

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OPERATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

**Eighty-Third Session
February 25, 2025**

The Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections was called to order by Chair Erica Mosca at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 3 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda [[Exhibit A](#)], the Attendance Roster [[Exhibit B](#)], and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Chair
Assemblymember Cecelia González, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Lisa K. Cole
Assemblymember Jill Dickman
Assemblymember Rebecca Edgeworth
Assemblymember Sandra Jauregui
Assemblymember Brittney M. Miller
Assemblymember Daniele Monroe-Moreno
Assemblymember Cinthia Zermeño Moore
Assemblymember Hanadi Nadeem

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblymember Brian Hibbetts (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Haley Proehl, Committee Policy Analyst
Aaron MacDonald, Committee Counsel
Mackenzie Scruggs, Committee Manager
Kristi Howard, Committee Secretary
George Whalen, Committee Assistant



OTHERS PRESENT:

Dawn Etcheverry, President, Nevada State Education Association
Catherine Nielsen, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Calen Evans, President, Washoe Education Association
Alexander Marks, Deputy Executive Director of Field & Communications, Nevada State Education Association
Terri Laird, Executive Director, Retired Public Employees of Nevada
Lynne Ballatore, State President, Retired Public Employees of Nevada
John Abel, Director of Governmental Affairs, Las Vegas Police Protective Association
Ryan Beaman, District Vice President, Professional Fire Fighters of Nevada
Tess Opferman, representing American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Retirees
Steven J. Horner, President, Nevada State Education Association-Retired
Janine Hansen, State President, Nevada Families for Freedom
Cyrus Hojjaty, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Katie Banuelos, Secretary, Libertarian Party of Washoe County, Nevada
Michael Ryan, Private Citizen, Pahrump, Nevada
Casey Rodgers, Private Citizen, Minden, Nevada
Ryan Vortisch, Northern Nevada Democracy Coordinator, Silver State Voices
Eric Jeng, Executive Director, One Asian Pacific Islander American Nevada
Chanel Cassanello, Campaign Manager, All Voting is Local Nevada
Paula Luna, Deputy Director, Battle Born Progress
Mathilda Miller, Government Relations Director, Native Voters Alliance Nevada
Lynn Chapman, State Treasurer, Independent American Party
Joshua Skaggs, Legislative Affairs Director, Nevada Republican Party
Joy Trushenski, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Susan Ruch, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Penny Brock, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Jim DeGraffenreid, National Committeeman, Nevada Republican Party
Ellen Gifford, Private Citizen, Nevada
Iris Stone, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Kaylah Maese, Civil Rights and Policy Analyst, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada

Chair Mosca:

[Roll was called. Committee rules and protocols were reviewed.] Welcome everyone here in Carson City, as well as those joining in Las Vegas and over the Internet. We are going to be taking items out of order from the agenda, and we will first hear Assembly Joint Resolution 6. This measure urges Congress to extend the Social Security Fairness Act. Though social security is not an issue typically covered by this Committee, A.J.R. 6 is part of our legislative operations work as a Committee since it is urging Congress to do something, and it is a joint resolution.

We are very grateful we have Assemblymember Miller here to present this joint resolution. Assemblymember Miller, you may begin when you are ready.

Assembly Joint Resolution 6: Urges Congress to extend the Social Security Fairness Act. (BDR R-32)

Assemblymember Brittney M. Miller, Assembly District No. 5:

Chair Mosca and members of the Committee, I am pleased to present Assembly Joint Resolution 6. This resolution urges Congress to extend the Social Security Fairness Act. First, I need to briefly explain the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Reduction Provision [*sic*]. Both reduced or eliminated social security benefits for people who earned both a pension and a social security benefit. You already know that we pay into social security through withholding from our gross income. With some occupations or places of employment, they also offer pensions.

I want you to keep two key points in mind. First, social security is not an entitlement or assistance program. It is money literally withheld or taken from our paychecks over the years that will be returned to us based on multiple factors and a formula that weighs heavily on individual earnings and withholdings. Secondly, this primarily impacts public employees who have worked in both scenarios throughout their life where they have paid into social security but have also earned a pension.

I will use myself as an example. I am a second career teacher who has previously paid into—and has already earned—my 40 credits for social security. But because I am now in a public pension, or PERS [Public Employees' Retirement System] here in Nevada, the Windfall Reduction Provision Act [*sic*—which was enacted in 1983—could have reduced my earned social security benefits by up to half. So, when I retire, I will get PERS, and my earned social security benefits will be reduced. I checked on my own record and according to my own individual social security statement in December 2024, they [Social Security Administration] were already estimating that they would reduce my social security by \$700 a month. I am clearly not the only one in this situation. In fact, this affects more than two million employees in the United States: mostly teachers, firefighters, and police officers; federal, state, and local government employees; and spouses and surviving spouses of teachers, firefighters, police officers, and government employees. Again, this is for people who have paid into both social security and have a pension.

On January 5, 2025, House Resolution 82, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023—a bill Senator Lisa Murkowski has cosponsored for over 20 years—finally became law. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our own Nevada public service unions and advocates who lobbied Congress. Many did go to Washington, D.C., to support in this effort and celebrate this victory. The Act repealed the Government Pension Offset, which reduced or completely eliminated spousal social security benefits for public employees, regardless of whether their spouse paid social security taxes or not. It is estimated that the repeal of the Government Pension Offset restored social security benefits to nine out of ten public employees who lost their entire spousal social security benefit. Those previously

affected by the offset will now see an increase between \$700 to \$1,200 a month in their social security benefits. The Social Security Fairness Act also repealed the Windfall Elimination Provision. About 11.8 percent—almost 12 percent—of Nevadans are entitled to both a pension and social security benefits. Now they will see their social security benefits increase by as much as \$558 a month.

More than two million government employees and retirees in the United States now benefit from this repeal. The restoration of full social security benefits for public employees who also paid into social security was long overdue. The last few generations of public servants—teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other dedicated government employees—had been penalized by being stripped of their benefits by the reduction or elimination of their social security—social security that they rightfully earned. It is actually quite sinister that these employees would have received less social security benefits when they legally paid their fair share of social security taxes when privately employed. The Social Security Fairness Act retroactively applies to monthly social security benefits from 2023 forward. So thankfully, these employees will receive backdated payments for all of 2024 which on average equates to \$4,320 a person. This is great—for those who retired last year. But what about the others—those who retired years ago, or even decades ago? Where is all their money?

Assembly Joint Resolution 6 is simple. It urges Congress to enact legislation to extend the Social Security Fairness Act to retroactively apply from December 2013 forward. This would allow social security beneficiaries to receive even more backdated payments of their duly earned social security benefits. If Congress were to pass such legislation, Nevadans who had been collecting a pension and social security benefits since 2013 would be entitled to roughly \$47,000 in return payments for the amount of their social security benefits that were reduced between 2013 and 2023. With the current cost of groceries, housing, and healthcare, imagine how impactful this would be for our retired public servants. Some of them are your parents and your grandparents. This measure also urges the President to sign such legislation if passed by Congress and requires that a copy of A.J.R. 6 be transmitted to the President, the presiding officers of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and Nevada's congressional delegation. Thank you for the opportunity to present A.J.R. 6. I hope you join me in supporting this resolution. I am open for any questions.

Chair Mosca:

Any questions from Committee members?

Assemblymember Cole:

I have two questions. The first question is I generally understand how social security works if I were to collect it myself after I retire, but can you explain a little bit more about how the spousal benefit works, and the surviving spousal benefit? Then my other question, what will be the dollar amount that we anticipate the federal government would pay out in that extra ten years of back pay?

Assemblymember Miller:

Again, social security is quite complicated and there are all kinds of formulas we can refer to online and such. There are multiple forms of social security: social security if someone is disabled, social security survivor's benefits if you were to lose a spouse or a parent. So there are all different types, and those are given when your spouse has paid into it. Maybe you are a nonworking spouse, just like you would be a nonworking or dependent-upon-yourself minor. So those are available, but it is all calculated based on how much you put in.

We do not decide how much we put into social security. It is the percentage that the government dictates and takes. People do have a choice to pay into social security, so if you are a business owner or an independent contractor, you do have a choice to do it. I would personally advise to do it. That is what I will say. I do not want to get deep into the formula. Your second question was the estimated cost. I do not have that estimated cost. I know that there have been some opposition emails coming in with all kinds of different numbers. I am not sure where those numbers came from but no, I do not have the numbers of the cost.

Chair Mosca:

Thank you. I appreciated your presentation because it really seems to me like, Yes, we paid into it. That makes sense to me. Do you know why they chose 2023 when they made the legislation?

Assemblymember Miller:

I have no specific—[Chair Mosca nodded.]—right.

Assemblymember Nadeem:

My question is what are the reasons that there is a reduction in social security payments?

Assemblymember Miller:

You mean why originally it was being cut? I do not have the exact technical answer to that, of why it was enacted in 1983. I can find it for you.

Assemblymember Nadeem:

But why is there a reduction in the payment?

Assemblymember Miller:

Maybe you are asking how the provision worked? The way it would work is, again, social security is based on what you pay into it. Keep in mind, this is not impacting everyone. It is only impacting people who have been in both situations. So, if a teacher were to start their career at 22 years old and worked their entire career in the system and under PERS, it does not impact them because very likely most 22-year-olds have not earned—even if they had some part-time jobs—40 credits. They had not earned enough to really retire on.

It is the people who have worked—I should not say worked, I should say, had paid into social security at a substantial level, which the last time it was told to me was \$27,000 or more a year and that you have earned your 40 credits. Now there was an exception. If you

had worked 30 years, paying into social security at \$27,000 or more a year, then you were exempt from this. So even personally, I was like, Well, I can leave teaching, get out, get back into social security, then they could not touch either my social security or whatever I had accumulated in PERS. But it was a reduction because—also as a teacher now in Nevada, I no longer pay social security. I am no longer paying into social security, but I have earned my 40 credits throughout my life. Because I am not paying anymore, that is part of the basis for it.

Assemblymember Dickman:

I was just curious. Someone asked why they did it in 2023. What made you decide to go to 2013? How did you decide on that number?

Assemblymember Miller:

Maybe the same way Congress decided on 2023. Personally, I believe that we should go back to the day of retirement and from the moment that each individual retired and this benefit was not provided, but I know that becomes very difficult in calculating, figuring, even locating and identifying retirees. I also considered the age of most people. Again, we are retiring later. There is a generation—I have friends whose parents all talk about how they all retired at 55, 57 years old. That is not necessarily the case right now, but I feel that ten years is still a substantial return on your withholdings. Again, you see about \$47,000 per person, but it was just a time frame I thought was enactable and able to calculate. That is a long way of saying it was just arbitrary; I thought, Yeah, let us go back ten years.

Chair Mosca:

It makes sense to me. Any other questions? [There were none.] We will hear testimony in support of Assembly Joint Resolution 6.

Dawn Etcheverry, President, Nevada State Education Association:

Educators from Nevada have been working alongside the National Education Association for over 40 years to repeal the steal of GPO [Government Pension Offset]/WEP [Windfall Elimination Provision]. During the last two years, Nevada educators have sent thousands of letters and made hundreds of calls to our federal representatives, encouraging them to sign on to the bill. The signing of the Social Security Fairness Act on January 5 is a day not one of us will forget anytime soon. The Nevada State Education Association would like to thank Assemblymember Miller for bringing this joint resolution, and we are ready again to set our advocacy at the federal level to make sure this is a reality. To answer the Assemblymember's question, President Reagan decided we were double-dipping, and that is why it was enacted—why we could not collect both.

Catherine Nielsen, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

I am actually testifying as the daughter of a retired state employee. My mother was the tape librarian for the State of Nevada for over 25 years, which used to be the Department of Information Technology. She currently gets about \$385 from social security, but all of that goes to Medicare, so she actually receives nothing from her social security. A majority of people actually end up having to pay in and they do not break even like my mom does.

The average person pays about \$185 a month for their Medicare on top of what they are paying out of their social security. This would greatly benefit a lot of our retired state employees and particularly my parents.

Calen Evans, President, Washoe Education Association:

We represent all of the certified professionals in the Washoe County School District. For decades, the GPO and the WEP unfairly reduced or eliminated social security benefits for public employees, educators, firefighters, police officers, and others who have dedicated their lives to serving Nevada. These provisions robbed retirees of the benefits they rightfully earned, leaving many struggling financially after a lifetime of public service. The 2025 repeal was a major victory, thanks to relentless advocacy from educators in this state and across the country for decades. However, the repeal only applied to benefits from December of 2023 forward, leaving behind thousands of public employees who retired earlier and suffered the same unfair restrictions.

Assembly Joint Resolution 6 calls on Congress to fully correct this as much as possible, extending those releases back to 2013, just ensuring that all affected retirees get what they rightfully earned. We thank the Assemblymember for bringing this resolution forward.

Alexander Marks, Deputy Executive Director of Field & Communications, Nevada State Education Association:

Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) fights for our members on the job and in retirement. Together with educators across the country, NSEA members advocated for retirement fairness for decades and finally won an important victory late last year with the repeal of WEP/GPO. All six Nevada federal delegate members voted in favor of this. Nevada State Education Association supported the Retirement Fairness Act [*sic*] to eliminate the GPO and WEP, which discouraged Nevadans from becoming educators—especially those mid-career considering a new job in education. The issue of retirement fairness was especially acute here in Nevada as our state struggled to fill thousands of vacant educator positions. With the largest class sizes in the country, the job of a Nevada educator is hard enough. The WEP/GPO only made matters worse. Over 35,000 Nevadans have had their social security benefits reduced to this, including thousands of retired educators. The WEP reduced social security benefits of people who work both in jobs covered and not covered by social security over the course of their careers—for example, educators compelled to take part-time or summertime jobs to make ends meet.

In an internal survey Nevada educators conducted last year, we found 30 percent of our members work a second job during the school year and another 34 percent work a summer job. With educator pay lagging behind the market, a second job is a necessity for thousands of Nevada educators. Penalties imposed on these struggling workers by WEP/GPO is just plain wrong. The repeal of WEP/GPO is an astonishing accomplishment. The passage of the Social Security Fairness Act corrects a 40-year wrong, but only beginning in 2024. The next step for true fairness in retirement is to make the repeal of WEP/GPO retroactive. The NSEA supports A.J.R. 6 to put Nevada on the record supporting another ten years of retroactivity.

Terri Laird, Executive Director, Retired Public Employees of Nevada:

We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded almost 50 years ago with the primary mission of this organization to protect the pension and benefits earned by all public employees, retirees, as well as those still working and hoping to earn that coveted PERS pension.

We are here today in support of Assembly Joint Resolution 6, that urges Congress to extend the Social Security Fairness Act from one to ten years. This may be a lofty goal, but we appreciate the effort from this body. I know our members who have been penalized for years by the WEP/GPO are so grateful for the long-awaited passage of H.R. [House Resolution] 82 last year. Retired Public Employees of Nevada has followed this issue since it arose many years ago. We joined forces on several attempts with the California Public Employees Association [*sic*] and sent several resolutions as well, though none of those previous attempts succeeded.

It is interesting to note that many organizations did not hold out much hope for the latest effort, though this attempt did have bipartisan support. Our latest resolutions and petitions apparently did help get it over the top. Our members in the north and south worked hard getting petitions signed and delivered, and our office also mailed out several resolutions to our Nevada delegation last year.

We are elated with this success. Public employees in Nevada and 13 other states did their part too. It was a joint venture each and every time, and we are happy to see it end. We have also encouraged our members to weigh in today during this hearing. Hopefully, we will be hearing from a few more of them this afternoon who may share what that passage meant to them.

Lynne Ballatore, State President, Retired Public Employees of Nevada:

I do want to start out by saying ditto for the testimony of Terri Laird, but I wanted to give a personal story. Personally, the WEP has greatly affected me and many people that I know. After getting my computer science degree, I lived in Las Vegas and worked for EG&G [Edgerton, Germeshausen, and Grier] Energy Measurements, supporting the underground atomic testing program out of what was at that time the Nevada Test Site. I do not keep track of what they are changing it to be today. And I was a member of the Nuclear Emergency Support Team, or NEST. When I started at EG&G in 1974, I was told that EG&G has a terrible retirement, and I should put money into their savings plan. This was way before there was a 401(k) or an IRA [Individual Retirement Account]. After 22 years as a salaried professional, my EG&G retirement does not even pay for my car payment now—so they were right. I really did not get a great retirement out of them. Luckily, I was also earning social security there. But when the EG&G contract ended in 1995, I moved from about a million people in Las Vegas to Dayton. It was a little bit of a change, but almost immediately I started working here at LCB [Legislative Counsel Bureau]. I was in the IT department working on a lot of your buttons here in these rooms, the front desk, website, and the Fiscal Division's BASN, which is the Budget Analysis System of Nevada [*sic*] budgeting system. I feel lucky to have PERS, which is often mentioned as one of the best in the country, but

because I had 18 years in PERS and 22 in SSA [Social Security Administration] I have had the WEP taken from my social security. I started getting my social security seven years ago and that—

Chair Mosca:

You are at two minutes, but you can submit your testimony as well so we could have it for the record [[Exhibit C](#)].

John Abel, Director of Governmental Affairs, Las Vegas Police Protective Association:

I want to thank Assemblymember Miller for bringing this joint resolution and I ditto everything everyone has said so far. We support this resolution.

Ryan Beaman, District Vice President, Professional Fire Fighters of Nevada:

We have been in 100 percent support of the Fairness Act on a national level. The firefighters—this is a huge piece of legislation that is helping our members, not just the ones that are—it is our older retirees that have passed away that leave behind a spouse that their benefit when they did retire was reduced and then they might not be eligible when that member passed away. Seeing this repealed, it will help out our members and the spouse that is still there with that money. So we support this bill.

Tess Opferman, representing American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Retirees:

The American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and AFSCME Retirees have been incredibly supportive of the Social Security Fairness Act. I will keep these comments brief, but many of our retirees are missing out on benefits because of the windfall provision, and we were incredibly grateful that that bill was able to be signed in January. We are grateful for [Assembly Joint Resolution 6](#) to move that timeline back, so thank you for your support.

Chair Mosca:

Seeing no more support here in Carson City, we will move to Las Vegas.

Steven J. Horner, President, Nevada State Education Association-Retired:

I am a retired special education teacher, an Army veteran, and president of the Nevada State Education Association-Retired. I am just going to say basically ditto to my colleagues from NSEA and I want to thank Assemblymember Miller. I have submitted my testimony, and I say ditto. Thank you very much.

[[Exhibit C](#) is a collection of letters submitted in support of [Assembly Joint Resolution 6](#).]

Chair Mosca:

Seeing no further support testimony on the phone lines, we will open testimony in opposition to [Assembly Joint Resolution 6](#) in Carson City.

Janine Hansen, State President, Nevada Families for Freedom:

I want to say, first of all, that I really appreciate Assemblymember Miller. She is always so kind to me, and I really want her to know that I appreciate her. I really was not against this until I started reading some of the figures that kind of alarmed me, and I just want to share those with you because I think it is something we all need to know about. The Congressional Budget Office recently released some information after the Social Security Fairness Act that was passed. That was a cost estimate of \$196 billion for the cost of the Social Security Fairness Act between 2024 and 2034. And that cost will continue to rise. So I think we need to keep in mind that these are not without a significant cost. We do not have an estimate, as the sponsor said, for how much this bill will cost. I could not find one when I searched online, but I think it is important to keep in mind that it will be significant.

I think the other thing that I would like to share is that when I looked up on the Social Security Administration site, it said that right now they estimate that there will be full benefits for people on social security until 2037, and then after that, they do not have enough money and that all people's social security will be reduced—perhaps as much as 78 percent of what they are getting. So I think it is important to remember when we promote these that we do need to understand there is a huge cost in the future and that we do not know who will be paying that, but it will probably be us and those who are younger who are working. And so we need to keep those facts in mind.

Chair Mosca:

Anybody else here in Carson City in opposition? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Las Vegas in opposition? [There was no one.] We will move to the phone lines for opposition testimony.

Cyrus Hojjaty, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am sorry for the background noise. I am at the IBS [International Builders' Show] convention. I will ditto the previous speaker. I do appreciate the speaker and the sponsor for addressing social security. It is very important. I am a young person. I want it to stay afloat, but I just believe we should have a more state-driven solution. So other than that, thank you so much.

Katie Banuelos, Secretary, Libertarian Party of Washoe County, Nevada:

I am calling representing the Libertarian Party of Nevada. I want to echo what people have said before me. Social security is in terrible shape. It is essentially the way it was established. It is set up a lot like a Ponzi scheme. People are paying into it, that money is being spent. There are no you know—everybody knows that is on a ticking clock. People my age and you know, my husband and I, for example, we are fully operating on the assumption that there will not be that available to us and that we need to make provisions for our future. At a minimum, social security needs comprehensive reforms. It needs testing, it needs—if you want it to work, you want to keep it and not continue to draw it down irresponsibly, without making any kind of provision for the future and for the people who expect it to be there and have been told that it will be there when right now it does not seem like there is a path for that. So I, we oppose this and as long as social security exists and people are planning to use

it, it needs to—people need to be adults in the room and actually plan, look at the real numbers for what this is going to mean. Or give people the option to opt out and come up with other alternatives.

Michael Ryan, Private Citizen, Pahrump, Nevada:

I am a long-time resident of Nevada. Please vote no on A.J.R. 6, which makes the Social Security Fairness Act retroactive back to 2013. The Social Security Administration projects that they will be able to pay full benefits only until 2037. If the Social Security Fairness Act were made retroactive back to 2013, it would bankrupt social security sooner. This would be horrible. Please vote no on A.J.R. 6 and thank you very much.

Casey Rodgers, Private Citizen, Minden, Nevada:

Everybody has basically said everything I was going to say. I would just ask that you oppose this bill. We do not want to further jeopardize our social security. As it is—as this is a bill that retroactively pays out up to 2013, it will bankrupt us so please vote no. That is all I have to say.

[\[Exhibit D\]](#) is a letter submitted in opposition to Assembly Joint Resolution 6.]

Chair Mosca:

We are going to move to neutral. Neutral has to be really neutral, not trying to give an amendment or—that is actually in opposition. If anyone is here to testify in neutral for A.J.R. 6 in Carson City, please join the table. Seeing none, we will move to Las Vegas. Seeing none, we will move to the phone lines. [There was no one.] Assemblymember Miller, would you like to make any closing remarks?

Assemblymember Miller:

Thank you so much, Chair, for the opportunity to make a few brief remarks. I would first like to thank the first opposition to the bill. That was also the nicest, kindest opposition because it was legitimate policy concern. I appreciate that. There is no question; my entire life, I have been hearing the fears and the concerns about social security being there when I retire, so that is not new or anything that any of us would dispute. But I believe, like anything else, it is time for our government and Congress to look and maybe change some of the ways that social security works.

Even with our spending as a whole, this is not the first time there has been an issue with people being neglected or wrongly reduced in their social security. My grandmother—the person who first got me involved and interested in politics, dragging me around canvassing at 11 years old—always referred to herself as a "gap baby"; another term is "notch baby." Those were for the individuals born between 1917 and 1921. In the 1970s or 1980s, the government tried to switch the formula, so those people born within those years were the gap babies—or the notch babies—meaning their social security was also reduced. Regretfully, I was never able to help my grandmother's social security before she passed, so I am here trying to help everyone else's grandmother's social security right now.

Again, with government spending, we have seen a lot of things happen indiscriminately sometimes, and not just for people, but businesses as well. It seems that when we have the ability to give tax breaks and waive certain things and free indiscriminately to people—this is not a handout. It is not an ask for assistance. It is not an entitlement program. It is literally the money that people paid out of their individual, hard-earned paycheck. These are our public employees who for the most part in this country, it has always been, Hey, here is the tradeoff for the lower salary that you will work while risking your life, while the stressful environment—was the benefits, and part of that major benefit was the retirement and the pension program.

Again, we are just asking for that money to be returned. When we hear things like—let me say this: answer me, Who else has been asked? Again, many people are still investing in other forms of retirement plans—multiple different pensions, social security, IRAs, mutual funds, all kinds of things—that is the wise thing to do, right? But who else has been asked to lose up to half of their retirement investment? Has anyone been asked and said, Their IRA, we are going to take half, or we are going to take half of that pension? We have not expected that out of anyone else and would think it was ludicrous. So again, we are just asking, especially in a country that was founded and continues to have the challenges and an issue that is really quite cantankerous for us, which is taxation, period. This is a situation where folks have been taxed and did not receive the return for the explanation of that tax. And so again, I am just asking that people get their money back.

Chair Mosca:

We will close the hearing on Assembly Joint Resolution 6. Thank you again for everyone who is here today. And with that, we will give some transition time. We will now open the hearing on Assembly Bill 237. As we transition, I will remind members that this is an example of an Interim Committee bill. That means this was a policy that was both heard and vetted and voted out during the Joint Standing Interim Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections to then become a bill here in the session. This measure authorizes any county to create the office of registrar of voters. We are excited to have Assemblymember Moore and Assemblymember González presenting.

**Assembly Bill 237: Authorizes any county to create the office of registrar of voters.
(BDR 20-363)**

Assemblymember Cecelia González, Assembly District No. 16:

My name is Assemblymember Cecelia González representing Assembly District No. 16. Assembly Bill 237 comes to this Committee from the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections. During the 2023-2024 Interim, the Interim Committee heard testimony from several county election officials about the challenges they face in administrating elections. A common theme was high workloads, particularly for county clerks, who are also the county recorder or treasurer or who may have other responsibilities besides elections. This Committee also heard about the same workload challenges from several county clerks during the first week of this session. Election administration is becoming more and more of a full-time job in smaller counties other than

Clark and Washoe Counties. However, these county clerks are not afforded the same opportunity to focus solely on election administration.

To help explain the differences in county election official positions across the state, we have provided a handout for this bill presentation [[Exhibit E](#)]. I do not believe it is up, but it is up on NELIS [Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System] for folks to view—apologies for that. In Clark and Washoe Counties, the county election official is a registrar of voters appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, whose only job is to administer elections. Clark and Washoe Counties separately employ county clerks to provide marriage licenses, business services, and passport services, while also preserving and maintaining county records and also serving as the ex officio clerk to the Board of County Commissioners and the district court within the county. In all other counties, and Carson City, the election official is an elected county clerk who administers elections and handles all other clerk duties that I just mentioned. In seven counties, the clerk is additionally responsible for county treasurer duties such as billing and collecting property taxes, reconciling county bank accounts, and overseeing county investment accounts.

At one time, it may have been sufficient for only Clark and Washoe Counties to have a full-time election administration position in the form of a registrar of voters and to combine election administration with other clerk and treasurer duties in small counties. However, we are continuing to hear from our county clerks that multiple roles and responsibilities are really testing their limits. This is not to say that they are unwilling to take on the high workloads. I want to commend all our county clerks, who do an excellent job and have been doing an excellent job at administering our elections over the past few years in the face of many challenges and, again, very high workloads. Our election officials are extremely hardworking and very passionate about what they do and for that, they really do deserve high praise. However, we should not continue to overburden our county clerks. [Assembly Bill 237](#) seeks to alleviate high workloads for county clerks, who are currently juggling multiple roles. At this time, I will turn it over to Assemblymember Moore.

Assemblymember Cinthia Zermeño Moore, Assembly District No. 11:

I am going to go through the bill summary. [Assembly Bill 237](#) authorizes, but does not require, the board of county commissioners of any county to create a registrar of voters position to administer counties. Now, that is an important point. It is to point out that it is not required—it is just simply an option. Currently, state law authorizes only counties with a population of 100,000 or more—this would be Clark and Washoe Counties—to create the office of registrar of voters. [Assembly Bill 237](#) removes the population threshold and instead allows any county, regardless of population, to establish the office of registrar of voters. The intent of the bill is to give the counties the option to create a full-time elections position if they wish, but not require them to do so. If a board of county commissioners were to create an office of registrar of voters, the board would make appointments to the office and prescribe the qualifications, duties, and compensation of that office. This bill would not eliminate the position of county clerk but instead shift election responsibilities from the clerk to the registrar of voters—with one small exception—that the county clerk would still be responsible for preparing and delivering Certificates of Election.

Again, this is enabling language only and does not impose requirements on the counties. This bill draft request was unanimously approved by the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections. Assembly Bill 237 is an effort to provide additional options to counties so they can choose how best to run elections in a way that works for them and how best to support their county employees. Chair Mosca and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present A.B. 237. I hope you will join me in supporting the bill. We are happy to answer any questions.

Chair Mosca:

We do have the handout. Does anyone have any questions?

Assemblymember Jauregui:

Again, it is permissible language, right? The language originally read, in each county having a population of 100,000 or more, a board of county commissioners may create [*sic*], and now it just reads a board of county commissioners may create [*sic*]. That is simply what it does, it just removes that 100,000-population count. My first question was going to be how it came out of the Joint Interim Standing Committee. Thank you for answering that—it came out unanimous. My second question was, during the Joint Interim Standing Committee, did you guys have the counties come present or did you speak to the counties about this?

Assemblymember González:

Yes, we did hear from the counties during the interim, as well as the first week of session. As we noted in our remarks, this is something that again, like you said, is permissive language that will really help alleviate some of these excessive workloads that they have been experiencing.

Assemblymember Nadeem:

My question is, do you think that it is going to help the election taking place more efficiently?

Assemblymember González:

Yes, I do believe that this will help run our elections more efficiently and, overall, their offices as well.

Assemblymember Cole:

My question is sort of on the democratic process. Right now those positions are elected positions and so of the 17 counties, 15 of them are rural and are under 50,000 people. This would allow the county commissioners to kind of take away the voice of the people, if you will, and who is running their elections. I am just wondering, is there a concern that kind of dilutes that democratic process?

Assemblymember González:

I appreciate the question and the concerns. However, I do not believe that this takes away from that. We have heard for the last couple of years, navigating very many challenges when it comes to some of the rules in administering some of these elections, so this is feedback that

the folks who are in these positions are doing every single day. I appreciate the question. I do not know if legal counsel may have any comments they want to add.

Chair Mosca:

I do not think so for legal counsel, but I will just add that the county commissioners are elected so folks could choose not to vote them in to make this decision. And again, it is enabling, so they do not have to.

Assemblymember Moore:

I want to just piggyback a little bit of what you just said. This is just giving that option to the counties who want to do this, and if it works for them—if it is something that the county commissioners feel that, one, they have the funding to do, and two, this is something that will work best for them. This bill will allow them to do that. During the first week or two of session we did hear many presentations from different clerks, and I was surprised to learn that many of them are doing two or three different jobs at the same time.

Chair Mosca:

I think those are all of our questions. We will move on to public testimony in support. If you are here in Carson City for support, could you please start joining the table?

Ryan Vortisch, Northern Nevada Democracy Coordinator, Silver State Voices:

On behalf of Silver State Voices and the Let Nevadans Vote coalition, I am here to support Assembly Bill 237. Nevada only has two counties with an established Registrar of Voters office, or ROV, and that is Clark and Washoe Counties. This means that for Nevadans in our remaining 15 counties, elections are run by administrators who are at the same time responsible for a completely different job, or at times in some cases, jobs. While they are responsible for administering a secure, transparent, and accurate election, election administrators in these remaining 15 counties are also responsible for a wide array of duties, including preservation of county records, clerking for the board of county commissioners or district court, providing business services, marriage licenses, or passport services, and in some cases dually acting as the county treasurer or county recorder. What does this mean? Nevada election administrators are overworked, underpaid, and lack the appropriate staffing they need to administer a smooth election. Assembly Bill 237 creates a great opportunity for us to ensure our elections are administered by a dedicated team of election workers whose only responsibility is protecting the vote of their county's voters. What we appreciate about this legislation is that it allows county commission boards—who know their budgets and staffing needs the best—to ultimately decide if this policy addresses their needs. We urge your support in voting for A.B. 237.

Eric Jeng, Executive Director, One Asian Pacific Islander American Nevada:

I am the executive director of One APIA Nevada, advocating for Asian American and Pacific Islander families here in Nevada. So, A.B. 237 empowers our counties with authority and autonomy and strengthens their governance infrastructure, and we are in full support because having a designated registrar—having the option to designate a registrar—can streamline election procedure, provide focused expertise, and alleviate the administrative burden on

county clerks. I urge your support for the bill and help ensure fair and efficient elections across Nevada.

Chair Mosca:

Seeing no other testimony in support in Carson City, we will move to Las Vegas.

Chanel Cassanello, Campaign Manager, All Voting is Local Nevada:

We are an organization that advocates for policies and legislative priorities that expand voter access to build a democracy for us all. We support A.B. 237, as currently only two counties meet the required 100,000 population threshold to have a registrar of voters. This bill would give Nevada's 15 rural counties the option to also have their own ROV. Throughout All Voting is Local Action's work with county officials, clerks have struggled to acquire the resources needed to administer demanding elections. Should newly eligible counties choose to create a registrar of voters office, this separation of duties and responsibilities would help alleviate the pressure clerks face and may reduce the high turnover rate in our state. Most importantly, this bill is not a mandate. It evens out the playing field for both counties and election officials. We urge you to support A.B. 237.

Chair Mosca:

Seeing no one else in Las Vegas, we will open the phone lines.

Paula Luna, Deputy Director, Battle Born Progress:

Assembly Bill 237 empowers counties with the option, not a mandate, to establish a registrar of voters office, improving local control over election administration. This enhances security, streamlines processes, and ensures dedicated oversight. With growing demands on election officials, this flexibility helps continue to strengthen integrity and efficiency. I urge your support.

Mathilda Miller, Government Relations Director, Native Voters Alliance Nevada:

We are in support of Assembly Bill 237. I echoed that sentiment to my colleagues, but I also wanted to emphasize that election administrators have one of the most important jobs in our democracy. Running elections is not something that can be done on the side. It requires focus, expertise, and an unwavering commitment to fairness and accuracy. This is what this bill gives counties: the option and autonomy to decide if they have the capacity to handle this. We urge you to support this bill.

[[Exhibit F](#) is a collection of letters submitted in support of Assembly Bill 237.]

Chair Mosca:

Seeing no further support calls at this time, we will now hear testimony in opposition to A.B. 237 here in Carson City.

Lynn Chapman, State Treasurer, Independent American Party:

I just wanted to bring up a couple of things. Registrars are appointed by the county commission, and we do elect county commissioners, but the registrars have no accountability

to the people. It is interesting because Washoe County—that is where I live—they have appointed registrars for quite some time. And then the last couple of years, we have had maybe four or five different registrars. Our elections have been kind of crazy. We have had some real problems because we have had so many different registrars. And the other thing that I wanted to bring up is the cost. I do not see anything in here with a cost. If you are going to set up a government agency, do you not have to have some cost to it? I just thought I would mention that as well. Thank you.

Joshua Skaggs, Legislative Affairs Director, Nevada Republican Party:

On behalf of the Nevada Republican Party, we oppose A.B. 237 because it eliminates the duties of the duly elected county clerk as the chief election official of the county and replaces them with an appointed registrar of voters. We believe this bill could lower our election integrity standards and could create a position susceptible to partisan political persuasion. Please leave the elections in the management of the duly elected county clerks in the counties that are less than 100,000 people, and do not silence the voices of Nevada voters. Thank you.

Janine Hansen, State President, Nevada Families for Freedom:

I do live in Elko. The last two years we have had all kinds of meetings in Elko with the county commission asking the county clerk to be there for accountability of what is going on in our elections. It has been a huge uproar for the last two years, and so that is one of the reasons I am here, because I really feel like an elected county clerk in the rural counties is very important because they are accountable to the local people and not an appointed part of the bureaucracy. Another issue for rural counties is cost. If you have a new office, it is going to have to have staff, it is going to have space, more resources, et cetera. I think that would be a huge issue for the rural counties.

Yesterday I spoke to one of the county clerks. I think it is important to notice that we did not have any county clerks here supporting this bill. I think that is a significant issue. But yesterday, the one I talked to from a rural county said county clerks do not want to give up their election duties, but they need more resources and fewer mandates from the Secretary of State's Office [Office of the Secretary of State], and that they would be able to perform these duties. They want to, and they want to be accountable to the public. So, we oppose this bill. Thank you very much.

Joy Trushenski, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

I am a nonpaid lobbyist for conservative causes, and I am a Navy veteran. Please vote no on A.B. 237, which allows rural counties to create the office of registers [*sic*] of voters with nonelected positions. I support the election of county clerks who have responsibility for elections. Only Washoe County and Clark County have offices of registrar of voters with appointed members. Voters should have a say in who runs elections. Additionally, it will cost the other counties considerable amounts of money to create a new office with new staff and resources. Currently, there are no problems with the rural county elections, in my opinion. This is just another bill circumventing the people's vote. Please vote no on A.B. 237. Thank you for your time.

Susan Ruch, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

I am the chairman of the Carson City Republican Party, but I am here on my own accord. I am opposed to this bill. We have a wonderful court recorder here in our own Carson City, and our elections go—run very smoothly and yes, they are overworked. And I do know that if we are going to be spending this additional money for a voter registrar, why do we not take those funds and increase the salary of the clerk recorders to the same salary range that the voter registers [*sic*] are and add additional staff to help them with all of their duty? Most clerk recorders that I know love their jobs. I am asking you to please vote no on this bill and thank you very much for your time.

Penny Brock, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I have been involved in our election issues in Washoe County since 2021. We got a new county manager in 2019. They put the ROV under him, and we have had four ROVs since then. It has been nothing but chaos. The register [*sic*]—the person that handles elections needs to be under an elected official. In many states the ROV is an elected position. I think that is what our legislature needs to be looking at: a bill that those who handle elections will be elected by the people, so they are accountable. What I have heard, the reason for this bill is because the clerks need more help. Well, then the clerk's office should be given more money to hire staff, not create a whole other bureaucracy. This is a huge issue in Washoe County and Clark County. Those of you who represent Clark County, you should know that you have got problems in Clark County because of the ROV and lack of accountability. We in Washoe County know we have really got problems, and it needs to be fixed. It needs to be put under an elected official. Our county manager is a hired employee. There is no accountability there, so we as voters have one huge issue after another.

I am happy to tell you that Kash Patel was just appointed FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigations] director. He has said he is going to be investigating elections in certain states, one of which is Nevada. Now, you might ask why? Well, Kash Patel is from Las Vegas—

Chair Mosca:

You are at two minutes. Is there anyone else here in Carson City? [There was no one.] I see no one in Las Vegas, so we can open the phone lines if you would like to testify in opposition to A.B. 237.

Cyrus Hojjaty, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I stand in opposition. I ditto the previous caller. Yield.

Jim DeGraffenreid, National Committeeman, Nevada Republican Party:

I am calling on behalf of the Nevada Republican Party in opposition to this bill. Our rural county clerks do an excellent job of ministering elections. Their issues are not because they cannot do it. It is just because they have the mandates and the things that are put down on them by the Legislature and by the Secretary of State. We believe that this bill does nothing to address any of those issues. We would actually prefer to see all registrars and clerks selected statewide regardless of county and regardless of county size. The voters need

to be able to select those who are going to administer their elections, and those who administer them need to be accountable to the voters. For all those reasons we oppose this legislation. Thank you.

Casey Rodgers, Private Citizen, Minden, Nevada:

I am here to ask you to vote no on A.B. 237. I do not trust any bill that works to subvert the current system where we the people elect government officials. They need to be held accountable. They need to be able to be held accountable. This takes away the ability of voters to directly vote for the person in charge of their election. I will also say the registers [*sic*] of voters are appointed and currently it is not working well in Washoe County. So that should be a good reason to vote no on this and on its face. So please oppose A.B. 237 and thank you for your time.

Michael Ryan, Private Citizen, Pahrump, Nevada:

I am a long-time resident of Nevada and a Marine Corps veteran. Please vote no on Assembly Bill 237. Voters have more say in our elections with an elected county clerk in charge of elections instead of an appointed person. In addition, it could cost the counties a considerable amount of money to create a new office with the staff and resources necessary. So please vote no on Assembly Bill 237 and thank you very much.

Ellen Gifford, Private Citizen, Nevada:

Assembly Bill 237 allows the county board of commissioners to create the office of the registrar of voters, prescribe the qualifications, duties, and compensation of that office, and make appointments to that office. It states that the registrar of voters "shall assume all of the powers and duties vested in and imposed upon the county clerk of the county with respect to elections." *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 246.010 states that county clerks shall be elected by the qualified electors of their respective counties at the general election. In keeping with that statute, it must be Nevada voters who elect the person responsible for the powers and duties vested in and imposed upon the county clerk of the county with respect to elections. Those powers and duties are mandated to an elected position. The people of Nevada elect the Secretary of State, who has mandated duties and powers. There is no process allowing the creation of another position with those same duties and powers and giving it another name. This practice must be upheld for the position of county clerk as well. In fact, NRS 244.164 should be repealed, and A.B. 237 should be declared invalid. Thank you.

Iris Stone, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I oppose A.B. 237. This bill allows the county board of commissioners to create the office of a registrar of voters. It states that the registrar of voters "shall assume all of the powers and duties vested in and imposed upon the county clerk with respect to elections [*sic*]." This is in complete conflict with NRS 246.0110 [*sic*], which states that "county clerks shall be elected by the qualified electors of their respective counties." In Nevada, it is the people who elect the person responsible for all the powers and duties vested in and imposed upon the

county clerk of the county, which includes elections. As a matter of fact, NRS 244.164 is unlawful and really should be repealed. And of course, A.B. 237 should be withdrawn. Thank you for your time.

[\[Exhibit G\]](#) is a collection of letters submitted in opposition to Assembly Bill 237.]

Chair Mosca:

There are no more callers in opposition. We will now open for anyone who would like to testify in neutral on A.B. 237 here in Carson City. [There was no one.] We will go down to Las Vegas. [There was no one.] We will go to the phone lines.

Kaylah Maese, Civil Rights and Policy Analyst, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada:

Let Nevadans Vote coalition and the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada support this bill. Thank you so much for letting me testify, Chair. Have a great day.

Chair Mosca:

We will make sure that is marked in support of. Are there any other callers in neutral today? [There was no one.] Assemblymember Moore and Assemblymember González, I will invite you back to the table. We do have one additional question from Assemblymember Monroe-Moreno.

Assemblymember Monroe-Moreno:

Listening to some of the comments that were made, this was an Interim Committee bill, correct?

Assemblymember González:

Yes.

Assemblymember Monroe-Moreno:

During the Interim Committee—I did not serve on this Interim Committee—oftentimes there are people who testify in the Interim Committee that do not often come into the legislative session. Did you have clerks that presented during the interim on this legislation?

Assemblymember González:

Yes.

Assemblymember Monroe-Moreno:

Last question. Just to confirm, this is enabling language. We are not forcing any county to change the way they are currently handling voting in their counties. Correct?

Assemblymember González:

Correct. I do apologize to Assemblymember Cole, your question, earlier. This does not take away the people's voice in voting because we vote for our county commissioners. We vote for them to make these decisions that are best for their county, just like our voters vote for

us to make the best decisions for their districts, right? I just wanted to get that on the record as well. I appreciate the questions. Do you have any more?

Assemblymember Monroe-Moreno:

I do not. Thank you so much for the clarification.

Assemblymember González:

I just want to thank the Committee. This bill draft request, again, was unanimously approved by the Joint Interim Standing Committee during the interim. This bill is an effort to provide additional options for counties so they can best choose how to run their elections in a way that works for them.

Chair Mosca:

We will now close the hearing on A.B. 237. We will move on to our last item on the agenda today, public comment. Seeing no one in Carson City or Las Vegas, we will move to the phone lines.

Cyrus Hojjaty, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I would like to share my experience at the convention, the International Builders' Show, if that is okay? I rode the monorail; it was very convenient. It was very efficient. I just want to let you know that we have got to have a priority towards mass transit. Shortly after I saw actor David Spade, an amazing show, I toured a lot of the exhibits regarding bathrooms and kitchens and faucets and so forth. One thing I wanted to discuss was tiny homes. There were duplexes, there were many different cottages. I think you guys should look at other states and make it easier to build these types of residential structures. They are more affordable, better quality. And I have to tell you, it is one of the things I enjoy about living here and all these great, amazing conventions. So much to do. We really have it good in so many ways out here.

Here is the thing. Guess how much I pay to attend this convention? Nothing. Oh, but everything is so overpriced here. And I am looking at this Vegas Loop line and the lines are really, really long. So, food for thought, I do not think that system is working as efficient as I thought. But other than that, thank you so much for sharing my story and hopefully you guys will absorb these ideas. Yield my time.

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Chair Mosca:

There are no other callers, so I will close public comment. Our next meeting will be Thursday, February 27 at 4 p.m. I thank all the members for all their hard work today for our first hearings. Seeing no further business before us, this meeting is adjourned [at 5:24 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Kristi Howard
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
A.J.R. 6	C	Various Individuals	A packet of letters in support of Assembly Joint Resolution 6
A.J.R. 6	D	Joseph McElhinney III, Reno, Nevada	A letter in opposition to Assembly Joint Resolution 6
A.B. 237	E	Assemblymember Cecelia González, Assembly District No. 16, and Assemblymember Cinthia Zermeño Moore, Assembly District No. 11	Document titled Assembly Bill 237 : "County Election Officials"
A.B. 237	F	Various Individuals	A packet of letters in support of Assembly Bill 237
A.B. 237	G	Various Individuals	A packet of letters in opposition to Assembly Bill 237