. I know that even last session, with one of my bills, it was because, again, the difference between the Uniform Crime Reporting and the NIBRS and what is required by the feds and such. It seems right now the federal system is NIBRS, but many of our local jurisdictions and states as well are not aligned. Is there an agenda or a plan to align to that reporting system so that we are reporting apples to apples, or is that something that, in functionality on the ground, does not work?

Darin Balaam:
What I would tell you is, it is difficult to mirror, because the feds are always changing those definitions. I would say at the state level, ours are good. They fit our codes and our statutes of what we want for crimes. They just look a little different on the federal side. That is why we need a lot of staff there to make sure we fit what an assault is in the federal system. They are all the same crimes. They just like different definitions.

Chair Miller:
When you say the NIBRS staff, are they our NIBRS staff or the federal NIBRS staff who is doing this quality control?

Darin Balaam:
It is our staff. They are located at the sheriff's office.

Chair Miller:
With that, I do not see any other questions for you. Thank you for your presentation. Did you have a final comment?

Darin Balaam:
I would offer up to anybody who wants to come tour, especially our jail-based management mental health unit, please come tour that. It is very unique. The data that we are collecting, our medical provider that is contracted there is actually taking that and moving it to their national sites. We are doing a lot of great things there. The one thing we did not mention with that, and it kind of ties to your question, Assemblymember Roth, we received the Pinnacle Award last year; we were the second detention facility in the nation, and part of that was mental health. We are opioid treatment program, medication-assisted treatment, and now mental health. Those three categories. We are the second in the nation to receive that. Please come tour the Forensic Science or Detention Division.

Chair Miller:
Often in these rooms, we hear about the challenges and the mistakes that are being made and we do not hear about the great things and the service that is being provided. I know when I was on the Assembly Committee on Education, there was a group that used to say, Hey, let me tell you, you know, just a great thing we are doing because we got beat up this whole last hour or so. When you come in here again, we need to hear—and we know the majority of folks are out there doing the right things for the right reasons—but please always let us know, let us get it on the record all of the great things that are happening as well. Thank you for letting us know that.

With that, I will go ahead and close the agenda item. That was our last presentation for today. We will move on to our last agenda item, which is public comment. We will first begin with public comment here in Carson City. Not seeing anyone, is there anyone there in Las Vegas who would like to approach and make public comment? Also not seeing anyone, we will open the lines for anyone who would like to make public comment on the phone. [There was no one.] I will go ahead and close public comment.

We have no other business before us. I will see you all at 8 a.m. tomorrow. This meeting is adjourned [at 10:09 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

_____
Traci Dory
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

_____
Assemblymember Brittney M. Miller, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
	C	Aaron D. Ford, Attorney General	PowerPoint presentation titled "Office of the Attorney General, Assembly Committee on Judiciary 2025"
	D	George Togliatti, Director, Department of Public Safety and Kristi Defer, Senior Fiscal Officer, Director's Office, Department of Public Safety	PowerPoint presentation titled "Nevada Department of Public Safety, 2025 Legislative Session, 2025-2027 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY"
	E	Joshua Martinez, Captain, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department	PowerPoint presentation titled "Presentation to Assembly Judiciary, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department"
	F	Jason Walker, Lieutenant, Legislative Liaison, Administrative Services Division, Washoe County Sheriff's Office	PowerPoint presentation titled "Washoe County Sheriff's Office"