MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Eighty-third Session
March 11, 2025

The Senate Committee on Judiciary was called to order by Chair Melanie Scheible at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, in Room 1214 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 Melanie Scheible, Chair
Senator Edgar Flores, Vice Chair
Senator James Ohrenschall
Senator Roberta Lange
Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen
Senator Ira Hansen
Senator Lisa Krasner
Senator John Ellison

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Julie Pazina, Senatorial District No. 12

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst
Brad Wilkinson, Committee Counsel
Michael Scully, Committee Counsel
Patrick Ashton, Senior Principal Policy Analyst
Sally Ramm, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Marilyn Jordan, Vice President, Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum
Mark Krueger, Chief Deputy Attorney General, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Office of the Attorney General

Jennifer Noble, Nevada District Attorneys' Association
Jason Woodard, Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association
Jason Walker, Washoe County Sheriff's Department
Susan Martinez, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Nevada State AFL-CIO
Randy Soltero, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 720
Alfonso Lopez, Sheet Metal Workers Local 88, Las Vegas
Joseph Graham, Chief Steward, Communication Workers of America Local 9413
Dora Martinez, Nevada Disability Care Action Coalition
Michael Ryan
Connie McMullen, Senior Coalition of Washoe County
Laura Leavitt
Russ James, Northern Nevada AFL-CIO
Donna Clontz
Terri Laird, Executive Director, Retired Public Employees of Nevada
Beverly Williams, Member, Teamsters Local 986
Rita Weisshaar, Nevada Alliance for Retired Americans
Dionne Klug, United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 711
Tamara Jamison, Member, Teamsters Local 14
Addie Crisp, Member, Transport Workers Union Local 556
Klarissa Principe, Member, Transport Workers Union Local 577
Liz Sorenson, President, Nevada AFL-CIO
Gabe Christenson, SMART-TD Local 1043
Sue Bird
Thomas Bird, Nevada Alliance for Retired Americans
Angela Knott, Washoe County Public Defender's Office
Paloma Guererro, Clark County Public Defender's Office
Yesenia Moya
Paul Moradkhan, Vegas Chamber
Tom Clark, Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce
Tray Abney, National Federation of Independent Business
Lynn Chapman, Independent American Party
Misty Grimmer, Nevada Resort Association
Yoana Ontiveros, Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance
Miranda Hoover, National Electrical Contractors Association; Energy and Convenience Association of Nevada
Mike Cathcart, City of Henderson
Kelly Crompton, City of Las Vegas
Bekah Denny, Nevada Chapter Associated General Contractors

Matthew Sauls, Nevada Trucking Association; Nevada Manufacturers Association
Peter Saba, Nevada Restaurant Association
Joshua Skaggs, Nevada Republican Party
Eric Cardona, Henderson Chamber of Commerce
Anahit Baghshetsyan, Nevada Policy Research Institute
Peter Guzman, Latin Chamber of Commerce
Katie Banuelos, Libertarian Party of Nevada
Mandi Elliott, Nevada Outdoor Business Coalition; Nevada Small Business Development Center
Kerrie Kramer, NAIOP Nevada
Jeff Rogan, Clark County

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:
We will start with the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 60.

SENATE BILL 60: Revises crimes committed against older or vulnerable persons. (BDR 15-342)

MARILYN JORDAN (Vice President, Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum):
Senate Bill 60 increases protections for seniors and vulnerable individuals against financial and physical harm by deterring criminals from targeting them. I also want to point out that a brief overview (Exhibit C) was uploaded to NELIS [Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System]. It is an informational memorandum about the Forum.

The Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum was created in 1997 to identify and act upon issues of importance to aging persons. It is comprised of up to 21 members who must be 60 years of age or older, nominated by state Senators and appointed by the Legislative Commission. The Forum may submit one bill each legislative session. Last session, S.B. No. 45 of the 82nd Session was brought forth by the Forum and passed by the Legislature. This bill in 2023 increased the personal needs allowance for Medicaid patients in long-term care facilities after being stagnant for over 32 years.

The Forum additionally carried A.B. No. 373 of the 82nd Session sponsored by former Assemblymember Michelle Gorelow, which increased civil penalties for deceptive trade practices directed toward individuals who are disabled, elderly or minor.

The Forum seeks to further expand these safeguards with S.B. 60 to provide more context. Let me share some background information. In recent years, we have seen a disturbing rise in elder abuse both in the form of physical mistreatment and the exploitation of their financial resources. Far too many seniors are victims of fraud, scams, theft and even physical abuse. It is imperative that we take action to protect them. According to Nevada Crime Statistics, as of November 2024, crimes against elderly people in Las Vegas alone were up more than 50 percent compared to 2023.

During a February 2024 meeting of the Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum, representatives from the Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection provided an overview of the work and services accomplished by the Bureau, particularly its efforts to protect seniors from scams and fraud in our State. Alarmingly, they highlighted that Nevada ranks third in the nation for seniors becoming targets of fraud and scams. In 2023 alone, Nevada seniors lost over $113 million because of fraud. Several Forum members expressed an interest in greater protections for the physical well-being of Nevada seniors as well. Specifically, they referenced news reports of seniors being severely injured during the course of a violent home invasion that took place in 2024 when individuals forcibly entered the homes of senior Nevada citizens without consent.

The Forum held its final meeting and work session in August 2024. Based on the recommendations from President Fran Almaraz and myself to address these threats, the Forum voted for a bill draft request (BDR). The bill aims to prevent physical harm and reduce scams and fraud targeting Nevada's senior citizens by determining crimes against us and other vulnerable populations.

Yesterday, you heard S.B. 50 requested by the Office of the Attorney General which closely aligns with S.B. 60. I think I can speak on behalf of the Forum when I say we are in full support of S.B. 50 because it enhances penalties for theft committed against seniors. The Forum's bill S.B. 60 achieves the same objective but includes several other crimes that are subject to additional penalties at the pleasure of the Chair.

SENATE BILL 50: Revises provisions relating to the additional penalty for certain crimes committed against an older person or a vulnerable person. (BDR-15-506)

I would now like to summarize the key sections of the bill. Section 1 expands the types of crimes against a senior or a vulnerable individual that require the imposition of additional penalties to include residential burglary, home invasion, forgery, fraud, larceny or theft or any such attempted crime engaging in a deceptive trade practice. Sections 2 and 3 increase the minimum imprisonment terms to at least 2 but not more than 20 years for individuals convicted of either a residential burglary or home invasion which causes the death of a senior or seriously injures a senior during the commission of the crime. Sections 4 and 5 prohibit an individual from being granted parole or early release from parole until the individual has paid at least 80 percent of the court-ordered restitution for the same crimes as described in section 1, and section 6 adds those additional crimes to the list of crimes for which a person is also liable for civil penalties.

This concludes my presentation of S.B. 60. By standing up for our senior citizens, we honor their contributions to our economy and society and reaffirm our commitment to a community that looks for and after its most vulnerable. Let us be the generation in Nevada that ensures that they are not only cared for but respected, protected and empowered to live their lives with dignity.

PATRICK ASHTON (Senior Principal Policy Analyst):
I am a nonpartisan member of the Legislative Council Bureau. I can neither advocate nor support S.B. 60. However, Mark Krueger and I are here to respond to any questions that the committee may have. We do not have any additional remarks at this time.

SENATOR FLORES:
Are there scenarios where the individual who commits the crime is not aware of the age of the victim and that they could potentially be captured with your proposed language here?

MARK KRUEGER (Chief Deputy Attorney General, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Office of the Attorney General):
My experience has been both as a civil attorney and as a prosecutor for several district attorney's offices in the State. In my experience, the majority of time when you will find that there's a residential burglary or a home invasion, the individuals have targeted these people. They know there are seniors living there. They know that this is a place that potentially they can find resources—valuables—to steal. I will give you an example. One time I prosecuted

two individuals for burglarizing a home of an individual who was a World War II veteran, 101 years old. They knew he was in there. They knew he was there with his caretaker, and they did it anyway. That is just one example of many that I have come across in my experience. So, most of the time, yes.

Now your specific question: Are there chances that there could be a time when someone does not know? Sure. Statistically, there's always a chance that there is going to be someone where you burglarize a home and you do not see them. Or, in our context of theft—especially through the scams and schemes that we are seeing—a lot of times they target anybody they can. However, there are specific schemes and scams that are targeting older individuals. The pig butchering, for example, is a really good one because that is what we are targeting. These scammers are essentially targeting people who they know are on singles dating sites, older adults, and they are pretending to be somebody else. They know they likely have a large retirement fund, and they want to be able to get that fund from these individuals. So more likely than not, in my experience, they know. Can these be attributable to someone who might come across an older person while they are doing it? Sure, statistically it could happen.

SENATOR FLORES:
I will just echo some of the remarks that I made yesterday where we are open to protecting vulnerable communities and making sure that we are doing whatever we have to do because we know that they, in fact, are targeted. But at the same time, I want to be careful that we do not cast such a wide net that individuals who just did not know, and there's no real way of them having the ability to have known the age of the victim, are then captured in this particular language with the understanding of the intent.

MR. ASHTON:
I cannot advocate or oppose this measure. However, I can speak about the intent of the Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum. Based on the meetings and meeting minutes, the intent is definitely to target those criminals or to enhance penalties for criminals that target seniors knowingly and willfully. Legally, I cannot speak about how this is addressed in the bill. But if in any way, that would be something the committee would like to change, we as staff could bring that to the former officers and see if there is an appetite to change it in a way that it would make sure it meets the intent of the Forum chair.

MR. KRUEGER:
If I may add, to supplement based on your comments, Senator Flores, I would like to kind of just take you through a little bit when residential burglar invasion of the home happens. Statistically, you know these individuals are targeting somebody who's older that lives there. But yes, you could have somebody invade a home who did not realize it could be a grandparent visiting, for example. So they did not know that the grandparent was there at the time. But when you get into the other crimes like theft, forgery, larceny, even fraud, and engage in deceptive trade practices—these, by the very nature of the crimes, require you to know that you are going after a specific individual. Also, that specific individual is going to be known to you to be an older adult.

Now, some older adults look a little bit younger nowadays and some look a little bit older. There could be that piece right at the age of 60. But you have to pick a number, and the Legislature a long time ago picked 60 as the definition of an older adult for purposes of criminal conduct in Nevada. So that is the age that we are. But in my experience—most of the time for sure—onto these other crimes, they know the person is 60 or older. Burglary and residential burglary, invasion of the home, most of the time they know who they are targeting, and there could be an older adult in there. Statistically, the Legislative Silver Haired Forum is really seeing a trend and an increase in crimes against older adults and feels that this is a bill they wanted to bring forward to address that trend with your support.

SENATOR HANSEN:
Now, I am 64 years old, so I fit in this category, but I got a problem with this kind of carve out. Here's why, and maybe there's already a provision in the law that I am going to bring out. But if somebody breaks into my house, beats the hell out of me, and I die, realistically, I got 20 years left anyway, maybe 30. If the same guy breaks into my house and my 14-year-old granddaughter is there and he beats her and kills her, she would have had potentially 60 to 70 years left of her life.

So her life and the murder of her—in my mind—is a greater crime than murdering me, simply because of the amount of life expectancy that is still left there.

And I got the idea that what if I am old? I am not as able to defend myself, so they targeted me. That's absolutely true for younger people too, though. You

know, if somebody high on drugs breaks into my house, beats up my granddaughter, she can't fight back either. Maybe it is a question for legal. Do they have that? Also, as I understand it, the district attorneys already have the ability to enhance penalties for certain heinous acts against senior citizens or perhaps other vulnerable people. Maybe I am wrong on that, but they have, as I understand it, a great deal of flexibility on what they are actually asking the court to do, assuming the person is convicted, on the penalty side.

MR. KRUEGER:
Correct, Senator Hansen. I am going to address both points that you made. You are correct under *Nevada Revised Statutes* 193.167. The enhancements are already built in for murder, attempted murder, assault, battery, kidnapping, robbery and sexual assault. And what this bill seeks to do is expand that list to include residential burglary, invasion of the home, theft, forgery, larceny. I am sorry, embezzlement was already in there as well as larceny, fraud and engaging in deceptive trade practices. So it does expand the list, and it captures those types of crimes that are frankly the ones that are being used by the criminals to take money from older adults.

Addressing your second question, the Legislature is the one that created these penalties for older adults and not at the same time created penalties for juveniles. We in the Bureau of Consumer Protection recognized that in the last session. Just like Dr. Jordan spoke about, we were able to increase the penalties both for deceptive trade practices and civil penalties for older adults against all adults and against juveniles because I agree, a juvenile's life is just as important as an older adult, and they are equally vulnerable to these abusive crimes.

The juvenile does not always have the money portion that we are talking about here. Interestingly enough, over the course of my career, prosecuting criminals a few times, I unfortunately had to consider the enhancements for the death penalty. Ironically, one of the considerations when you are balancing those factors is for crimes against older people but not when those deaths occurred to a younger person. So there are some provisions in the law that do not address juveniles and the crimes that are done against them. I agree with you, and I think that is a question and an issue for another day. It is not in this particular bill.

SENATOR HANSEN:
Okay. Well, this goes back honestly to some concerns I have had over how we are always singling out some victims and making some victims. Frankly, you receive greater punishment. For example, if somebody came in here right now and shot me because he does not like my political views, there's no enhancement on any penalty. If he came in here and shot me because he does not like my religious views, then it is a hate crime. And even though it is the same person, I am dead, you know—exact same act on one hand but because of my religious views, I have an enhanced penalty. But on the other hand, for my political views, no enhanced penalty. That whole issue gets into hate crimes and all sorts of stuff. We are breaking out all these categories of victims, yet the actual act is supposed to be what the intent is. If the intent for whatever reason is to kill me one way or the other, why am I a greater victim on one hand than the other when it comes to punishment?

MR. KRUEGER:
Senator Hansen, you brought up another enhancement, which is the hate crime enhancement. Hate crime enhancement can apply to anyone, whether the perpetrator is a juvenile or somebody in between a juvenile and an older adult.

So the enhancement for an older adult penalty has been around for quite some time, and the reason for it is because of exactly what Dr. Jordan highlighted: this society is judged by how it treats older people. Too often we find that older people are neglected, left alone, forgotten about. And so these enhancements were brought about to protect and provide a deterrent for people who come in and kill an older person.

In your particular example, if they came in and killed you either for your religious belief or because you are over 60, they are going to get one enhancement or the other or both because murder is already an enhancement for older people and the hate crime enhancement is already there. But with the enhancements that we are talking about in this particular bill that we are proposing, the Silver Haired Legislative Forum recognizes that the enhancements that exist go to some of these heinous crimes that involve violence against the person. But what about the ones that involve absolutely gutting somebody financially, taking everything that they have in order to financially make it to death? That's what they are taking from these people, and that is what their goal and objective is. And that is why the legislation is important to put up a deterrence and stop that and punish appropriately.

SENATOR HANSEN:
In that part of the bill, I support 100 percent Senator Stone's bill on that. We heard one, I think yesterday, on that as we were trying to figure out ways to keep people from getting scammed. I am uncomfortable with always breaking out different categories of victims, when it is the same basic act in the first place. [For] everybody, whether if somebody comes in here and murders me, it is the act of murder that is wrong, not the motive. You are creating a punishment for thought and in this case for age, but then you do not for children. It is an issue.

SENATOR ELLISON:
When I looked over this bill, I thought we just had the same bill yesterday. I had to keep looking at the number. The problem I have is if you go back and look at, statistically, some of these robberies that are break-ins, they follow these people dramatically. They know their victims because if they know there's a 350-pound gorilla in that house, they are not going to go in. But if they know there's a 65- or 70-year-old woman in there by herself, that is not a threat. So I really believe that this bill has merit.

Here's another thing—these robberies are planned 90 percent of the time. I will give you an example. Several years ago, there was a guy that used to do the Reno Rodeo, he and his wife. A guy went in, friended him, did some yard work and he goes back and murders them and robs them. I mean, he set the people up to die. I got problems with this.

Here is another thing of this bill that gets me. It says they pay restitution. That's a joke. These guys do not ever pay restitution coming out of prison. If they say that they do, I would like to see it because I know so many people that put in for restitution never got one dime for the damage to their homes or their pets and stuff like this. So I got a problem with this restitution. The bill says in section 5 that they got to pay 80 percent. They can't get 80 percent out of nothing. What are you going to do then? How are you going to collect anything? Are they going to stay in jail? What are they going to do? Leave them on probation? Can somebody answer that question?

MR. KRUEGER:
Let us take your first part first. You are absolutely correct that the bill is designed to thwart, prevent and deter individuals from targeting older adults. I also have examples. I had a friend right here in Carson City who literally got

burglarized. She is an older adult. How did they know to burglarize her house? The individual that did it once dated her daughter and knew exactly where the parents lived—knew everything about it—knew how to get into their schedule—the whole bit. So there are many examples that support your example from the Reno Rodeo guy, where they absolutely know who they are targeting.

Moving on to the next issue of restitution. This is an age-old issue faced by the courts, the prosecutors, even the defense—how do we get restitution paid? And what do you do if it does not? The truth of it is that in a very small percentage of the cases will a maximum restitution be paid. There are some that I have seen; and in my prosecution years, I have witnessed actual restitution paid either upfront or throughout a term of probation. I do not have an answer for you on that. The intent of the Forum was to make sure that there was a deterrence there and to attempt to try to get some sort of restitution to these individuals that have been taken.

Sometimes, these individuals do not use the money right away before they are caught or apprehended; sometimes they do. So, it is a concern. I hear your concern. Restitution acts as a deterrent and helps the enhancements. It is something that we can certainly take back and discuss with the Forum.

SENATOR ELLISON:
These guys are on the internet or finding names and calling, and they clean victims out, everything. They end up losing their house, their car, their finances, everything. But 90 percent of the bad guys are not in the United States. I still think that there's got to be laws out there to go after these people. I do not care what country they are in; if they know who they are and they know how to get to them, and they can back it up, I say “Go get them.” That is just me. Personally, I am just sick and tired of our citizens of this country being screwed over like this, and we have got to stop it or slow it down with some bills, at least send a signal to these guys. We're going to get you. It might take a while, but I guarantee it. You go after a senior, we are going to come after you, and we are not going to quit until we do that. That's my belief. So bills like this I think have merit, and I hope it goes through.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
Section 2, subsection 6 of S.B. 60 starts with a person convicted of a residential burglary. In current law, if you were to commit murder and it was a first-degree murder, and you had an enhancement which already exists in law

for an older or vulnerable person under this statute, it would carry with it an enhancement of 1 to 20 years. I am wondering what the thought process was behind this enhancement that is seeking to be added in this bill because for residential burglaries that may cause death or serious bodily harm, the penalty enhancement is 2 to 20 years. So if you are to do a residential burglary and have an enhancement, it is a larger penalty than if you were to commit murder under the current law.

I was wondering why, for this one added section, there's an enhanced penalty that is greater than the rest of the existing statutes for murder, attempted murder, assault, battery, kidnapping, robbery and sexual assault.

MR. KRUEGER:
Senator Nguyen, I am reading the provision that you cited to me and perhaps I misunderstood, but I see it as a 2- to 20-year enhancement on this particular one where you end up convicting a murderer of an elder person during a residential burglary.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
I am reading it that way, but under existing law, it is just a 1 to 20.

MR. KRUEGER:
I understand. So the way that the enhancements work, obviously, is that they go on top of the underlying offense. The way the murder works is that if you plead to it, there are three different types of penalties you can get, which is life with a chance of parole after 20 years, life without parole or a definite term of 50 years. And so this enhancement would be on top of that. You are looking at making sure that an individual did not parole out until a provision after the 20 years from 2 to 20 has expired.

SENATOR NYGUEN:
May I clarify? I do not think I am being clear. I understand that is how it is in existing law. This added section increases it to a larger term for the enhancement for 2 to 20 years in a residential burglary with serious bodily injury. I mean, obviously with the death that would be a murder charge. In this added section that you are seeking to add, if it was a residential burglary with serious bodily injury, the enhancement is greater than it would be if there was a murder or sexual assault. If you go back to subsection 1 under the original law, you'll see that the enhancement currently as it stands is a term of not less than

1 year with a maximum term of not more than 20 years. In this new added section, just for residential burglary, you are seeking to make it 2 to 20 as opposed to 1 to 20, like it is for the sexual assault, murder, attempted murder, assault, battery, kidnapping. So my question is what was it that went into that additional year on the bottom as it relates to the residential burglary and not like sexual assault?

MR. KRUEGER:
I do not have an answer for you on the low end, but I do know that they wanted an enhancement for the crime of residential burglary or invasion of the home when a serious bodily injury occurs, including obviously a murder as well. So that is the enhancement. I do not have an answer for you on the rationale behind doing a two year versus the one year that was an existing law, but I can certainly speak with Ms. Alvarez and see if we can come up with that rationale. They were in the meetings. I was not present during those time frames.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
No, thank you. I was just wondering if that was a change suggested. There are not many changes in a Senate bill. So I just wanted to know what reasoning went behind that residential burglary is not bad. But it seems weird that kidnapping and sexual assault would have a lesser punishment than that crime. If you can get back to me on that, that would be great.

JENNIFER NOBLE (Nevada District Attorneys' Association):
I am testifying in support of S.B. 60. It is really important that we hold those who prey upon elderly persons or older persons accountable in an appropriate fashion. And so we do support this bill. The Committee has raised some interesting questions this afternoon and so to the extent that we may be of assistance in helping them refine language, if they decide to do that, we are happy to do so.

JASON WOODARD (Nevada Sheriff's' and Chiefs' Association):
I am here to testify on behalf of the Association in support of this bill. I know through my experience in law enforcement that the crime of exploitation of our elderly community continues to increase, and it is a constantly morphing and changing crime. It is constantly adapting, and elders are specifically being targeted, not only for physical crimes, like burglaries into their residences, but also fraud and scams. These impacts are devastating to our elders' communities when they occur. When elderly people are victims of these crimes, many times

the crimes go undetected for prolonged periods of time because the elder community is more susceptible. They're less adept with technology, the interface of technology and how they can become victims.

In these cases. I can speak from personal account because my own mother, with me being a law enforcement officer for 27 years, was a victim of a credit card and gift card scam that went on for several weeks without her knowledge of the scam occurring. We believe this bill helps to further support older people, holding folks accountable and increasing the penalties for someone who does target the elder community.

JASON WALKER (Washoe County Sheriff's Office):
I am testifying in support of S.B. 60 by expanding the list and increasing penalties. I am hopeful that this would be enough of a deterrent to prevent the continuance of these crimes being committed against our senior citizens.

SUSAN MARTINEZ (Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Nevada State AFL-CIO):
I had this on my priority list, actually. Somebody asked me: "Susie, why are you so invested in this bill?" You know, we represent our retirees, and I often talk about how we want them to have their pensions, good pay so that they can retire with dignity. And that is the point. We want them to retire with dignity, enjoy their lives, have nobody take their stuff and nobody hurt them. So that is why this bill is very important to me.

As we get older, we are so much more vulnerable. We had one of our retired postal workers—his wife had just died—and her iPad was on the couch, the one that she used, and it came on. It said something like alert, alert. He looked on there and started messaging with the people. Long story short, they ended up scamming him out of $800,000. The last words he said to these people were: "If this is a scam, I am going to kill myself." He contemplated it. Fortunately, he spoke to some people. They were able to get half of his money back, but these crimes are happening all the time. That is why our retirees and our seniors need to be protected.

When we watch the news, I know I get frustrated and I say, "Damn, we need to pass some bills because that can't be happening to our seniors." That is so unfair. We take care of our communities, our children, the employers that we had, and their businesses are still going strong. We put in many years. We at

least deserve to be protected in our old age. So for that reason, the AFL- CIO supports the bill.

RANDY SOLTERO (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 720):
I am also in full support of this bill. I think it goes without saying that more and more these days there are scams that go on. I can tell you that I get calls all the time. I am 63 years old, but I get calls about Medicare, about all these programs that I can get involved in, and I try to say, "lose my number," but of course, that is not the deal. They're not going to lose my number. They keep trying. I have known people that as they get older, they are not as protective or do not or maybe cannot think about being more protective of those kinds of calls and are being subject to them. Those are the things that worry me. My dear friend and colleague Fran Almaraz, who is the head of the Silver Haired Legislative Forum, brought this piece of legislation as well as other important legislation in the past, and I very much support this bill and ask for your consideration in passing it.

ALFONSO LOPEZ (Sheet Metal Workers Local 88, Las Vegas):
We all know that these issues are going to just get worse as time goes on, the way technology is advancing on a daily basis. It is going to be more, there's going to be a lot more offenses out there. So please do something to help protect our elderly.

JOSEPH GRAHAM (Chief Steward, Communication Workers of America Local 9413):
I strongly urge the committee to support this bill.

DORA MARTINEZ (Nevada Disability Care Action Coalition):
We wholeheartedly support this bill. I know you guys say vulnerable population, and I think that also refers to people with disability. I am not sure because I have not seen the text, but I certainly hope it does. As a blind woman, I do walk a lot because I do not drive legally. I take Uber and the public transit. And I have my service dog, a German shepherd. He is my first line of defense because people see him and they kinda think twice. And then I have my iPhone, and I have a taser in my pack. So I mean, I can't see to be my own eyewitness, but I hope that if I do get attacked, because I know—I understand that I am an easy target because I am blind—that I have all this technology to assist me. If I—hopefully not but in the future—go to court or something. I wholeheartedly support this bill.

MICHAEL RYAN:
I am a long-time resident of Nevada and a Marine Corps veteran. Please vote yes on S.B. 60. It is critical to raise the penalties for perpetrators who commit crimes against our senior citizens. Seniors are more vulnerable to bad actors and criminals and may become victimized in person or online. The criminals who prey on seniors must receive additional punishment for such heinous acts. Please vote yes on S.B. 60.

CONNIE MCMULLEN (Senior Coalition of Washoe County):
I am testifying on behalf of 30 businesses and organizations for seniors. We are in favor of S.B. 60. The Senior Coalition is in support of expanding the list of crimes against older persons as many have increased in recent years. According to AARP reports, $28.3 billion a year is stolen from seniors aged 60 and older. The Coalition also supports the proposed increase of penalties for residential burglary, death or serious bodily injury in the commission of a crime. Enhancement of penalties of these crimes should protect our aging communities. We thank the Silver Haired Legislative Forum for bringing this bill forward.

As the publisher and owner of *Senior Spectrum* newspaper in Northern Nevada, I can't tell you how many times I have been contacted by fraudulent activities against me as a senior because I am 70. I can't tell you how many I have reported on throughout the years.

LAURA LEAVITT:
I am calling in support of S.B. 60 brought forth by the Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum of which I am a member as well as being a retired AFSCME Union member and member of the Nevada Alliance for Retired Americans. I have submitted a letter (Exhibit D).

This bill to increase prison terms and fines for crimes against seniors as well as expanding the list of crimes against seniors is very important in the efforts to protect seniors in our communities. I and many of my friends and neighbors have been targets. We've been targeted by at least one or more of the crimes listed, notably, the fraud, attempted fraud and deceptive trade practices in the form of phone, text, email and internet scams and schemes. This has been on an almost daily or at least weekly basis. I would appreciate your support of this bill to increase prevention and provide civil and criminal justice for senior citizens.

RUSS JAMES (Northern Nevada AFL-CIO):
I am in support of S.B. 60. I urge the committee to support it as well.

DONNA CLONTZ:
I am calling as an individual Nevada citizen in support of S.B. 60. I am also a member of the Washoe County Senior Coalition, a retired attorney, a former prosecutor and union leader. It was gratifying to hear from everyone who was looking out for the retirees in our community who would be better protected by what this bill is seeking to accomplish. It is important to add enhancements to protect our seniors against these serious crimes. I urge the committee to vote yes and thank you for your time.

TERRI LAIRD (Executive Director, Retired Public Employees of Nevada):
We are a nonprofit nonpartisan organization with nearly 7,000 members statewide in 17 chapters. We too thank the Silver Haired Legislative Forum for bringing this bill to your attention as most of our membership is made up of retired public employees. We are in strong support of S.B. 60. In fact, we have had quite a few of our members who have been victimized by these very sophisticated criminals. No matter how many warnings are issued, many seniors still fall prey to these scammers. We also echo many of the comments already made here today. And again, we ask for your support of S.B. 60.

BEVERLY WILLIAMS (Member, Teamsters Local 986):
I strongly urge the committee to support S.B. 60.

RITA WEISSHAAR (Nevada Alliance for Retired Americans):
We are an organization of seniors living throughout Nevada. We urge you to support and vote yes on S.B. 60.

DIONNE KLUG (United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 711):
We strongly urge you to support S.B. 60.

TAMARA JAMISON (Member, Teamsters Local 14):
I strongly urge the committee to support S.B. 60. There have been too many crimes taking place in our valley and across the globe. The world is not the way it used to be. I have been advocating for our seniors in different communities to help them be aware of the scammers that are happening out there, the text messages and giving out their information, and we strongly need to support this bill. There is just way too much going on in this world. The scammers and the

people would do everything they can to get their needs met, and we need to protect our seniors. They have lived, they have done what they are supposed to do. They need to now enjoy their retirement without worrying about someone trying to take advantage of them and mistreat them. I also have senior parents; I educate them and bring them knowledge every time I get it to let them know what to expect, what not to do, what is important out there and how to notify the authorities when someone is coming up to them and doing harm. People need to be accountable. People need to understand that they cannot just mistreat our senior community and nothing be done. They have to know and be held accountable for their actions. I am asking you to please support S.B. 60. And I strongly urge you guys to listen to all the other testimonies that were given and make the right decision.

ADDIE CRISP (Transport Workers Union Local 556):
I first would like to thank the Nevada Legislature for giving me the opportunity to testify from the break room. But I also would like to strongly urge the committee to support S.B. 60.

KLARISSA PRINCIPE (Member, Transport Workers Union Local 577):
I do strongly urge the committee to support S.B. 60.

LIZ SORENSON (President, Nevada AFL-CIO):
I am in strong support of S.B. 60. I urge this committee to support it as well.

GABE CHRISTENSEN (SMART-TD Local 1043):
We 100 percent support this bill. My mother and grandmother both were taken advantage of by phone scams, and they are both residents of the State as well. We urge you to support S.B. 60. I am a senior in rural Nevada.

SUE BIRD:
I am a senior in rural Nevada. I urge you to support this bill. As a senior, I have been scammed and so have many of my friends. As seniors, we are not able to get back into the workforce to be able to make ourselves whole again, so this is a very difficult situation for us when we have been scammed. Please consider our seniors as most of us hopefully will be to that stage. I thank you for your support.

THOMAS BIRD (Nevada Alliance for Retired Americans):
I am a union member of IBEW 1245. I am also president of the Nevada Alliance for Retired Americans which represents 20,000 retirees throughout the State. I strongly urge this committee to support S.B. 60.

ANGELA KNOTT (Washoe County Public Defender's Office):
Protecting vulnerable populations is important, but this bill will not deter conduct. Senate Bill 60 is about punishment as with our concerns yesterday with S.B. 50 yesterday. This bill fails to provide a knowingly or specific intent element as to a victim's age or circumstances.

If you look at the crimes that are already a part of the statute like assault, battery and robbery, they are all crimes of violence and are crimes where you are face-to-face with your victim. You have some level of interaction with that victim. That is not the case for these newly added crimes. Not one of these crimes involves any knowledge of who the victim is, much less their age. They are crimes that can happen without ever knowing or seeing the victim.

We also have a concern with the sentencing guidelines. Using larceny as an example, if I steal a cell phone worth $1,300 and even if I do not know who it belongs to, I will get up to four years in prison for the larceny and another four just for the enhancement. That is almost eight years in prison for stealing a cell phone. Now, if it was a fancy computer say worth $5,000 that would be up to ten years in prison, and that is the same sentence you would get for manslaughter. In other words, with this legislation, certain nonviolent offenses will now carry more potential prison time than some of the most serious violent felony offenses. For those reasons, we cannot support this bill.

PALOMA GUERRERO (Clark County Public Defender's Office):
For the reasons outlined by my colleague in Washoe County, we also agree.

YESENIA MOYA:
I am calling today to oppose S.B. 60 which proposes sentence enhancements and new crimes targeting elderly individuals. While protecting our most vulnerable is definitely crucial, evidence shows that sentence enhancements do not deter crime. They contribute to mass incarceration and disproportionately impact marginalized communities. Increasing penalties for violence, crimes and theft against elders will not address the root cause of harm such as poverty, lack of resources and social isolation. Rather than relying on punitive measures,

we should focus on preventing elders' isolation and protecting our seniors from financial crimes. These crimes particularly scam targeted seniors who are growing concerned. Increasing sentence enhancements will not stop perpetrators from exploiting our people. We need to invest in financial literacy programs that require fraud protections. We need to expand those resources like prevention, hotlines and stronger consumer protections for our folks.

Research shows that social isolation is a significant risk factor for elder abuse and theft. Expanding home visit intergenerational programs by senior centers is essential. We need to be able to address the root causes and not just go toward a more punitive effect. Instead of expanding mass incarceration, we need to invest in community-based resources to protect our elders and address these harms.

I urge the committee to reject S.B. 60 and pursue policies that promote true safety for our elders.

MR. KRUEGER:
I think by the sheer volume and number of organizations and individuals that support this bill and have testified in support, the committee should strongly consider this bill and passing it. There are a couple of things I want to comment on. I have had a long experience in both criminal prosecutions and civil prosecutions. I have heard the arguments that these increased penalties do not deter crime. However, I can tell you from my experience in practice, they do. They absolutely deter crime. These criminals think about it before they target these individuals; they realize if there's an additional enhancement that they should not do that, and they will find a different victim to go after regarding the actual crimes that are listed.

Keep in mind, they are not all just violent crimes as the Washoe County Public Defender's Office has identified. They do also include embezzlement, obtaining or attempting to conspire to obtain money or property of value of $650 or more through false pretenses. These are also crimes that are very much similar to the ones we are trying to add which are deceptive trade practices—which is basically a misrepresentation or deception in the sale of goods or services fraud.

And when we are seeing fraud, we are seeing massive amounts of securities fraud, which is very much the same as an embezzlement, just without that trust component. However, these individuals are starting to get these older people to

trust them, which is why they are able to get enough of their information, their personal identifying information—including passwords—to be able to drain their accounts. Theft falls right in there. So I just wanted to highlight some of those figures for you. On behalf of the Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum, we ask for your support of S.B. 60.

SENATOR ELLISON:
Did any of the people in the public defender's office say that, hey, this is what we believe in? Can we lower this crime, or can we do anything? Did they put any kind of amendments forward on this?

MR. KRUEGER:
Not to my knowledge. I have not seen any. However, Mr. Ashton may have some additional information.

MR. ASHTON:
At this time, staff has not received any proposed amendments or any other testimony in that regard.

VICE CHAIR FLORES:
We have one letter (Exhibit E) of opposition to S.B. 60. We will close out the hearing on S.B. 60 and open the hearing on S.B. 240.

SENATE BILL 240: Revises provisions relating to state business licenses. (BDR 7-126)

SENATOR JULIE PAZINA (Senatorial District No. 12):
I am before you today to present Senate Bill 240 which revises provisions relating to state business licenses. The intent of S.B. 240 is to help small businesses succeed in Nevada. One of the top barriers to small business success is the cost of obtaining the required licenses and permits. High license fees can significantly impact the initial capital and ongoing operational costs of startups and small businesses. To reduce the burden of new and existing small businesses, this bill reduces the fee for the issuance of a state business license for entities with fewer than 50 full-time or part-time employees. According to the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are currently 104,793 business establishments in Nevada with fewer than 50 employees.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, but most of them struggle, especially in the first three years of operation. Not only do small business owners currently have to pay state licensing fees, but they also pay county and city licensing fees as well, compounding the cost of opening their business. This bill will greatly support small businesses and entrepreneurs within our State. Currently, all businesses operating in the State must obtain a state business license, and the current business license fee is $200 for sole proprietorships, limited liability companies, limited partnerships or general partnerships. Senate Bill 240 would lower that from $200 to $100 for all sole proprietorships, limited liability companies, limited partnerships or general partnerships for those companies with fewer than 50 employees.

I would also like to direct your attention to the amendment (Exhibit F) on NELIS. Please note that corporation as described in this bill has been deleted by this amendment, as well as this should be for just the initial filing fee. So the fee of $100 would be for the initial filing with the Secretary of State (SOS), and any additional applications or renewals with the SOS shall be accompanied by a fee of $200. We are working with the SOS on an updated fiscal note.

PAUL MORADKHAN (Vegas Chamber):
The Vegas Chamber is the state's largest business organization. Our membership consists of 85 percent of small businesses as the Senator shared. Capital is one of the leading challenges for a business to succeed in it is first three years of operations. A reduction in the state licensing fee in that first year would help small businesses and entrepreneurs reduce their costs in operation.

First-year operations are impacted by unexpected costs, startup fees and higher-than-expected spending to get started. As you can imagine, small businesses have a hard time accessing capital because of lack of credit history, collateral or investment interest or, quite frankly, burdensome loan processes. This bill—with the amendment—is designed to truly help small businesses and entrepreneurs in your districts and purposely designed for businesses with under 50 employees and so forth. Fifty is the number that the State uses to define small business. The focus of this bill is a strategic approach to support small business entrepreneurs with employees at the 50 count in the first year, only for reduction. All other fees would remain the same for existing businesses per the amendment. This bill was specifically written to ensure no impact to local governments, and this bill would only pertain to the state business licensing.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
So the current fee is $500.

SENATOR PAZINA:
It is $200 for limited liability companies, sole proprietorships, limited partnerships or general partnerships. That is who this would apply to. It would not apply to corporations where the fee is currently $500.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
And I know this is not a money committee but the fiscal note that is currently on there, where was that prepared? Postamendment or preamendment?

SENATOR PAZINA:
That was prepared preamendment.

SENATOR ELLISON:
One thing that I see out there in small businesses right now—you can't find help, and that is one of the biggest things. So, if you can't find help, you are doing everything you can to stay alive. The labor market out there is awful. So this bill if it just gives them a little bit of a punch, not much, but to them it might be. I tell you; I hear this every day—"I can't find help." You drive down the street and you'll see help wanted everywhere. So anything we can do to keep the people up, get them moving, get some money in their pockets and start paying the taxes, start paying the new increases, whatever right now. It is just rough on them people out there. So I support this. This is a bill aimed at helping small businesses in the State.

SENATOR HANSEN:
I remember when this state business license was first introduced; it was $25, and it was a lifetime license. Absolutely true. Bob Miller was Governor. So it has been a while. So really what, this saves a small business about $100. Okay. And the savings of $400 for corporations has actually been amended out of the bill.

SENATOR PAZINA:
That is correct.

SENATOR HANSEN:
Okay. No, I am fine with the bill. I like the concept. Just kind of interesting to see the evolution of that over the years to being—they got their camel's nose under the tent with that $25 fee—total opposition to it in this building. Well, it is only the one time, it is lifetime, it is $25.

And now look at the evolution of that and the dollar amounts ever since. So anything that can help people, especially the smaller businesses when it comes to government fees, I am all for it.

SENATOR ELLISON:
Senator Hansen, I thank you for making that comment. I was not here then because I got in after the covered wagons. I am going to sign on to this bill because I think anything we can do to help small businesses is going to be important for the State, and I am hoping you'll follow with me.

VICE CHAIR FLORES:
I would just take a personal point of privilege saying, thank you. You know, I have recently, in the past 23 years, gone through the process of opening several small businesses. I can tell you that first year is always incredibly difficult for the family. It is incredibly difficult for hiring purposes. It is incredibly difficult, particularly if you are funding it yourself. So I do appreciate the intent. I was curious to know—you may not have the data—in the last three years, approximately how many new businesses registered per year in Nevada? Is it something we can get offline if we do not have that number?

MR. MORADKHAN:
We can get you those updated numbers. They are reportable, and we will get those from the Secretary of State's Office. We'll follow up with you afterward, sir.

VICE CHAIR FLORES:
Understood. And I think I am looking at a number here that was just sent over because we are asking. I think we had approximately 1,055 reported right now. But we can get clarification numbers. We'll make sure we send it to the entire committee. The reason I was asking that is I wonder if we lower some of the thresholds. We lower some of the fees and we cut some of that red tape, more individuals would be willing to engage in entertaining the possibility of starting a small business. And on the back end, we are talking about the money that is

being collected for the General Fund. Now we are getting businesses who took the leap of faith, and we are getting money we would have never captured but for lowering some of these rates. Now we are getting the renewals every single year because we made it easier for those businesses to survive at the beginning. Have you had an opportunity to look at other states that potentially saw those types of patterns? Or is that the intent, maybe not having seen in other states but hoping to accomplish that here?

MR. MORADKHAN:
Yes, other states do offer different standards. But also, to your point, not only will they generate a business licensing fee, if they have employees, they are going to pay into the Modified Business Tax, payroll tax, property tax. So it is a compounding economic benefit to the State. This is to your point that more businesses take that leap of faith to start in Nevada. The General Fund will benefit from it is the theory.

TOM CLARK (Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce):
We are very much in support of this not just for what has already been said, but, you know, we market Nevada as the "Delaware of the West" for those big companies to incorporate here, and we benefit from that. Messages like this to small businesses will do what was mentioned previously. If I am considering starting my own small business, being a sole proprietor, maybe I need to start that small business because I am an influencer on the internet. Now I am making income. This is one small step for those small businesses to be able to get their state license. And as the previous speaker said from our friends in the south, it will spur additional income tax benefits, Modified Business Tax, sales tax and the like.

TRAY ABNEY (National Federation of Independent Business):
I will be blunt; I would like the intent of the original bill to keep it at $100 in perpetuity instead of just the initial. But understanding what large fiscal notes do to bills in this building, we think this is a good first step to the Vice Chair's point about other states. We were all in this room a couple of weeks ago when Secretary of State Francisco V. Aguilar presented S.B. 75. He put up a chart of what other states charge for their business license fees. He specifically pulled out Delaware, Montana and Wyoming that all had cheaper business license fees than state business license fees, some by four times less. So I think that is something that we need to consider and look at anything we can do to help small businesses. To Senator Hansen's point, I was certainly not around here

when Bob Miller was Governor, but I was around here when it used to be $100, and we raised it to $200 solely for the purpose of raising revenue for the State. This was created as a revenue generator for the State, not as any kind of assistance or help to business. Just a little history. We support this bill.

SENATE BILL 75: Revises various provisions relating to the duties of the Secretary of State. (BDR 7-484)

SENATOR HANSEN:
Because at one time in Nevada we had significant generation of revenue, in fact, we consider revenue for the State with no obligations by having—what do you call—the people in the registered corporations here? Maybe there's somebody from that industry here because we lost that revenue when we bumped our business license fee up. Everybody went to Delaware when one of the other states you would mention ...

MR. ABNEY:
Montana and Wyoming were the other two that the Secretary of State ... .

SENATOR HANSEN:
Thank you. Anyway, those people kept their business license costs down, and we lost all of those people. In fact, there's still a few resident agents for corporations. Now, I am remembering it. Those resident agents would buy a business license fee and pay a tax, but they had no employees, no kids in school, no traffic, no nothing. It was just like a huge revenue source, but you are not familiar with that?

MR. ABNEY:
I agree with you that the higher you increase those fees, those type of businesses—which just to remind you, National Federation of Independent Business does not necessarily represent—will flee to other states. I agree with your contention.

SENATOR HANSEN:
We drove out a free revenue source basically by raising that business license fee too much. I did not know if anybody was here to represent the resident agents anymore. And again, it was a big deal at one time.

MR. ABNEY:
I think the point is that this was never that you are going to pay a business license fee to the State and you are going to get all these services. It was solely to raise revenue. That's the only reason the State business license fee exists is to raise revenue for the State. Correct?

LYNN CHAPMAN (Independent American Party):
Our platform supports businesses, especially small businesses because they are the lifeblood of America. We should be encouraging businesses to come here but also encourage people to start businesses in this State. They usually are small businesses when they are started. I had my hair chopped off on Sunday and my hair guy, Ricardo, was really excited to hear about this bill. I was talking to him about bills, and he was excited to hear this because he realized that would save him so much money. He's trying to raise a family. And this is something that he was interested in.

I went on to the internet. I went to the cheapest place for filing fees, and Kentucky is about the cheapest. It is only $40 to have a business license, and the annual fee is $15. Arkansas has 3 million people. They have close to 260,000 small businesses with 500,000 people working, and their filing fee is $45 with an annual fee of $150. I went online, of course, and found some really good quotes about small businesses. One was from an anonymous person: “When you start, when you support a small business, you support a dream.” Another one by Richard Branson: “A big business starts small.” Keith Haines said, “We need to keep our small businesses healthy in order to keep our economy strong.” I think those all speak well of small businesses. Let's help our small businesses in this State by voting yes on this bill.

MISTY GRIMMER (Nevada Resort Association):
As you might imagine, our members will probably not be taking advantage of this, but we absolutely support legislation that increases diversity, economic diversity in the State. So we would encourage your support of this bill.

YOANA ONTIVEROS (Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance):
The Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance is the Regional Development Authority for Southern Nevada. We are here in full support of S.B. 240.

MIRANDA HOOVER (National Electrical Contractors Association; Energy and Convenience Association of Nevada):
We are here in full support. To Senator Hanson's question, while I am not a registered agent, I started a corporation five years ago, and I went to Wyoming to register my state business license because it was cheaper to pay the foreign entity fees to Nevada [*sic*] than it was to register my corporation here in Nevada. I hope that this is the first step in cutting some of that red tape and to include corporations one day.

MIKE CATHCART (CITY OF HENDERSON):
I thank the sponsor and the Vegas Chamber for bringing this bill. The city believes that S.B. 240 is a positive step in supporting small business in our community.

KELLY CROMPTON (City of Las Vegas):
The City of Las Vegas supports S.B. 240 as an incentive to drive small businesses into our communities. We have seen areas like Fremont East and the Arts District breathe new life because of small businesses like the ones identified in the bill. We thank the bill sponsors for bringing this forward, and we hope that S.B. 240 drives economic activity into our city jurisdictions.

BEKAH DENNY (Nevada Chapter, Associated General Contractors):
I am here to echo what has been said in support of S.B. 240.

MATTHEW SAULS (Nevada Trucking Association; Nevada Manufacturers Association):
Voicing our support for S.B. 240, we support the reduction in fees and increased accessibility for certain businesses and employers. Just a couple of stats for the committee: 95.5 percent of trucking companies nationwide operate with ten or fewer trucks. Also, there are approximately 1,700 manufacturing companies in the State operating with 50 or fewer employees. So we appreciate your consideration on this bill, helping the smaller makers and movers of the Silver State.

PETER SABA (Nevada Restaurant Association):
Unlike the Resort Association, a lot of restaurant owners will definitely benefit from this bill, and we appreciate the bill sponsor and the Chamber for bringing this forward. It would really help some of these small-scale business owners and restaurant owners.

JOSHUA SKAGGS (Nevada Republican Party):
I am here today in support of S.B. 240. The Republican party platform states, "We support lower taxes and fees and a reduction in the scope of government at all levels." Small businesses are the foundation of Nevada's economy, creating jobs and strengthening our State by reducing the state business license fee from $200 to $100 for qualifying businesses of not more than 50 employees. Nevada will lighten the financial load on small business owners and help improve the economy for all Nevadans. For these reasons, the Nevada Republican Party supports S.B. 240.

ERIC CARDONA (Henderson Chamber of Commerce):
I am here representing the Henderson Chamber of Commerce and our over 2,000 members, the majority of whom are small businesses, to express our strong support for S.B. 240 which establishes a $100 state business license fee for the first year of operation for new businesses with 50 or fewer employees. The fee returning to $200 in subsequent years is welcome. Starting a business in Nevada involves numerous upfront costs. These initial expenses often create financial strain, forcing many small businesses to begin operations with a deficit. Nevada prides itself on being a business-friendly state, and S.B. 240 reinforces that commitment by reducing the initial financial hurdles. We are empowering small- and micro-sized business owners to pursue their dreams and contribute to our thriving economy. We believe this bill will encourage entrepreneurship and foster sustainable growth in Southern Nevada. For these reasons, we support S.B. 240.

ANAHIT BAGHSHETSYAN (Nevada Policy Research Institute):
Nevada Policy Research Institute is in strong support of S.B. 240. To echo and answer some of the questions that Vice Chair Flores has, 99.2 percent of the businesses in the State are classified as small businesses, and they employ over 42 percent of Nevada residents. I do not have the exact number of how many small businesses are being added every year, but I do know that we have over 312,000 small businesses registered in the Silver State, which is an immense number, and all of them would be affected by this.

I would like to echo the testimonies before me but add more statistics to also echo what Senator Ellison mentioned before, which is that Nevada Small Business Development Center conducted a survey through the startups that were members and based in the Silver State. They found that of all the startup founders, 23 percent cited that navigating requirements to register and pay for a

business registration in Nevada was a major obstacle for them. This number grew to 38 percent when it came to startups that were in manufacturing or healthcare industries. But what is utmost—like very, very striking—is that 45 percent of rural startups mentioned that registration and business fees are of utmost obstacle to them. Obviously, these businesses could have a harder time accessing capital; any small reduction such as the one that S.B. 240 is introducing could be meaningful to them to invest in workforce marketing, digital presence equipment and so on and so forth. By making this small change, we could empower so many small businesses in the State, and we look forward to seeing the committee support this bill.

PETER GUZMAN (Latin Chamber of Commerce):
I am here before you today to express my strong support for S.B. 240 which proposes to reduce the initial fee for state business license to $100 for small businesses that employ 50 or fewer full-time employees. This bill represents a significant step in supporting the backbone of our economy, which we all know is small business, by lowering the cost of entry. We can empower more Nevadans to start small businesses, ultimately creating more jobs and driving economic innovation.

MR. RYAN:
I am a long-time resident of Nevada and a Marine Corps veteran. Please vote yes on S.B. 240. This will help small businesses which create many jobs in Nevada. This is a no-brainer. Please vote yes on S.B. 240.

KATIE BANUELOS (Libertarian Party of Nevada):
We are in strong support of this bill. Anything that the State can do to reduce burdens on entrepreneurs and small business owners is something that should be done. Please vote in favor of this bill.

MANDI ELLIOTT (Nevada Outdoor Business Coalition; Nevada Small Business Development Center):
Throughout the entirety of my career with these organizations, I have personally spoken with countless entrepreneurs who cite licensing costs as a prohibiting factor to them starting their businesses. Lowering the cost of licenses will have a positive impact on the growth of new businesses throughout the State and therefore will strengthen our small business economy. I sincerely urge you to support this bill, and I encourage the committee to investigate other ways to lower licensing and permitting burdens on small businesses.

KERRIE KRAMER (NAIOP Nevada):
We'd like to echo the sentiments of our colleagues and thank the sponsor as well as the Vegas Chamber for bringing this bill.

JEFF ROGAN (Clark County):
We'd like to thank the bill sponsor and the Vegas Chamber for bringing forth this bill, but today we are in neutral. We will have no further comment on this.

CHAIR SCHEIBLE:
The hearing on S.B. 240 is now closed, and this meeting is adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

_____
Sally Ramm,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

_____
Senator Melanie Scheible, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	**Exhibit Letter**	**Introduced on Minute Report Page No.**	**Witness / Entity**	**Description**
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
S.B. 60	C	3	Marilyn Jordan / Nevada Silver Legislative Forum	Overview
S.B. 60	D	16	Laura Leavitt	Letter in Support
S.B. 60	E	21	Senator Edgar Flores	Theresa Yancy-Benson: Letter in Opposition
S.B. 240	F	22	Senator Julie Pazina	Vegas Chamber Proposed Amendment