MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Eighty-third Session
April 28, 2025

The Senate Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Edgar Flores at 3:36 p.m. on Monday, April 28, 2025, in Room 2149 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 6 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. Exhibit A is the agenda. Exhibit B is the attendance roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Edgar Flores, Chair
Senator James Ohrenschall, Vice Chair
Senator Dina Neal
Senator Skip Daly
Senator Lisa Krasner
Senator John Ellison
Senator Lori Rogich

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Shea M. Backus, Assembly District No. 37
Assemblymember Ken Gray, Assembly District No. 39
Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Assembly District No. 14

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jann Stinnesbeck, Committee Policy Analyst
Heidi Chlarson, Committee Counsel
Lauren Spratt, Committee Counsel
Spencer Jones, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Charine Lomibao, Community Organizer, One APIA Nevada
Noé Orosco, Make the Road Nevada
Mathilda Miller, Native Voters Alliance Nevada

Aesha Goins, Service Employees International Union 1107
Sally Balecha, President, Desert Mountain Region, National Federation of Filipino American Associations
Jacqueline de Joya, President, National Federation of Filipino American Associations Nevada
Cyrus Hojjaty
Alejandro Rodriguez, Nevada System of Higher Education
Jordyn Griffin, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Nevada State University
Sheila Bray, University of Nevada, Reno
Sydney Williams, Elko Band Colony; Las Vegas Paiute Tribe; Reno-Sparks Indian Colony
Jay Guerrero, The Nature Conservancy
Olivia Tanager, Director, Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter
Hector Arreola, Policy Fellow, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition
Ryan Beaman
Jennifer Willett, All Voting is Local
Alex Tanchek, Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribe; Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe
Cal Boone, Member, Walker River Paiute Nation
Kenale Ainuu, One APIA Nevada
Jizhoni Witherspoon, Member, Navajo Nation
Bri Schmidt, Silver State Equality
Dominic Digeronimo
Jane Audette, Showing Up for Racial Justice, Las Vegas
Mark Diefenbacher
Tara Webster, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Yesenia Castro, Nevada Conservation League
Ryan Vortisch, Northern Nevada Democracy Coordinator, Silver State Voices
December Cuccaro
Jill Douglass
Janine Hansen, State Chairman, Independent American Party of Nevada
Joy Trushenski
Joshua Scaggs, Nevada Republican Party
Michael Ryan
Lynn Chapman, State Treasurer, Independent American Party of Nevada
Lorena Biassotti
Angel DeFazio
Al Lasso
Katrin Ivanoff
Kimberly Johnston-Linsday

Will Adler
Pat Spearman
Andrew LePeilbet, State Chairman, United Veterans Legislative Council
Fred Wagar, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Benefits Protection Team Lead, Nevada Department of Disabled American Veterans Services

CHAIR FLORES:
We will take the bills in the order they are on the agenda. We will begin with Assembly Bill (A.B.) 8.

ASSEMBLY BILL 8: Revises provisions relating to state financial administration. (BDR 31-378)

ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEN GRAY (Assembly District No. 39):
Thank you for the opportunity to present A.B. 8 today, on behalf of the Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System.

Under existing law, all public money received by any state officer, department or commission must be deposited by the following Thursday. However, if at any time the amount collected reaches $10,000 or more, it must be deposited no later than the next working day. An exception to this currently exists for the Department of Wildlife, which is allowed up to ten working days to deposit $10,000 or more.

Assembly Bill 8 seeks to extend the same exemption to the Division of State Parks within the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Under this bill, if the Division accumulates $10,000 or more in a single day, it would have up to ten working days to make the deposit rather than being required to do so the next working day.

I would like to draw your attention to section 1, subsection 4 of the bill. The law would now read: "If the Department of Wildlife or the Division of State Parks of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources accumulates for deposit $10,000 or more on any day, the money must be deposited within 10 working days." This change will help relieve manpower strain especially in the summer months, providing much-needed flexibility to staff and management. Additionally, it enhances security by making deposit schedules much less predictable.

SENATOR ELLISON:
That's a little long system [time period] for deposits, don't you think?

ASSEMBLYMEMBER GRAY:
It is matching up with the Department of Wildlife. In the summer months when they are at their busiest, it is hard for manpower to be cut loose to go make that deposit.

It is also going to make it much less predictable. I actually see this as a safety measure as well. So if you have got that money, which it is very easy for Sand Harbor to collect that much money in a day, they [you] are going to make that deposit either that evening or the next morning, first thing in the morning, to meet the current deadline. So that would make it really easy for a hit-and-run robbery. By changing this, they would have ten days, and they could make that deposit at any point in that period.

SENATOR ELLISON:
And that makes sense.

SENATOR DALY:
This came out of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Oversight Committee. We were requested by the Division to put this in because they were finding themselves in noncompliance because they could not actually meet the next day, especially over the weekend in the summertime. It [Sand Harbor] is not the only location in the State with that problem. When we put it in, we said this is what we wanted to do, and the LCB [Legislative Counsel Bureau] came up with the language to match [the text] with Division of Wildlife. We did not go looking for a new rule and say you can do it in three, we just matched the other exemption, which is ten days. They are doing it quicker as they can. If they are under the $10,000, as soon as they hit that, they make it if it is during the week, but if it happens to be on the weekends, which regularly occurs in the summer, they can't comply.

CHAIR FLORES:
Having no testifiers in support and no testifiers in opposition or neutral, I close the hearing on A.B. 8 and open the hearing on A.B. 83.

ASSEMBLY BILL 83 (1st Reprint): Designates "Larry Itliong Day" as a day of observance in this State. (BDR 19-99)

ASSEMBLYMEMBER ERICA MOSCA (Assembly District No. 14):
I am proud to be the first Filipina to ever be elected to the Nevada State Legislature. This bill comes directly from Democratic and Republican Filipinos in Nevada—it was a bipartisan effort during the interim session.

The Refugee Assistance Alliance and Asian Pacific Islanders community is the fastest growing community in Nevada, and the Filipino community is the largest community. Whether it is your J-1 visa teachers in Mineral County, nurses at the hospital or small businesses where you may eat lumpia or ube, Filipinos are part of Nevada. This is a bill that ensures our most famous Filipino is celebrated in our State to give our community an opportunity and a way to be celebrated.

If you do not know who Larry Itliong is, this bill explains his importance. In the Assembly, I made them watch a music video, which I will not make you watch, but I will send it to your inbox. I think you'll enjoy it. I will just say that Larry Itliong is the one who organized the Delano Grape Strike before Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez but is someone who is not always talked about in the history books.

I really hope that this committee can consider passing this bill to show our Filipino community that they matter, they are important, and they are important to Nevada.

CHAIR FLORES:
I know it is timely because we are also considering a measure celebrating Dolores Huerta. And it is always important to recognize all the contributions of the different communities that came together to make all that magic happen. For the first time in this session, you have completely kept the entire committee silent. It is impressive. Assemblymember, take that as a badge of honor.

CHARINE LOMIBAO (Community Organizer, One APIA Nevada):
I am a Filipino community organizer with One APIA, Nevada, a nonprofit grassroots organization that educates and advocates for the Asian-American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in Las Vegas.

I am here today in strong support of A.B. 83 which designates Larry Itliong Day as a day of observance. Nevada is home to over 200,000 Filipino Americans, one of the largest Asian subgroups in the State. Many of them are essential workers in healthcare, hospitality, construction and the casino industry—fields

where Filipino labor is deeply rooted and vital. Just this year, Las Vegas officially recognized Filipino Town, a milestone that reflects both the deep cultural contributions and growing visibility of the Filipino community in Nevada.

Larry Itliong's legacy is foundational to this progress. As a pioneering Filipino-American labor leader, he recognized farm workers and fought for fair wages and humane working conditions. His leadership in the Delano Grape Strike, alongside Cesar Chavez, transformed labor rights for generations, especially for immigrant and marginalized workers. By establishing Larry Itliong Day, Nevada honors not just one man's legacy but the enduring impact of an entire community. This recognition reinforces the values of dignity, equity and justice that he fought for and that Filipino Americans in Nevada continue to carry forward.

NOÉ OROSCO (Make the Road Nevada):
We are in strong support of this bill. I myself had the privilege and honor of being able to learn a little bit about Mr. Larry Itliong, as a former farm worker in the State of California. But I really do hope that we are able to pass this bill so that the rest of the State would be able to learn about him. We urge you to support this bill.

MATHILDA MILLER (Native Voters Alliance Nevada):
I am native Hawaiian, and I am also Filipino. We are in strong support of Assembly Bill 83.

The reason we observe leaders like Larry Itliong is simple—because without him, the story and the promise of America is incomplete. He stood up for the rights of farm workers who were treated as disposable, even though they fed the nation. His leadership helped transform labor rights across the country, laying the foundation and the groundwork for protections that every American worker benefits from today.

Observing Larry Itliong Day is about reminding the next generation that leadership and sacrifice are defined by action, not by fame. It is about honoring those who made this country stronger through hard work, courage and unwavering belief in the American opportunity. In its heart, this bill is saying that our State must honor the principles this country claims to stand for: fairness, dignity and opportunity for all. We urge your support.

AESHA GOINS (Service Employees International Union 1107):
I am here on behalf of SEIU [Service Employees International Union] 1107. We strongly support this bill. We want to stand in unison with our community partners as well.

SALLY BALECHA (President, Desert Mountain Region, National Federation of Filipino American Associations):
I strongly advocate [for] A.B. 83, the establishment of a Larry Itliong Day in Nevada. Larry Itliong's tireless efforts in championing labor rights and social justice have left an unforgettable mark on our history. This day will honor his legacy and also inspire our community to continue striving for his justice for all.

JACQUELINE DE JOYA (President, National Federation of Filipino American Associations Nevada):
The National Federation of Filipino American Associations of Nevada's mission is to promote the well-being of Filipino Americans throughout the United States. There are approximately 4 million Filipinos in the United States, with 270,000 in Nevada. We are in support of A.B. 83. I believe this bill will make a huge impact in our community. I am honored to support the establishment of a Larry Itliong Day in Nevada.

Larry Itliong's legacy as a labor leader and advocate for Filipino-American rights is an inspiration to us all. Recognizing his contribution through this special day will not only honor his memory but also educate future generations about the significant role Filipinos and Filipino Americans have played in our nation's history.

CYRUS HOJJATY:
I support this bill. I will ditto the previous testifiers. I do support their economic and social contributions to our State. I have been to the Philippines last September, and it is a really great, interesting culture. I even dated a Filipino.

CHAIR FLORES:
There is a conceptual amendment (Exhibit C) removing cosponsor Assemblymember Heidi Kasama, Assembly District No. 2, from A.B. 83. The committee also received a letter of support (Exhibit D) from Caitlin Gatchalian for A.B. 83.

Having no further testimony in support and no testimony in opposition or neutral, I close the hearing on Assembly Bill 83 and open the hearing on Assembly Bill 144.

ASSEMBLY BILL 144: Revises provisions relating to "Indigenous Peoples Day" in Nevada. (BDR 19-7)

ASSEMBLYMEMBER SHEA M. BACKUS (Assembly District No. 37):
Nevada is the ancestral homelands of the Northern Paiute, Southern Paiute, Washoe and Fort Mojave Nations. I want to express my deepest respect and gratitude to our five major Indigenous groups who are not only the original caretakers of this land we now call Nevada but for their enduring stewardship and protection of our shared lands and waterways.

Today, Nevada is home to 20 federally recognized tribes comprised of 28 bands and colonies. In addition to our tribal citizens, our State has 60,000 urban Indians who call Nevada home. And for some new faces on the Senate Committee, I am an enrolled member—I am one of those 60,000 urban Indians who call Nevada home.

Indigenous Peoples Day is being celebrated throughout the United States to recognize the vast contributions of Indigenous communities, to recommit respecting tribal sovereignty and self-determination, to usher in a new era of government-to-government relationships. In Nevada, statutory language sets forth Indigenous Peoples Day as August 9, but celebrations of Indigenous Peoples Day actually occur on the second Monday of October, not only in our State but also around the country.

It was quite interesting: this last October 14, I had to go make a deposit at the bank, and the bank had posted that they were closed in observance of federal Columbus Day and state Indigenous Peoples Day. I thought that was very timely for me because I knew I had already submitted a bill to align the two holidays. Assembly Bill 144 will align the date to honor the resilience of our ancestors and to uplift the enduring legacies of Indigenous peoples, their voices, their cultures and their connection to this land.

This is not just about a day of recognition. It is about placing Indigenous voices at the forefront of decisions that shape the future of this State. I do want to

stress that this bill does not repeal Nevada's observance of Columbus Day, as there have been a lot of miscommunications sent via email that it does.

I will now walk the committee through the sections of the bill. Section 1, subsection 1, provides the change of the date to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day to the second Monday of October. Subsection 2 provides details for the Governor's proclamation to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day. I am happy about this because it provides the Governor suggestions of what can be done to celebrate such an observant day. It sets forth that the proclamation must call upon the media, public officials, schools and other public and private entities to bring attention to the importance of Indigenous communities in our State. Such proclamation will also acknowledge the culture and history of and significant contributions and advancements made by Indigenous communities and promote active engagement in activities to support the preservation of the distinctive public lands that are sacred to Indigenous communities in Nevada.

In closing, I would like to thank Chair Flores and the members of this committee for hearing this bill today. I ask for your support for A.B. 144.

SENATOR ELLISON:
There's a book in Senator Ira Hansen's office. If anybody wants to see the true history about Christopher Columbus, they need to go look at that book and actual facts. A lot of people do not know that Christopher Columbus was Jewish. We got two Jewish people in here that need to look at this book and give the actual facts of what he did. And those that accused him of doing wrongdoing, [it] is not true. So, it would be wonderful if people get a minute, go in there and take a look; this book is really good. Well put together. I thank you for what you had to say.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BACKUS:
I do not think you had a question there, but I did want to just stress it because when I was on the Assembly side, I was getting a lot of questions about if there would be confusion if both the [observance] days were held on the same day. And I do not think so. In fact, I think people are confused because they already think that Indigenous Peoples Day—or they call it New American Day—is held on the second Monday in October because it is in other states. I think we already celebrate it as a state holiday as Columbus Day.

MR. OROSCO:
We are here in strong support of A.B. 144. Ayala, Semana and Turtle Island—these are just a few of the Indigenous names for the lands that span what is currently the Americas. These are more than just words. They are the memories of migration, of knowledge systems that understood the land as a relative, not as a resource. Yet, for too many, these names and the rich histories, teachings and the ways of life they embody remain unknown, dismissed or deliberately erased. Our stories have been systematically overlooked, distorted or silenced through centuries of colonization, violence and cultural genocide. Recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day is not solely for the benefit of Indigenous peoples, it is an opportunity for all of us to gain a fuller, more accurate understanding of our shared histories. And for that, we ask you to support this bill.

ALEJANDRO RODRIGUEZ (Nevada System of Higher Education):
We are in strong support of A.B. 144. We'd like to thank Assemblymember Backus, and we urge your strong consideration for this bill.

JORDYN GRIFFIN (University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Nevada State University):
We are in full support of this bill, and we thank the Assemblymember for all of her hard work.

SHEILA BRAY (University of Nevada, Reno):
We also are here in full support of A.B. 144.

SYDNEY WILLIAMS (Elko Band Colony; Las Vegas Paiute Tribe; Reno-Sparks Indian Colony):
I am a proud member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe, and I am here on behalf of the Elko Band Colony, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe and Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. We rise in strong support of A.B. 144, which would declare the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples Day in Nevada.

In recent years, Indigenous peoples across our State have gathered on this day, not August 9, to honor our cultures. We hold round dances, share traditional foods and celebrate our identities as native people.

The current designation in Nevada law does not reflect the realities of our communities. It asks us to honor ourselves on a day that does not carry the meaning, traditions or collective recognition that October holds. This bill is not about creating something new; it is about aligning state law with the truth of

what already exists. Passing this bill is a necessary step toward respect, visibility and a good faith relationship with Nevada's Indigenous peoples.

It costs nothing, yet it carries a profound meaning for communities that have long been overlooked. We urge you to take this simple but significant action to honor Nevada's Indigenous peoples.

As always, we appreciate the committee's willingness to hear from us and many other native voices in the State.

JAY GUERRERO (The Nature Conservancy):
I am a member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. The Nature Conservancy supports A.B. 144 to revise provisions to Indigenous Peoples Day. We appreciate the guidance included in the bill for the Governor's proclamation. Notably, we hear the call to action for nonprofits and other entities to bring attention to the importance of Indigenous communities in Nevada and to promote volunteer stewardship activities that support preservation of lands important to Indigenous communities. We appreciate your consideration and support for A.B. 144.

MS. MILLER:
We are in unwavering support of A.B. 144. Today, the committee is not just hearing a bill. You're answering a question. Will the State of Nevada honor the people who have cared for its lands, protected its future and carried its spirit since time immemorial? The bill answers that question with clarity and conviction. This bill does not erase anyone, and it does not divide; it affirms what tribal nations, some Nevada counties and businesses across the State and nation already know: that the second Monday in October is a day to honor Indigenous Peoples, and it is time for the State to stand alongside them. It recognizes that telling the full truth about who we are does not come at the expense of anyone else. It strengthens the promise of Nevada itself, that every voice, every person and every story has a place.

And let me be clear, this day was claimed by our relatives who refused to let memory, culture and survival be taken from us. We celebrate it, we teach it, and we love it. We know what erasure feels like—where our languages were stolen, our histories were rewritten, our survival was treated as an afterthought. Yet, despite every attempt to erase us, we are still here. This bill is about recognition and truth. And it is a step toward a Nevada where native children

can grow up seeing their identities honored and where elders who have endured every attempt at erasure can finally witness a state move closer to justice. And most importantly, we are extremely grateful to Assemblymember Backus for carrying this measure forward, refusing to let our stories be erased and fighting to build a Nevada where native children are protected, our identities are celebrated, and justice for missing and murdered relatives is a promise kept. We urge your support.

OLIVIA TANAGER (Director, Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter):
We are the largest grassroots environmental organization in the State of Nevada. At its core, environmental stewardship and the movement for Indigenous recognition are deeply interconnected. Indigenous communities have served as the original caretakers of Nevada's lands, waters and wildlife since time immemorial. Moving Indigenous Peoples Day to October ensures this recognition is given the full attention it deserves. It is a necessary step in honoring those who have nurtured Nevada's rich biodiversity long before Nevada became a State. It acknowledges the crucial contributions native communities have made and continue to make in protecting sacred landscapes, safeguarding water sources and defending ecosystems against exploitation. With that, we urge your full support for A.B. 144

I do want to clear up a misconception. Tony Ramirez is also in full support of this bill. I just wanted to put that on the record.

HECTOR ARREOLA (Policy Fellow, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition):
We are here in full support of Assembly Bill 144. Indigenous people have cared for these lands, waters and sacred places, guided by tradition that honored balance, responsibility and respect. Their leadership is not a memory, it is a lived force that continues to shape how we protect our environment and defend places we call home. Recognizing Indigenous people on the correct day—the second Monday in October—is a commitment to honoring the leadership, amplifying Indigenous voices and ensuring that future generations inherit a Nevada where culture, land and community are protected together.

RYAN BEAMAN:
I am here representing myself and to support A.B. 144. As a Native American member of the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe, I believe this is a vital step toward recognizing our deep cultural contributions of Indigenous communities and ensuring that our history is accurately represented. For centuries, the Timbisha

Shoshone Tribe has called Death Valley home long before it [the name] was born. Our ancestors strived in harsh desert landscapes, adapting to challenges in that area. Our people traded with neighboring tribes, contributing to the vast network of culture exchanged. Yet, despite our deep-rooted presence, history has often overlooked us. When Death Valley was designated as a national monument in 1933, the federal government disregarded our existence, labeling the land as uninhabited. Assembly Bill 144 is a chance to ensure that our Indigenous voices are heard that our contributions are acknowledged, and the future generations understand the resilience and wisdom of native people. By recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day, Nevada takes a meaningful step toward reconciling, fostering a more inclusive society where native voices are valued. I urge your support for A.B. 144.

MS. GOINS:
I am here on behalf of SEIU 1107. I just want to thank the sponsor for bringing this bill, such an important piece of legislation, and it gives me great pleasure to just be able to say I support the voices that came before me and the stories that were shared. Please take those into consideration. We support this bill.

JENNIFER WILLETT (All Voting is Local):
All Voting is Local is an organization that advocates for policies and legislative priorities that expand voter access. We support A.B. 144. We recognize that Indigenous peoples are the original stewards of this land. Their contributions are deeply woven into Nevada's past and present, and their leadership continues to shape our communities and our shared future. Honoring Indigenous Peoples Day on the correct day—the day chosen by Indigenous communities—is one way we reinforce our overarching commitment to equity for tribes, which includes the right to vote without barriers, a longstanding issue for tribal members. We urge the committee to pass A.B. 144.

ALEX TANCHEK (Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribe; Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe):
The tribes are in full support of this bill.

CAL BOONE (Member, Walker River Paiute Nation):
I am here to urge your support for A.B. 144. I think Nevada is a unique place right now given that it already leads in the country for so much for Nevada's tribes, whether that is for voting access, recognition and things like that. I think supporting A.B. 144 would continue this momentum and be really great for Nevada's tribes and Indigenous population.

KENALE AINUU (One APIA Nevada):
We are here in full support of A.B. 144 which acknowledges Indigenous Peoples Day. We stand in solidarity with the Indigenous communities of Nevada.

This bill serves as a meaningful step toward honoring their rich cultural heritage, recognizing their deep historical roots in this region and affirming our commitment to respect and inclusion. This date is already celebrated and recognized by many businesses and communities in Nevada and nationally. It is time for Nevada to formally recognize this day.

JIZHONI WITHERSPOON (Member, Navajo Nation):
I am testifying today in support of Assembly Bill 144. When I first moved to Nevada, I knew little about the tribes here and I felt alone and isolated, far from my community. It was not until I walked across the University of Las Vegas, Nevada's campus and discovered the Festival of Communities that I found a sense of belonging. Through that experience, I learned about the 28 federally recognized tribes in Nevada, and this bill is about making sure that our people feel seen and heard. It acknowledges our presence and raises awareness of a history too often overlooked in textbooks. It also eases the burden on native people who constantly have to explain their identity in every interaction. By passing this bill, we take an important step in recognition and understanding.

BRI SCHMIDT (Silver State Equality):
I am speaking in support of A.B. 144 on behalf of Silver State Equality, a Nevada statewide LGBTQ+ civil rights organization. I am also a lifelong Nevadan and Italian American. Our Indigenous siblings have been caring for this land for forever. I learn, read, grow and work on lands originally belonging to the Washoe Northern Paiute, Southern Paiute and Shoshone people. The stewardship of this State by Indigenous peoples deserves the recognition of the State to honor this day, which is already observed by countless communities, counties and businesses in Nevada. I support this important measure.

DOMINIC DIGERONIMO:
I support A.B. 144 because honoring Indigenous peoples is not just about the past, it is about the future we are choosing to build. The traditions, knowledge and resilience of native communities that carried this land through centuries of change deserve more than is mentioned in our history books. They deserve a place in our present and in the future, we are shaping together. Recognizing

Indigenous Peoples Day is one way we show that respect. It is one way we move forward together. I urge your support.

JANE AUDETTE (Showing Up for Racial Justice, Las Vegas):
I am calling in support of S.B. [A.B.] 144, [about] Indigenous Peoples Day. Las Vegas organizes white people to act for racial justice and sustain engagement and accountability, particularly through educating them about the history and lived experiences of folks in our community. We do not assume that white people [who] are entering justice work have been taught the history, nor do we assume that they have ever been exposed to the lived experiences of those of other races, ethnicities and cultures. We consider this part of our work.

The establishment of a state-recognized Indigenous Peoples Day on the second Monday in October in Nevada recognizes the need for all of us to learn directly from our Indigenous brothers and sisters. For white people, it provides a frame for learning history and experiences that we may not have ever had access to. It provides us an opportunity to engage in unlearning previous misinformation and biases and to fill gaps in our understanding. Everyone in our State can benefit from the celebration. I urge support of A.B. 144.

MARK DIEFENBACHER:
I am a resident of Senate District 8. I am testifying today in support of A.B. 144. I encourage this committee to support moving Nevada's current Indigenous Peoples Day to align with the national observance day and join the 18 other states that have done right by honoring a date chosen by the Indigenous peoples of this land. Given that Indigenous peoples purposely chose the October date, we, as Nevadans, have an opportunity to honor that decision. We can demonstrate to the rest of America a level of growth and Nevada's understanding and appreciation to our Indigenous neighbors. This type of demonstration has the power to spark our fellow Nevadans' continued growth in this area that can lead to beneficial relationship-building with the Indigenous community.

This bill can also act as a catalyst for other states and localities to establish a proper Indigenous Peoples Day in October. I urge this committee to support A.B. 144 knowing that passage sends a broader message beyond a date change.

TARA WEBSTER (Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada):
This bill is not only about a date on the calendar but also about truth, recognition and respect. For too long the histories and contributions of Indigenous peoples have been minimized or erased. Establishing Indigenous Peoples Day and a day long associated with colonial conquest is a profound step toward acknowledging the full, complex history of this land. The State will also serve as a source of pride and belonging for native youth growing up in Nevada. It sends a clear message that their ancestors, sacrifices and triumphs are not footnotes in history. They're foundational to the story of Nevada itself. Please support A.B. 144.

YESENIA CASTRO (Nevada Conservation League):
Nevada's Indigenous community's deep connection to the land continues to inspire stewardship and resilience today. By understanding their history and contributions, we honor the authentic spirit of this land and its people. Recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day celebrates the resilience, culture and stories of the people who shaped this land and continue to do so. We urge the committee to support this bill.

RYAN VORTISCH (Northern Nevada Democracy Coordinator, Silver State Voices):
I am here to testify in support of A.B. 144. At Silver State Voices, we recognize that Indigenous peoples have cared for this land since time immemorial, and that the second Monday of October is the correct day in which Indigenous Peoples Day is observed. We'd like to uplift the other supporting testimonies the committee has heard and urge you to pass A.B. 144.

DECEMBER CUCCARO:
I am calling in support of A.B. 144. As you might tell by my last name, I am an Italian American, and I stand with our native siblings as they advocate to celebrate and honor their communities on the correct day, the second Monday in October. It does not hurt me or my culture to share the day with them and to recognize the full history of what happened. Indigenous people have been here since time immemorial and deserved the State. It is already observed by counties, businesses and communities across the State and the nation. It is only time for all of Nevada to do the same.

CHAIR FLORES:
We have letters in support of A.B. 144 from Lindsay Gordon (Exhibit E), Tammi Tiger (Exhibit F), Jay Tan (Exhibit G) and Bertha Gutierrez (Exhibit H).

JILL DOUGLASS:
I rise today in strong opposition to A.B. 144. The bill seeks to erase Columbus Day and replace it with Indigenous Peoples Day. Let me be clear: Honoring the history and contributions of Native Americans is extremely important, and that is why we have a Nevada law declaring August 9 as Indigenous Peoples Day.

Why that day? Because this is also the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. We should not tear down another important part of our history; we should not rewrite our shared story to fit a political agenda.

Christopher Columbus's journey marked the beginning of Western Civilization's arrival in the Americas, a bold and pivotal event that ultimately shaped the world we live in today. Columbus Day honors not just a man but the spirit of exploration, innovation and courage that built our nation. It reflects our shared American story of striving, discovery and progress.

Tearing down Columbus Day does not heal divisions, it deepens them. It sends a dangerous message that our history is something to be ashamed of instead of something to be understood and learned from. Erasing one group's contributions to elevate another's divisive and unfair, and it is not the way to unite. We can honor and uplift without erasing. No one should be confused. We should not dismantle the traditions and heritage that millions of Americans, especially Italian Americans, hold dear. I urge this body to reject A.B. 144, keeping Nevada's celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day as already established on August 9. Let us move forward by honoring all history, not rewriting it.

JANINE HANSEN (State Chairman, Independent American Party of Nevada):
As you heard, Nevada already has an Indigenous Peoples Day on August 9. This is the international day for Indigenous peoples. We do not object to that. We think it is good. But this bill erases and supersedes the historical Columbus Day. Columbus Day marks the beginning of recorded history. The exchange between America and Europe for music, science, medicine, philosophy and religious principles, includes Greek democracy, Roman law, Judeo-Christian ethics and the tenet that all men are created equal. The first time it was celebrated was in

1792 in honor of the three-hundredth anniversary. The Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892 to honor the four-hundredth anniversary of this voyage.

President Benjamin Harrison declared Columbus Day a legal holiday. In 1971, Columbus Day became a federal holiday in all 50 states after Congress passed a law declaring the second Monday in October as Columbus Day. Columbus Day is the only day on which the nation recognizes the heritage of an estimated 26 million Italian Americans. We do not need to erase the heritage and the history of one group in order to acknowledge another. We oppose this bill because it erases and supersedes Columbus Day.

JOY TRUSHENSKI:
I am a nonpaid lobbyist and a Navy veteran. Please vote no on A.B. 144. Nevada already has an Indigenous Peoples Day on August 9. This bill seeks to replace Columbus Day, which is currently celebrated on October 12, and diminishes and erases our history. If you did not know, Columbus Day was first celebrated October 12, 1792, and is one of America's oldest holidays. It celebrates the beginning of cultural exchange between America and Europe. Because of Christopher Columbus, millions of European immigrants came to America, bringing Roman law, Judeo-Christian principles and the idea that all men are created equal, endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. Additionally, President Trump vows to bring back Columbus Day as Democrats have done everything possible to destroy Christopher Columbus's reputation. Please vote no on A.B. 144 and keep our historical heritage.

JOSHUA SKAGGS (Nevada Republican Party):
I am here today in opposition to A.B. 144, which represents yet another attempt to diminish key elements of American history. It also diminishes the cultural heritage of millions of Italian Americans for whom Christopher Columbus is a symbol of pride, perseverance and contribution to the American fabric. The forty-fifth and forty-seventh President, Donald J. Trump recently addressed this troubling trend, stating,

> I'm bringing Columbus Day back from the ashes. The Democrats did everything possible to destroy Christopher Columbus, his reputation and all of the Italians that love him so much. They tore down his statues and put up nothing but "WOKE" or even worse, nothing at all. Well, you'll be happy to know Christopher is going to make a major comeback. I am hereby reinstating Columbus Day

> under the same rules, states and locations as it has had for all the many decades before.

Columbus Day has long been a celebration of exploration, discovery and the vital contributions of Italian Americans to this country. Diminishing Columbus Day by copying and pasting another day of remembrance on top of it undermines not only our shared history but also the generations of Americans who have celebrated this holiday. Honoring Indigenous peoples is unquestionably important. And many of us support efforts to recognize their history and rights, but that recognition need not come at the expense of another group's heritage. August 9 is already recognized internationally as Indigenous Peoples Day. Moving Nevada's recognition of that to Columbus Day is unacceptable. Please vote no on A.B. 144.

MICHAEL RYAN:
I am a long-time resident of Nevada and a Marine Corps veteran. Please vote no on A.B. 144. Nevada already has an Indigenous Peoples Day on August 9. This bill seeks to diminish the importance of Columbus Day and erase our important history. I am proud to celebrate Columbus Day each year.

Why do you want to change this holiday into something that it is not? This is totally unacceptable. Please do not support A.B. 144. Please vote no on this bill.

MR. HOJJATY:
We support and appreciate the contributions of the Amerindian community. However, we believe that this is a struggle against European influence and the impact that it has brought into the Western Hemisphere, not to mention the values, the innovation and the cultural impact.

Right now, I am taxi staging at Caesars Palace, a Roman-themed casino located in present-day Italy [*sic*]. Now think about a lot of the hotel casino themes that are European themes. Look at the cultural influence. We believe that this primarily pushes guilt of the fact that European influence has been very, very negative; correct me if I am wrong. And in fact, if we are going to push this bill, maybe we should have an Armenian Day in the country of Turkey, considering what the Turks did to the Armenians about 100 years ago. Think about it. And I am very, very concerned about these cultural trends. Look at comedian

Bill Maher, he will tell you that a lot of these trends are very, very concerning. So we will ditto the previous commentators.

LYNN CHAPMAN (State Treasurer, Independent American Party of Nevada):
It is wonderful to celebrate different people from different cultures and to learn and share together. And that being said, why would we as a state want to dismiss other peoples' culture and history? Well, we should not. We have a day that is celebrated as Indigenous Peoples Day, which is August 9, and we should share, learn and shine a light on their culture and people.

On December 23, 1994, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it named August 9 each year as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. But to have chosen another day to celebrate as well would erase and diminish other peoples' day of culture and celebration. That is the wrong thing to do. Leave Columbus Day celebrations as the second Monday in October, as it has been celebrated since October 12, 1792, and leave Indigenous Peoples Day as August 9. Otherwise, it shows that Nevada is trying to divide people, not bring people together.

Look at the opinion—71 percent oppose this bill, and there's a reason why. Let us all show respect to other cultures, peoples and their celebrations. Please vote no.

LORENA BIASSOTTI:
I am speaking for myself. I oppose A.B. 144. I find it incredibly disingenuous to claim that we are not attempting to replace Columbus Day. The truth is that the history and traditions of America have been under attack and worse from within. Indigenous populations make up just 5 percent of Nevada's residents. To prioritize celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day over honoring the brave explorer Christopher Columbus, who navigated dangerous seas to discover these lands, discredits the very foundation upon which we all, 100 percent of us, say it ended today. I am not opposed to celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day. What I oppose is a deliberate attempt to replace a long-standing American tradition. Why are we being told that this new observance is the quote unquote correct one? In reality, it is not. This has become a social justice issue, one that our Legislators should not be taking up. Your oath is to honor this great nation. The descendants of Indigenous tribes, like all of us, benefit from the discovery of the New World, living today in the greatest and strongest country on earth, not in teepees but in modern prosperity. I strongly urge you to oppose this bill. Please

prioritize the needs of your constituents that have elected you to improve their lives. Constantly chipping away at our country's traditions simply is not it.

ANGEL DEFAZIO:
I want to preface my comments to start with: This is no disrespect to the Indigenous peoples. Over the weekend I sent an email to every member of the committee on the true history of how Columbus Day came about. Are you suppressing Columbus Day and inserting Indigenous peoples? The horrific lynching and murder of innocent Italians in 1891 in New Orleans is being whitewashed. This incident was so horrendous that President Harrison actually pulled our ambassador from Italy, and Italy took their ambassador from here for fear of war with Italy. So in order to appease Italy and the Italian Americans, they needed a figurehead, and that was Columbus because he was well known.

Somehow Columbus Day got bastardized and included what happened with the Indigenous people. This is not true. My people were slaughtered, but yet you want to ignore that fact. Please do not vote for this bill. There is already a day celebrating the Indigenous people. Yes, they make contributions to our country. There is no denying that but so have my people. So, with all due respect, I wish that you would read that full email (Exhibit I) that I gave you.

AL LASSO:
I am just confused as to why this body would want to diminish the important and significant contributions of the Indigenous peoples by celebrating Indigenous peoples on the same day with another important holiday, Columbus Day. Celebrating two holidays on the same day can potentially diminish and dilute the significance of each holiday because it divides attention and focus, making it harder to give either celebration the full recognition and respect it deserves.

While it is possible to celebrate multiple holidays on the same day, doing so can weaken the emotional and cultural impact of each event. For holidays to retain their full honor, it is often better for each to be given its own space and time for reflection, celebration and community gathering.

Why would you want to diminish the Indigenous peoples by giving them a holiday that they share with another group? Why not give them their own holiday? This way everyone can focus on celebrating Indigenous peoples on that

day rather than sharing it with another holiday. So, I ask you to vote no, for those reasons, on this bill.

KATRIN IVANOFF:
I want to say that I have a very big respect for the Indigenous peoples in this country. I think we should look more into the way they take care of their health, and the way they do things is very, very good—not the way we do things. However, I am in opposition of this bill for the many things said before me. I am just going to say ditto to everything that was said in opposition.

KIMBERLY JOHNSTON-LINSDAY:
I would like you to please vote in opposition of this bill. As I understand, we already have a day to recognize Indigenous peoples, August 9, and that is wonderful. I do feel like it is an attempt to undermine Columbus Day because of social justice issues that are prevalent right now. So, I do not think it is truly genuine nor necessary since we do already recognize that day, August 9.

CHAIR FLORES:
We have letters in opposition to A.B. 144 from Reva Crump (Exhibit J), Nancy Carlson (Exhibit K), J.S. McElhinney III (Exhibit L), Cynthia Perine (Exhibit M), and Ann Sweder (Exhibit N).

WILL ADLER:
Today I am representing myself. I want to testify in neutral on this bill given some of the comments recently. Interestingly enough, Columbus Day is an odd day in itself. Columbus sailed to America in 1492, but he thought of himself as discovering Asia actually, and he only made it to about Cuba, and then he went home. Again, there is Italian pride here. But the correct person [to honor] is probably Amerigo Vespucci. He's the guy who actually named America after himself, the Americas, Amerigo.

But additionally, Italy itself was not a country at the time in 1492. And in fact, it took the Napoleon conquering of the 1861 era to unify Italy into one kingdom; the Italian Kingdom of Napoleon became Italy then. It is a weird conflict to say that we must support Italian pride for a man who identified as Spanish, who sailed here under their flag and represented a city-state because they were not a country at that time. But I do think this bill has merits. I just want to put this on the record. There is some mixing of Italian pride and bags here that might not be needed in this conversation.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BACKUS:
I just want to thank the committee for sitting through a lot of testimony. I stress and reiterate; this bill does not repeal Columbus Day. We heard from members of our community that Indigenous Peoples Day is already being celebrated by numerous tribes and communities throughout our State, as well as being recognized by the United States as being the second Monday in October. And I am really proud of Nevada. We've done a lot of work with our government-to-government relationships with our tribes, and this just simply codifies the observance of a day that is being celebrated.

I want to thank the committee for your time today and urge your support for Assembly Bill 144.

CHAIR FLORES:
We will close out the hearing on Assembly Bill 144 and open our last bill hearing for the day, Assembly Bill 342.

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

PAT SPEARMAN:
I am former Senator Pat Spearman. I served as a state Senator representing Senate District 1 in Clark County for 12 years, from November 2012 to November 2024. I am also a veteran and served almost 30 years in the military.

I am excited to be back in the Legislature this afternoon to present A.B. 342 which designates the month of March as Women Veterans History Month. I would like to first provide a little bit of background on this bill.

This recommendation came from the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs. I had the honor of serving as chair of this committee in the past interim. Of course, veterans are one of the key populations of focus within this committee, and one topic we particularly focused on in this interim was women veterans. Various presenters in this area discussed the specific issues and concerns facing women veterans, such as the lack of recognition. A 2023 *RAND Health Quarterly* publication notes, for example, that women service members tend to face increased scrutiny while serving. But once they transition to civilian life, we become invisible. Furthermore, women service members are often confronted with sexual

violence. And the United States Department of Veterans Affairs reports that, on average, one in three women veterans tell the Veterans Health Administration healthcare provider about experiencing some type of sexual harassment or assault in the military. I am one of those one and three. In 1986, as a young captain, I experienced sexual harassment from an 06 colonel in Panama. He did not get far, but the fact that he threatened to ruin my career was enough for me to keep my mouth shut, keep my head down and try to help other women to avoid that type of disastrous behavior.

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

From the U.S. Revolutionary War to today's fighter pilots, women have proudly served in the U.S. military for over 200 years. From March 21, 2023, since the Al Qaeda 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, more than 300,000 women have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. During the war on terrorism, 166 lost their lives. And 100 more received permanent physical, emotional or mental trauma as a result of their service. And although I did not deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan, my service at the Pentagon afforded me an opportunity to carry these alphabets for the rest of my life—PTSD—because of what I saw happening on the battlefield. And I will tell you that when the IEDS, the improvised explosive devices, went off, there was not a difference between gender, male or female, and many of the people who were killed in those attacks were women. I often ask people to close your eyes: when I say, veteran, tell me what you see; characteristically, they usually say I see a guy. I say, stop right there—that's the problem—because we served too.

In 2017, I had an opportunity to meet a Nevada resident, Lena King, whose story, up until December of last year, had not been told. She was one of my constituents. Perhaps you have seen the Netflix movie, *The Six Triple Eight*. It is about the 6888 Postal Battalion. More than 800 women—the only all-female battalion sent overseas during World War II—were sent to unclog the mail that had piled up over a few years. And if you have ever been stationed overseas, you know how important the mail is. No mail—low morale. She said they were

sent over there to prove that women, particularly the Negro women of the Women's Army Corps, could not accomplish the mission. But they did, and they did so in record time.

In 2020, I had the opportunity to go to Lena King's ninety-ninth birthday party. And as we sat there and the testimonials were coming forth and the accolades were being presented, out of the right-side peripheral vision I saw a rather tall gentleman coming down the aisle, and I saw Ms. King—she was only about 4 feet, 11 inches tall—sit up in her chair and clap. And as he came in full view, I said, oh, my God, it is Tyler Perry. And he went to the stage, knelt down and said, "Ms. King, your story will be told. It has languished in obscurity far too long. I am committed to bringing the story of the 6888 Battalion to the American people, and I promise you we are putting in the full force and effort of my company behind this." They finished the film in January 2024, and he went to Las Vegas to Ms. King's home and showed her the film. She passed a few weeks later just before her one hundredth birthday.

Some people ask, why do we need a Women Veterans History Month? I was commissioned in December 1977 as a second lieutenant in the United States Army Military Police Corps. Look at the history: They do not want Black people in the Military Police Corps. They sure as heck did not want women. As a matter of fact, through the whole five months of my basic officers' training, they did everything they could to make me drop out. We would do pushups for a physical fitness test, and I would have to do five before they counted one. Somehow, when we're doing the run, the clock would get jammed and not stop when I crossed the finish line. And someone said to me, didn't that make you angry? I said no, because even though they meant to break me, they built me. In spite of the obstacles that I faced in my almost 30 years of military service, I managed to rise to the rank of lieutenant colonel. I am but one woman who served the United States Armed Forces honorably and proudly.

I urge you please recognize our service. Please recognize our service and pass this bill.

SENATOR ELLISON:
This is more of a comment. We try to show respect to our veterans, female and male. I have had the honor to drive several veterans in parades and honor them during the Fourth of July or Veterans Day in a convertible to show our respect for what they've done for this country. My granddaughter just drove one of

them last year. There's a lot of us who have so much pride for what the women and men have done and what they did during their service. And thank you for your service.

I remember when we put in the Women Veterans Day license plates. I do not know if we still have them or not, but we got them passed when I was in the Assembly. I do not know if they are still available or what, but the template should still be out there and active. That money should be going to the veterans' women's group. I do not know if you can answer that or not.

ANDREW LEPEILBET (State Chairman, United Veterans Legislative Council):
The answer is the women veterans' plates are still active, and we are still issuing them from the DMV.

SENATOR ROGICH:
I commend that you are here highlighting this important issue. We had a neighbor once upon a time who served in World War II. She was a proud woman, and she was strong and independent. But in her later years, she was alone, and there was not that recognition that she served in World War II. So, thank you for bringing this forth. She was a nurse, and the positions were very limited then, so she never truly received the recognition throughout her life that she deserved for her service and the commitment. For the record, Pat Spearman, thank you.

MS. SPEARMAN:
I just want to add one thing before I step back. I was honored to speak with a mother whose daughter was fourth-generation military. She was in Richmond, Virginia, and she said all her daughter wanted to do was just join the military. She joined JROTC while in high school. And once she finished, she went into the military and was a logistics specialist. And her mom said she thought that was just great because being in supply would mean that she would not be in harm's way. Well, she was deployed to Iraq. She finished school at Fort Lee in September and was sent to Iraq in October. And her mother said all her daughter wanted to do was serve. The last phone call that she got from her daughter, her daughter said, "I don't know why we're in Iraq. The people do not want us here. Mom, I am scared I am not going to come back. I have got to go because we are getting ready to go out on a convoy." Her mom said she did not hear from her for about a week and a half until the chaplain came to the door. Her daughter had been killed by an IED in that convoy escort. The funeral was

held with a closed coffin because the only thing that was left is what they could gather after the explosion. If you want to know what that does, it is very polite to say, "Oh, it is just an IED." But if you take a tomato, put some ketchup on it, put some mayonnaise on it and some relish, maybe some hamburger meat, and you get that all mixed up and then smash it, that's what that mother got back.

We served valiantly and we served honorably. This is but a small thing to ask so that we are not invisible.

And just as an aside, one of the reasons I have fought so hard for renewable energy is because six out of every ten deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan happened because people were guarding oil.

MR. LEPEILBET:
I am the state chairman of the United Veterans Legislative Council representing the 250,000 veterans in Nevada. If you include their families, that makes 500,000 Nevadans.

What I am going to say here is a little different. Every year between sessions, we bring veterans around the State together, and we ask them what they want us to work on with the Legislators. This past year, we had 69 priorities that these veterans came up with, which we distributed to all of you. We also had 14 federal issues which we shared with the federal congressional individuals. And [priority] number 13 on that 69-priority list was this bill. That's where it was ranked in terms of the votes of what the veterans want. We had them vote on all 69 of them statewide—and this was thirteenth out of the 69. So it is a big deal for our veteran community to recognize our women.

I am the father of four daughters, [and have] a wife and somewhere there's a son, and I recognize a lot of the issues. My kids did not go in the military, and I came from a military family. But you know, the wives, brothers, sisters, fathers, they all served with us. I served 55 to 60 years ago. And yes, I really am that old. About 2 percent of the population of veterans were women at that time. Today, it varies between 16 percent and 23 percent; and on average, I believe it is right around 19 percent. Lieutenant Colonel Spearman can straighten me out if that is not correct. The women have become a significant element in our military and our logistics chain, specifically in places where we are fighting a war. A lot of our war fighting pilots are women today. In my day, you did not

see a woman near a helicopter or a jet plane, and now they are a large part of the military fighters.

I think this is the right thing to do, not just honoring what our veterans expect me to do here. We should approve this bill. It has been the right thing to do for many, many decades. There are a lot of women we do not even know they were there serving for us. It is like the Postal Battalion. I knew about the Postal Battalion, but I will give you that 99.9 percent of Americans do not have a clue about the All-Black Postal Battalion in World War II. My dad's a Pearl Harbor survivor on the USS Arizona. My grandfather was World War I survivor. I have a brother who finished as a one-star general. I was an infantry officer in Vietnam. I have two sailor brothers. I have a marine now—we do not hold that against him. Let us support this bill; the United Veterans Legislative Council wholly supports this bill.

MS. BRAY:
I just want to start off by saying to Senator Spearman and the gentleman before me, thank you for your service. We are completely behind this bill and believe it just highlights the work, experience, dedication and service that our women veterans have made to our country.

I think just a testament already has been the experiences that were highlighted as part of the presentation. Many of us may have known, maybe many of us have learned that just now. I think that stands true for what this bill is intended to—highlight some of those experiences—and we stand behind this bill.

FRED WAGAR (Veterans of Foreign Wars; Benefits Protection Team Lead, Nevada Department of Disabled American Veterans Services):
I want to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Assembly Bill 342. The Women Veterans Advisory Committee has advocated for this recognition for years, and it is good to see it finally made it into a bill. This bill is an important step toward recognizing the invaluable contribution of women veterans, preserving their legacy and inspiring future generations to honor their sacrifices. Women veterans, as Senator Spearman pointed out, have played an integral role in the United States military since the Revolutionary War. I doubt very many people know that today they constitute a vital part of our armed forces with their numbers continually increasing in our military. Despite their vital contributions, women veterans' stories are often overlooked in the broader narrative of military history. Assembly Bill 342 seeks to change this by

creating a dedicated month to honor their service, ensuring their stories are told, remembered and celebrated. The Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans organizations urge you to support A.B. 342 and designate March as Women Veterans History Month in Nevada to recognize the courage and resilience of these extraordinary individuals who have given so much to our State and our nation.

MS. CHAPMAN:
I am a 50-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary, and I have known many World War II veterans, both men and women.

I found interesting information that you may not know about women in the U.S. military: According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, more than 2 million women veterans live in the U.S. today. In the year 2000, women veterans were just 4 percent of the veteran population. But by 2040, they are projected to make up 18 percent of all veterans, making them the fastest growing group of veterans.

Navy Captain Rosemary Mariner was one of the first eight women selected to fly military aircraft in 1973 and a year later became the Navy's first female jet pilot. At her gravesite service in February 2019, nine female pilots from Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia performed the missing woman formation for their predecessor—the first all-female crew to do so. Dr. Kamin Samuel was the first Black female helicopter pilot for the U.S. Navy. Television star Bea Arthur was a truck driver in the Marine Corps during World War II, and there are many, many more stories about courageous women that I could not present here today.

But honoring women who worked hard to achieve their goals in helping to protect and serve their country is a goal that our State can and should achieve by passing A.B. 342.

MR. HOJJATY:
Ditto the previous callers, I would like to thank everybody for their service and thank you for the efforts of the state Senator and her contributions.

CHAIR FLORES:
Thank you again for the presentation and for all who have served our country. We will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 342. Seeing no public comment, this meeting is adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Donna Crawford Kennedy,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Edgar Flores, Chair

DATE:

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	**Exhibit Letter**	**Introduced on Minute Report Page No.**	**Witness / Entity**	**Description**
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
A.B. 83	C	7	Chair Flores	Conceptual Amendment
A.B. 83	D	7	Chair Flores	Support Letter, Caitlin Gatchalian
A.B. 144	E	17	Chair Flores	Support Letter Lindsay Gordon
A.B. 144	F	17	Chair Flores	Support Letter Tammi Tiger
A.B. 144	G	17	Chair Flores	Support Letter Jay Tan
A.B. 144	H	17	Chair Flores	Support Letter Bertha Gutierrez
A.B. 144	I	21	Angel DeFazio,	Neutral Letter
A.B. 144	J	22	Chair Flores	Opposition Letter Reva Crump
A.B. 144	K	22	Chair Flores	Opposition Letter Nancy Carlson
A.B. 144	L	22	Chair Flores	Opposition Letter J.S. McElhinney III
A.B. 144	M	22	Chair Flores	Cynthia Perine
A.B. 144	N	22	Chair Flores	Opposition Letter Ann Sweder