



NEVADA LEGISLATURE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS, VETERANS AND ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

(Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] 218E.750)

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The third meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults With Special Needs was held on Monday, June 13, 2016, at 9 a.m. in Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. A copy of this set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report," including the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" and other meeting materials, is available on the Nevada Legislature's website at <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/interim/78th2015/committee/>. In addition, copies of the audio or video record are available through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (e-mail: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775/684-6835) and may be available online at <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Granicus/>.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Senator Joseph (Joe) P. Hardy, M.D., Chair
Senator Mark A. Manendo
Senator Patricia (Pat) Spearman
Assemblywoman Ellen B. Spiegel
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Assemblyman Philip (P.K.) O'Neill, Vice Chair

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Marsheilah D. Lyons, Chief Principal Research Analyst, Research Division
Bryan Fernley, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Eric Robbins, Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Debbie Gleason, Senior Research Secretary, Research Division

Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.

AGENDA ITEM I—OPENING REMARKS

Chair Hardy called the meeting to order. He asked for a moment of silence for the victims and survivors of the recent Orlando, Florida, tragedy and for the passing of Roger McClellan, Health Care Policy Specialist, Constituent Services Unit, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB).

AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Hardy called for public comment.

Helen A. Foley, Nevada resident, representing residential care homes (RCHs), Las Vegas, Nevada, proposed four items for bill draft requests (BDRs): (1) include the definition of residential care homes as that of “residential” and not commercial; (2) follow the guidelines as defined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services concerning services provided by caregivers, as appropriate, including caregivers being able to give insulin only by method of a prefilled flex pen; (3) place all senior service homes under the authority of an ombudsman; and (4) conform to federal labor standards concerning live-in, service-domestic employees.

Norma Garcia, resident, Elko, Nevada, provided testimony through Gina Burnaugh, a sign language interpreter. Ms. Garcia emphasized Elko’s need for more certified sign language interpreters and for improved public education programs in order to serve its increasing deaf community.

Andre’ Haynes, representative, EMG Cares Foundation, Las Vegas, Nevada, requested a BDR to expand and clarify statutory language regarding the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) program and to support existing oversight thereof. He read a brief statement from the Honorable Mark Stevens, Municipal Court Judge, Department 1, Clark County, which explained that a recent decision by the Henderson City Attorney’s office to not allow domestic battery and/or driving under the influence cases into the VTC, due to those cases being dismissed or sealed, will result in the elimination of the VTC, and veterans will not subject themselves to the intense requirements of the program if there is no chance their cases will be dismissed. Mr. Haynes said Judge Stevens asked for assistance from the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM III—APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON FEBRUARY 22, 2016, AND MARCH 28, 2016, IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

MOTION: Assemblyman Stewart moved to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2016, and March 28, 2016, meetings held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The motion was seconded by Senator Manendo and passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM IV—PRESENTATION CONCERNING MILITARY AND VETERAN EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AT NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Ross D. Bryant, Director, Military Veteran Services Center (MVSC), University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), referred to the document titled “A Summary of Military and Veterans’ Education Benefits” (Agenda Item IV A-1), which highlighted programs designed to help veterans with their transition from military to civilian life. He also referred to a handout titled “VA GI Bill-Fry Scholarship” (Agenda Item IV A-2), which gives surviving family members their own G.I. Bill. Mr. Bryant requested legislation to eliminate the eligibility time limit in the Fry Scholarship.

Mr. Bryant directed the Committee to a presentation that highlighted veterans’ services offered at Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions (Agenda Item IV A-3). The following individuals provided commentary concerning various NSHE institutions:

Christopher Brown, Director, Veterans Education and Transition Services, College of Southern Nevada (CSN), discussed retention programs and community partnerships, noting the funding CSN receives through the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) federal grant program.

Winston Grant, student presenter, CSN, stated he is a veteran of the United States Air Force. He briefly shared his experience as a prenursing student and his work at the CSN veterans’ center where he assists other veterans with enrollment.

Mr. Bryant commented on retention programs and community partners at UNLV’s MVSC.

Norsiah Castellanos, student presenter, UNLV, said she is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and staffs the UNLV Rebel Women Vets. She described some of the challenges she faced transitioning to civilian life and in pursuing her educational goals. Ms. Castellanos acknowledged the support she received through the MVSC; emphasized the need for better communication between organizations for veterans transitioning out of the military; and encouraged awarding veterans more college credits toward their degree for military experience.

Discussion ensued between Assemblyman Stewart and Ms. Castellanos regarding the average monthly stipend for eligible full-time students in Nevada through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Bryant said he follows up with UNLV graduates regarding employment opportunities and continued education scholarships. In addition, he noted that every post 9-11 G.I. Bill benefit recipient receives \$65,000 over 36 months that pays 100 percent of instate tuition, not including books and living stipends. Mr. Bryant clarified for Assemblywoman Spiegel that the

disparity between educational institutions concerning awarding transferable credits pertains to training and experience veterans received in the military.

Ms. Castellanos provided Senator Spearman with more detail regarding the need for effective communication as service members transfer to civilian life.

Mr. Bryant clarified for Assemblyman O'Neill the timeframe allowed for recipients of the Fry Scholarship and provided more detail regarding veterans receiving college credit for certain military training and experience.

Assemblyman O'Neill and Mr. Bryant discussed the concept of awarding points to veterans in order to compete with 4.0 students.

Chair Hardy asked Mr. Bryant whether he would make an inquiry of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) concerning transferable credits.

Senator Spearman suggested approaching the Board of Regents, NSHE. In addition, she offered as a resource the website for the [American Council on Education's Military Guide](#) that translates military experience into college credits.

Terina Caserto, M.A., Director, Veteran Services, University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), commented on the retention programs and community partners of UNR. She mentioned a number of issues UNR needs to address in order to recruit veterans with extensive experience for integration into Nevada's workforce.

Jeremiah Fruge, student presenter, UNR, shared that he is also a U.S. Navy veteran, the president of Wolf Pack Veterans, and a Vet2Vet coordinator. He described his affiliation with different veterans' programs at UNR and how they help veterans focus on their goals for post academic life and in securing a career. Mr. Fruge said only 8 of his 30 military credits transferred to UNR.

Zachary Totans, Coordinator, Financial Aid, Veterans Benefits, Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), provided commentary on TMCC's retention programs and its community partners. He added TMCC is in the process of devising a follow-up program for veterans seeking and retaining employment after graduation. In addition, he stated that TMCC sends informational e-mails to subscribers, but unless there is a response, it is difficult to track veterans' progress on a case-by-case basis.

Kevin Burns, U.S. Marine Corps Major (Ret.), Coordinator, Veterans Resource Center (VRC), Western Nevada College (WNC), gave a summary of WNC's veterans' services concerning retention programs and its community partners, noting the program will end in 2017 when the TAACCCT grant runs out if it does not receive additional funding. In addition, Mr. Burns pointed out that he is a liaison on behalf of veterans, and he

corresponds weekly with the director of admissions and records at WNC in order to seek out as much credit for veterans as possible.

Zachary Adams, student presenter, WNC, stated he is also a U.S. Navy veteran. He described his military training as well as his experiences at WNC. Mr. Adams, who now attends UNR, shared his educational and vocational aspirations of becoming an English teacher and an advocate for veterans.

Mr. Burns said TMCC is the only community college that has made its veterans' services a permanent program. He also mentioned he is chair of the United Veterans Legislative Council and will be appearing before the Legislature during the 2017 Session. Mr. Burns related that the two highest priorities for Nevada's veterans are the Fry Scholarship and the permanent establishment of veterans' resource centers in Nevada's community colleges.

Freley Hosana, coordinator, CSN, reiterated that CSN was also awarded the TAACCCT grant, which she reminded the Committee will end in 2017.

Frances Wilson, VA/Scholarship Specialist, Office of Financial Aid, Nevada State College, (NSC), gave a brief overview of NSC's retention programs and community partnerships.

Jacob Park, Coordinator, VRC, Great Basin College (GBC), provided a summary of the services provided at the VRC and community partnering efforts. He noted the VRC serves as a "one-stop-shop" for Nevada's rural communities, covering ten counties and 86,500 miles. Mr. Park stated that he is the only employee in the VRC and is paid through the TAACCCT grant, but many volunteers support the VRC. He reported that another VRC would open in Pahrump when funding is approved through the TAACCCT program, noting Pahrump has the second highest student veteran population.

In closing, on behalf of his colleagues, Mr. Bryant thanked the Committee for its support.

Chair Hardy commented the Committee's work session would be on Monday, July 18, 2016, at 9 a.m. in Las Vegas. Further, he said the Committee is allowed ten BDRs in the event Mr. Bryant and his colleagues are interested in providing recommendations.

AGENDA ITEM V—PRESENTATION REGARDING THE ADOPT A VET DENTAL PROGRAM

Linda J. Haigh, Founder, Adopt a Vet Dental Program (AAVD), Northern Nevada Dental Health Programs, Community Health Alliance, played a video (link: <http://nndhcp.org/veterans/>) of success stories told by veterans—who do not qualify for dental benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs—but have benefitted from the AAVD program. She testified on the essential dental services provided pro bono by 110 dental professionals to over 750 veterans through the AAVD program. The services are provided at either no cost or a minimum cost to low-income veterans across ten counties in northern Nevada

(Agenda Item V A-1). Ms. Haigh stressed the importance of funding the AAVD program in order to continue its operation. She requested the Legislature consider sustainable funding for the AAVD program in the amount of \$125,000 annually, which would also support a dental clinic and pave the way for providing services in southern Nevada. Ms. Haigh commented the funds would supplement money raised through fundraising, and she stressed the program cannot continue without support from local and/or State government. She also provided a summary of the major points of the AAVD program (Agenda Item V A-2).

There was discussion with members and Ms. Haigh related to options for low-income veterans receiving Social Security Disability Insurance benefits who do not qualify for Medicaid services and the possibility of the AAVD program receiving supplemental funds through Nevada's Department of Veterans Services (NDVS).

Chair Hardy asked Ms. Haigh to identify specifically how supplemental funds would be expended. She reiterated the funds would be used to supplement fundraising efforts and for opening a dental clinic through the AAVD.

AGENDA ITEM VI—PRESENTATION CONCERNING SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Sandi Patton, M.S., Director, Disability Resource Center (DRC), NSC, shared a presentation (Agenda Item VI) outlining the NSHE disability resource centers with emphasis on the following:

- DRC's mission;
- Student use – spring 2015;
- Student use by primary disability types;
- Accommodations;
- Graduation rates;
- Coordination with campus resources;
- Workforce placement program rates; and
- Student satisfaction.

Ms. Patton noted the name listed as the first level of contact at CSN concerning student complaints is obsolete.

Assemblywoman Spiegel and Bryan J. Hilbert, Director, DRC, UNLV, discussed the causes for the low student use of DRCs at UNLV. Mr. Hilbert projects a 5 to 6 percent increase in the coming years.

Ms. Patton said she will follow up with information regarding the low student use of DRCs at GBC.

Joan Steinman, Ed.D, Director, DRC, TMCC, conjectured that the low student usage of the DRC at GBC could be due in part by the area being spread out, which may be a challenge for individuals with disabilities in general.

AGENDA ITEM VII—RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE GROWING DEMAND FOR SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN NEVADA

Gary Olsen, Chair, Subcommittee on Communication Services for Persons Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Persons with Speech Disabilities (SOCS), Nevada Commission on Services for Persons With Disabilities (CSPD) (NRS 427A.1211), Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), articulated the need to establish an interpreter training program (ITP) in northern Nevada while expressing support for a proposed American Sign Language (ASL) and interpreting baccalaureate degree program (interpreting program) at UNR (Agenda Item VII A). He called attention to the effects on the deaf and hard of hearing community for the lack of an ITP, and the need to indemnify the damage caused to deaf students over the years.

Andrea Juillerat-Olvera, Nevada resident, stated she is an ASL interpreter and a proponent of establishing an interpreting program at UNR to address the shortage of interpreters in northern Nevada (Agenda Item VII A). She briefed the Committee on the following points: (1) sign language interpreters are in high demand; (2) increasing interpreter resources will alleviate the State's noncompliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; (3) the interpreting program is designed to work as a jobs development program; and (4) a program that validates the deaf community and interpreters will engender greater social capital between the deaf community and the general hearing population at large.

Jennifer Montoya, Nevada resident, shared she has been deaf since birth and that she has used sign language her entire life to communicate. Ms. Montoya related specific barriers deaf persons encounter when a qualified interpreter is not available to them, particularly regarding medical appointments and their right to privacy. She compared Nevada's lack of interpreters to the superior availability of interpreters in Maryland.

Gina Burnaugh, Nevada resident, provided testimony (Agenda Item VII B) of her personal experiences concerning the lack of qualified and certified interpreters in Nevada, which compelled her to pursue her educational goals outside the State. She described the incapacitating effects of deaf persons not having access to qualified interpreters, particularly when it comes to medical appointments and/or medical emergencies, and the refusal of doctors

to provide interpreting services. She supports the interpreting program and hopes it will alleviate some of these issues.

In closing, Ms. Juillerat-Olvera remarked that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has made funding interpreter training programs a priority. She said the interpreting program falls within the eligibility parameters for the WIOA grant, and an application will be submitted on behalf of the interpreting program. Ms. Juillerat-Olvera clarified for Chair Hardy that the interpreting program is her idea, but she has assembled a team of various deaf individuals to work on it. She stated she has also garnered support for the program from several interested local and State entities, and she aspires to formally present the program to UNR within the next few months.

Chair Hardy and Ms. Juillerat-Olvera discussed NSHE's involvement in the program and the fact that the program must be a baccalaureate degree program due to requirements from both of the national certifying bodies for interpreters and to qualify for WIOA funding. She also provided examples of baccalaureate degree interpreting programs offered through other states' systems of higher education, noting the need for enticing interpreters to remain in Nevada. Chair Hardy inquired about WICHE programs that might support enrollment in interpreting programs. Ms. Juillerat-Olvera was not aware of specific efforts by WICHE. Chair Hardy stated the Committee would look into that.

Assemblyman O'Neill and Ms. Juillerat-Olvera discussed the differences between her four-year interpreting program and that of the two-year deaf studies program offered through WNC.

AGENDA ITEM VIII—PRESENTATION REGARDING THE EFFORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION SERVICES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING AND PERSONS WITH SPEECH DISABILITIES

Gary Olsen, SOCS, CSPD, ADSD, DHHS, gave a review of the SOCS' origin and its challenges, solutions, and goals in meeting the needs of Nevada's deaf and hard of hearing population, including the concept of creating a commission to address issues directly related to deaf and hard of hearing Nevadans and Nevadans with speech disabilities (Agenda Item VIII A-1). He provided examples of five state commissions that serve the needs of deaf and hard of hearing populations in states similar to Nevada (Agenda Item VIII A-2).

Jill Berntson, Deputy Administrator, ADSD, DHHS, introduced Rique Robb, Chief, Disability Services, ADSD, DHHS, who provided a report (Agenda Item VIII B) that focuses on the challenges of recruiting qualified interpreters for the State Communication Access Realtime Translation registry (interpreter pool) as required by Assembly Bill 200 (Chapter 191, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*). The report also covered: (1) shortages of language interpreters in Nevada; (2) the need for a four-year ITP; (3) the five-year plan being developed by SOCS; (4) the partnering of SOCS and CPSP; (5) deaf service centers; (6) Relay Nevada and its

recertification; (7) trends involving the use of video phones; and (8) the number of calls made using Relay Nevada.

Chair Hardy inquired whether information concerning the cost for State employment versus State contracted positions for interpreters was readily available.

Ms. Robb replied that although she does not have specific data concerning those costs, the ADSD could provide a cost comparison; however, she offered assurance that contracted rates through the interpreter pool are less costly than rates charged through contracted vendors. She noted that one of the challenges is identifying where the skills and duties of an interpreter fit within the State's pay grade in order to offer a competitive salary.

AGENDA ITEM IX—DISCUSSION REGARDING THE OPTION OF PROVIDING CAPTIONING SERVICES FOR MEETINGS OF THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE

(This agenda item was taken out of order.)

Gary Olsen, previously identified, established that the goal is to find ways to improve involvement in the legislative process for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing without it being too expensive. He recommended closed captioning but pointed out it is one-dimensional and requires an interpreter in order to respond; he opined the use of interpreters might be best for legislative meetings. Mr. Olsen provided a survey (Agenda Item IX A) of committee meetings deaf persons frequently attend and the motivation behind their attendance.

Rick Combs, Director, LCB, stated that for the last 18 months, the LCB has been researching the issue of providing greater accessibility to floor sessions and committee meetings for the hearing impaired and hard of hearing community through whatever reasonable accommodations it is able to make. He said \$15,000 was approved for interpreter services during the 2015 Interim, and the money is being used for individual as well as public meetings. In a memorandum dated June 12, 2016 (Agenda Item IX B), Mr. Combs provided an overview and the pros and cons of two closed captioning options: (1) use a vendor to provide closed captioning services; and (2) purchase voice recognition software and hardware to provide captioning. He said the primary concerns are cost, attaining an acceptable accuracy rate, and incorporating the process into the LCB's current structure. Mr. Combs suggested considering a pilot project to explore these options.

Senator Spearman inquired whether the benefits of using an "in-house" interpreter with knowledge of the legislative process versus contracted interpreters have been considered.

Mr. Combs contended the cost for an in-house interpreting staff would be over \$100,000; the interpreter would be limited to providing services one meeting at a time. This would be problematic in an environment where meetings are frequently held simultaneously. Therefore, several interpreters would be required and they would need to be contracted.

Mr. Olsen clarified for Vice Chair O'Neill that an interpreter is not necessarily better than closed captioning but for the time being, it is the only option. In addition, he recommended the LCB use Relay Nevada for establishing video equipment for people to call in to the meetings with an interpreter available to interpret their comments.

Vice Chair O'Neill and Mr. Combs discussed the possibility of using an interpreter through video via livestreaming, which would also be archived.

AGENDA ITEM X—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Hardy called for public comment.

Donald S. Hackett, Jr., Nevada resident, provided brief testimony on the following items: (1) the waste, abuse, misuse, and fraud of certain funding and the disconnect between federal and State laws concerning the Code of Federal Regulations; (2) mental health services for Nevada veterans and federal funds to the states; and (3) benefits to veterans for sustained injuries.

The following documents were submitted for the record:

1. Letters regarding personal care services provided by Nevada Medicaid (Agenda Item X A), provided by Helen A. Foley, previously identified.
2. Link to the Adopt A Vet Dental program (Agenda Item X B), provided by Linda J. Haigh, previously identified.
3. Link to Relay Nevada TRS Call Traffic Report (Agenda Item X C-1), provided by Gary Olsen, previously identified.
4. Data regarding the best current estimate of the total U.S. deaf population (Agenda Item X C-2), provided by Gary Olsen, previously identified.
5. Chart of data needed regarding the deaf and hard of hearing population (Agenda Item X C-3), provided by Gary Olsen, previously identified.

AGENDA ITEM XI—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Gleason
Senior Research Secretary

Marsheilah D. Lyons
Chief Principal Research Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Senator Joseph (Joe) P. Hardy, M.D., Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	WITNESS/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item IV A-1	Ross D. Bryant, Director, Military Veteran Services Center (MVC), University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)	A summary of military and veterans' education benefits
Agenda Item IV A-2	Ross D. Bryant, Director, MVC, UNLV	VA GI Bill-Fry Scholarship
Agenda Item IV A-3	Ross D. Bryant, Director, MVC, UNLV	Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
Agenda Item V A-1	Linda J. Haigh, Founder, Adopt a Vet Dental Program (AAVD), Northern Nevada Dental Health Programs (NNDHP), Community Health Alliance (CHA)	Testimony
Agenda Item V A-2	Linda J. Haigh, Founder, AAVD, NNDHP, CHA	AAVD major points
Agenda Item VI	Sandi Patton, M.S., Director, Disability Resource Center (DRC), Nevada State College	Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
Agenda Item VII A	Andrea Juillerat-Olvera, Nevada resident	American Sign Language and interpreting baccalaureate degree program
Agenda Item VII B	Gina Burnaugh, Nevada resident	Testimony
Agenda Item VIII A-1	Gary Olsen, Chair, Subcommittee on Communication Services for Persons Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Persons With Speech Disabilities (SOCS), Nevada Commission on Services for Persons With Disabilities (CSPD), Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)	Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
Agenda Item VIII A-2	Gary Olsen, Chair, SOCS, CSPD, ADSD, DHHS	Links to various state agencies serving the deaf and hard of hearing

Agenda Item VIII B	Rique Robb, Chief, Disability Services, ADSD, DHHS	Report
Agenda Item IX A	Gary Olsen, Chair, SOCS, CSPD, ADSD, DHHS	Survey
Agenda Item IX B	Rick Combs, Director, Legislative Counsel Bureau	Memorandum
Agenda Item X A	Helen A. Foley, Nevada resident, representing residential care homes	Letters
Agenda Item X B	Linda J. Haigh, Founder, AAVD, NNDHP, CHA	Link to AAVD
Agenda Item X C-1	Gary Olsen, Chair, SOCS, CSPD, ADSD, DHHS	Link to Relay Nevada
Agenda Item X C-2	Gary Olsen, Chair, SOCS, CSPD, ADSD, DHHS	Chart
Agenda Item X C-3	Gary Olsen, Chair, SOCS, CSPD, ADSD, DHHS	Chart

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