

Annual Report

Nevada Youth Legislature

2013-2014

Overview

The 2013-2014 year was a time of much growth and development in the Nevada Youth Legislature program as a whole. The two-year term, 2013-2015, began this year, and welcomed 18 new members. As the first year in a two year term, this year was dedicated to training and working with the legislators not only to make us feel comfortable, but also to develop our skills as communicators, listeners, and learners. In addition to new training sessions, the NYL welcomed panels of current legislators as well as others in the public service field. NYL Alumni were also welcomed not only to participate in panels, but also to the annual NYL reunion.

The focus of this year was to help the youth legislators realize how much representative power and responsibility we hold; not only were we given lists of how many people we represented in their districts under the ages of 18, but we also were tasked with setting up District Youth Advisory Councils. In addition to these DYACs, youth legislators each held town hall meetings, and were tasked with speaking at a public body's meeting. These hands-on experiences were the manifestation of the skills and knowledge we learned in the year.

Though the primary location for NYL meetings was Las Vegas, northern Nevada youth legislators attended each meeting by videoconference and fully participated in the trainings. During each meeting's interactive exercises, northern youth legislators engaged in the exercises as well. Also, for the first time in the program's history, the legislature's Broadcast Services provided extraordinary support by recording and playing back exercises so we could "see and learn". All of this while the meetings were being broadcasted live on the Internet!

In conclusion, the 2013-2014 year not only marked growth of the Nevada Youth Legislator program as a whole, but also individual growth of each member of the organization.

Respectfully submitted by:

Miranda Rosen, Chair

Nevada Youth Legislature

2013 Summer Training

On the morning of August 8th, 2013, southern Nevada Youth Legislators flew into Reno and met up with the northern Nevada Youth Legislators outside the Plaza Hotel. This was the first time both the northern and southern youth legislators met in person, so a lot of introductions and networking took place immediately. Following room assignments and settling in, Mr. David Byerman, Secretary of the Senate and NYL Executive Director, guided us on a scenic walk to the legislative building.

Upon arrival to the legislative building, former NYL Chair Grant Gabriel led an icebreaker to help us get to know each other. Afterwards, we drew the roles for which activities we would be volunteering for, and the opening session began.

In the Senate Chamber, Nevada Supreme Court Chief Justice Kristina Pickering swore in youth legislators. Senator Valerie Wiener, Chair, NYL Foundation Board, gave a brief introduction on the role of the youth legislator. Following this, the youth legislators were treated to two videos prepared by Senator Harry Reid and Senator Dean Heller.

During lunch, a panel of lobbyists was invited to discuss the lobbying process. After learning the basic roles, some personal stories, and how to become a lobbyist, we were welcomed to ask any questions and interact with the panel of guests, which included Alex Bybee, Rebecca Gasca, and Lorne Malkiewich.

After lunch and a break, the NYL returned to training and attended a presentation that explained how a bill becomes a law. The process was skillfully described through diagrams and testimonies, and handouts.

Following this, the youth legislators moved to room 2135 for Mock Committees discussing Senate Bill No. 187 and Senate Bill No. 135. This was a favorite among the youth legislators as it was the first taste of how we would be working with and getting to know each other.

After a break and some downtime in the hotel, the NYL was treated to dinner at the Governor's Mansion. After the perfect group photo was taken, we were

welcomed into the mansion and dinner was served. While eating, Lt. Governor Brian Krolicki, Attorney General Catherine Cortez, and Chief Justice Kristina Pickering offered incredible presentations on the relationship between the branches of government.

Following a day full of presentations and mock committees, we got to experience an NYL first: a bowling social. Teams formed and competed against each other in a little NYL friendly competition.

The next morning, the third mock committee was held to discuss Senate Bill No. 414 and Senate Joint Resolution No. 6. Following mock committee, we were educated on the bill drafting process in a presentation led by Brenda Erdoes of the Legislative Counsel.

After learning about the bill drafting process, the current youth legislators were educated on the process of issue narrowing by former members of the NYL, Zhan Okuda-Kim, NYL Chair 2010-2011; Alex Bybee, NYL Chair 2011-2012; and Grant Gabriel, NYL Chair 2012-2013. This was a prelude to what would be happening the following fall, in preparation for the NYL's official BDR. Back in the Senate Chamber, a Nevada Youth Legislator Floor Session was conducted, with presiding officer Brian Krolicki, President of the Senate.

Lunch and the closing ceremony were hosted at Red's Old 395 Grill. Senator Wiener recapped the two-day experience with the group of youth legislators, and emphasized her excitement for the coming two-year term. She also presented us with our own set of business cards for networking purposes.

After the final group photo, we went back to the legislative building to record the Observations Radio show. Two panels of three youth legislators each spoke with Bob Fisher as he recorded a segment that would be played on two later occasions.

Following the recording, we gathered for snacks and the traditional carrot cake celebration. We ate and mingled amongst ourselves, and got to know more about our new colleagues.

All NYL business was closed as the southern Nevada Youth Legislators departed for the airport and the northern Nevada Youth Legislators were dismissed at 4:30PM.

2013-2014 NYL Meetings

September 10, 2013

At the first meeting of the Nevada Youth Legislature, the first order of business was to elect the Chair and Vice Chair. The results of the election were Miranda Rosen as 2013-2014 Chair and Ryan Lim as 2013-2014 Vice Chair. At this meeting, a panel consisting of Senate Assistant Majority Whip Justin Jones, Assembly Minority Floor Leader Pat Hickey, and Assembly Majority Whip David Bobzien led a discussion on constituent outreach and the utilization of advisory bodies by members of the Nevada Legislature. This was an incredible opportunity to hear the experiences of actual legislators. We were provided with an opportunity to absorb and learn not only through remarkable presentations, but also through direct discussion with the legislators. This meeting also implemented the District Youth Advisory Council (DYAC) aspect into the NYL program. Each youth legislator would be able to appoint, through an application process, the maximum of two people per school to serve on his or her DYAC. These DYAC members would provide invaluable perspectives and opinions of the youth in that youth legislator's district, as well as assist the youth legislator in planning and running town hall meetings. In conclusion, the meeting held many new beginnings—a new chair and vice chair, the implantation of panel discussions, and the DYAC program. All of us were inspired to partake in what would be an incredible year to come.

October 16, 2013

This meeting held many valuable discussions, as well as a powerful presentation by Senator Valerie Wiener on “Mastering Media Relations”. Mr. David Byerman led discussion on the progress the District Youth Advisory Councils were making, and opened the floor up for discussion for questions and concerns the youth legislators had. Later on, Senator Wiener presented her training on “Mastering Media Relations”. This was a presentation that was given in a conversation-like manner, and thus, was very well absorbed by the youth legislators.

November 7, 2014

This meeting held three incredible training opportunities for the youth legislators. Paul Mourtitsen, Principal Policy Analyst and Manager at the Constituent Services Unit (CSU) and Beverly Mobley, Assistant Manager at the Constituent Services Unit, led a training session about accessing constituent services. This training gave us insights about constituent services as a whole, as well as ways we could utilize CSU to help us fulfill our roles as youth legislators within our own districts. Teresa Wilt, Legislative Librarian at the Research Library, gave a training session on how to utilize the research library. Finally, Senator Wiener gave a presentation on "Listening Skills". Through a presentation and an interactive portion that involved youth legislators in interactive role-playing, we learned the importance of being good listeners. We also learned helpful listening techniques that could improve our communication skills as a whole.

January 14, 2014

This meeting held incredible opportunities for youth legislators to engage in a panel discussion, discussion of their DYACs, as well as participate in an interactive training activity that simulated town hall meetings. Senator Wiener facilitated a panel discussion on building connections with constituents through town hall meetings with Assemblyman Paul Anderson, Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Senator Joe Hardy, and Senator Joyce Woodhouse. These legislators gave personal stories and advice pertaining to the topic of building connections with constituents. This allowed us to build on what we learned about constituent services and the importance of listening, which allowed us to truly internalize the town hall process and the key components for leading a successful one. Mr. Byerman then led a discussion on the DYACs. Most youth legislators had made significant progress and appointed at least one person so far. Finally, we participated in an interactive training activity regarding their upcoming town hall meetings. In each of the three mock town hall meetings, two youth legislators co-led the meetings while other youth legislators asked them questions just like they would be asked in a real town

hall meeting. Afterwards, the youth legislators, Mr. Byerman, and Senator Wiener offered constructive criticism and feedback. This allowed for us to practice the skills we had learned up to that point with the Nevada Youth Legislature and to prepare us for our upcoming town halls.

February 12, 2014

This meeting held a new form of panel discussion for the Nevada Youth Legislature, a training session, as well as an interactive activity regarding presentations. For the first time in NYL history, a panel of NYL alumni was invited to speak and discuss public speaking and the role the NYL has had in their lives. The alumni who participated were Nathan Keith, 2012-2013; Tierra Patmavanu, 2012-2013; Kaitlin Tucci, 2012-2013; and Phalguni Vetrichelvan, 2012-2013. Senator Wiener then led a training entitled “Advancing Yourself through Power Presentations”. She asked every youth legislator to share what he or she most wanted to learn about effective presentation skills. Afterwards, three youth legislators, Caitlyn Anderson, Katherine Krolicki, and Lorenzo Pinon, gave prepared speeches and they were recorded. Then, Mr. Byerman and Senator Wiener played back their speeches while complimenting them and giving them constructive criticism. This was an invaluable experience for all involved, as we were able to absorb the knowledge presented through discussion as well as interactive activities.

April 29, 2014

This was the last meeting of the Nevada Youth Legislature for the 2013-2014 year. The meeting began with a discussion on town hall meetings and DYAC appointments. We discussed their experiences holding town halls; most were positive, and all felt they had helped the youth in their district have a voice and realize the importance of participatory democracy. We also discussed the DYACs; most had a positive experience with this as well, and the remaining few who did not appoint youth advisory members pledged to do so as soon as possible. Afterwards, Assistant Minority Floor Leader Senator Ben Kieckhefer, President Pro Tempore Senator David Parks, and Assemblywoman Heidi Swank led a panel discussion

concerning effective negotiating. Through discussion of their own styles of negotiation, as well as opening themselves up for questions, these legislators gave us incredible insight into politics as well as the importance of powerful negotiating skills. To build on this, Mr. Byerman presented a training session on effective negotiating techniques. His presentation was filled with dozens of helpful skills and phrases. All the youth legislators greatly enjoyed his presentation and absorbed the knowledge he had to offer. The meeting ended with the three seniors, Youth Legislators Cabrera, Lim, and Rosen, giving their thanks and appreciation to the Nevada Youth Legislature, as this was their last meeting. The meeting ended on a bittersweet note. Although the year was over, everyone learned so much already, and all were certain that the 2014-2015 year would be a year of growth, learning, and advancement for the Nevada Youth Legislature.

2014 NYL Reunion

The Nevada Youth Legislature hosted its Second Annual Alumni Reunion on January 4, 2014. As youth legislators and alumni live in all parts of the state, two reunions were held. The Northern Nevada Reunion was held from 9:00am to 10:30am in Carson City at the Nevada State Capitol, and the Southern Nevada Reunion was held from 4:00pm to 5:30pm at the Grant Sawyer Building in Las Vegas later that day. There were 38 RSVPS total. At both reunions, current youth legislators and alumni could be seen reuniting or meeting for the first time. We enjoyed "catching up" with each other. Over delicious fruit and desserts, each youth legislator and alumnus shared why the NYL was important to them and how it truly affected their lives. The reunion ended with a feeling of love and appreciation for the program. We all unanimously agreed that the NYL has shaped us into who we are today.