

Support for SJR 7

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Nevada is one of the fastest growing states in the nation, and that growth has brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges when it comes to the education and diversification of our workforce. Even now, in the midst of one of the worst health and financial crises in our state's history, we have an opportunity to strengthen our workforce so that in the future, Nevadans are not as vulnerable to the vagaries of the national economy. To ensure that the community colleges are able to play the strongest possible role in strengthening Nevada's workforce, we must ensure first, that their support from public dollars is adequate and secondly, that they have the flexibility needed to respond to the the needs of their communities' expanding and diversifying economies. For these reasons, as two former long-standing Presidents of two Nevada community colleges, we support SJR 7, which would bring accountability, transparency, and oversight to the Nevada Board of Regents. The Board is the governing body of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) which consists of Nevada's universities, colleges, and community colleges.

SJR7 will help us get NSHE's focus and energy back to where it needs to be: on serving our students and their communities. The students we are educating today will be taxpayers tomorrow and will help our state and its economy to diversify and grow, even when tough times hit. These students and communities are now being let down by a large, centralized state bureaucracy that is inflexible and tone deaf to their needs and the needs of the institutions educating them. By ensuring that NSHE and the Board of Regents are held accountable, like every other state entity, and not shielded from critical oversight, we will be in a better place to meet the future needs of our state economy.

Each college and university has a different mission and each Nevada community has evolving needs, in order to meet the demands of its workforce and economy. There can be no one-size-fits-all approach. SJR7 will rectify our current antiquated higher education bureaucracy, one that dates from the nineteenth century and that is now holding back our students and our state economy. This higher education reform will also assure that precious state resources will actually go toward serving students, by modernizing our governing structure with transparency, accountability, and oversight. That is why we are supporting SJR7.