



NEVADA FACULTY ALLIANCE

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Public Comment to the Interim Finance Committee

December 15, 2022

Kent Ervin, Nevada Faculty Alliance state president, representing the professional employees of Nevada's public colleges and universities.

Today in Agenda G.18 you have the opportunity to approve repayment of the furlough pay cuts from Spring 2021 using federal ARPA funds. This is an important first step in restoring the state workforce, which is now at crisis vacancy rates of up to 30% across state agencies. The best time to have repaid furloughs was in May 2021 after ARPA was enacted and the \$2.7B in funding for the State of Nevada was announced with interim rules. Restoring compensation and benefits for state employees cut because of the pandemic is not only allowed by the rules but is an intended purpose. Another good time would have been when the final rules were published in April 2022. But now is better than waiting until next biennium and will provide some relief for state employees who have loyally served on the front lines throughout the pandemic, at least for those who remain in state employment.

Since July 2019, inflation has been 16.6% per the CPI/Urban West. During that time most state employees including NSHE professionals have received only one 1% cost-of-living increase. Our classified employee colleagues in collective bargaining units received 3%. State and NSHE salaries were already below competitive levels. If we want the state government to provide essential services to the citizens of Nevada, we must be able to hire and retain public employees. If we want to be able to hire new state employees and stop the losses, the next budget must contain a truly significant pay increase of 15-20% along with restoration of healthcare benefits. With the high revenues forecast by the December Economic Forum, that is very much possible. We owe it to our dedicated public servants.

Thank you.

The [Nevada Faculty Alliance](#) is the independent statewide association of professional employees at the colleges and universities of the Nevada System of Higher Education. The NFA is affiliated with the [American Association of University Professors](#), which advocates for academic freedom, shared governance, and economic security for faculty, and the [American Federation of Teachers](#)/AFL-CIO, which represents over 300,000 higher education employees nationwide. *The NFA works to empower our members to be fully engaged in our mission to help students succeed.*

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