



# POLICY AND PROGRAM REPORT



## The Legislature

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Nevada's State government is organized into three branches: (1) the Legislative Branch, which creates the laws; (2) the Executive Branch, which enforces the laws; and (3) the Judicial Branch, which interprets the laws. The Nevada Legislature is the political institution closest to the people. Not only does it enact laws, the Legislature creates the machinery for carrying out those enactments. The Legislature establishes departments, boards, commissions, and bureaus and defines the scope of their powers and responsibilities. In addition, the Legislature sets down the fundamental rules of government in Nevada in the form of administrative procedures acts, civil service rules, and election laws.

### LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE

Nevada has a two-house (bicameral) Legislature consisting of the Senate and the Assembly. The two houses jointly are designated by the *Nevada Constitution* as "The Legislature of the State of Nevada." According to the *Nevada Constitution*, "... no persons charged with the exercise of powers properly belonging to one of these departments shall exercise any functions, appertaining to either of the others . . ." except in certain specified instances.

### *Size and Apportionment*

Unlike some states, Nevada does not fix the number of its Senators and members of the Assembly in its constitution. Instead, the *Nevada Constitution* sets a maximum limit of 75 legislators from the combined total of the two houses. No minimum limit is set on the size of the Legislature, but the *Constitution* provides “. . . the number of Senators shall not be less than one-third nor more than one-half of that of the members of the Assembly.” The actual size of the Legislature is set by statute. Since 1983, the Nevada Legislature has had a 21-member Senate and a 42-member Assembly.

The *Nevada Constitution* states that Senators and members of the Assembly must be apportioned among the several counties of the State or among legislative districts in accordance with law. The United States Supreme Court has held that both houses of state legislatures must be apportioned on a population basis under the principle of one person, one vote. Membership in both houses of the Legislature is apportioned geographically throughout the State on the basis of population. Normally, the Legislature redistricts once every ten years during the session next following the federal decennial census, as required by the *Nevada Constitution*. The federal decennial census was held in 2010, and at public hearings both before and during the 2011 Legislative Session, members of the Legislature heard from dozens of citizens regarding the redistricting process. To facilitate public involvement and understanding of the process, the Legislature provided public workstations for mapping in both its Carson City and Las Vegas offices. Additionally, the Legislature included comprehensive information on its website that featured a dedicated reapportionment and redistricting webpage for meeting announcements, submitted fact sheets, historical data, informational items, plans, and reports.

The Nevada Legislature, however, was unable to complete the legislative and congressional redistricting process during the 120-day regular session. Two redistricting measures, Senate Bill 497 and Assembly Bill 566, were approved by the Legislature, generally on party-line votes, on May 10 and May 25, 2011, respectively. However, both bills were vetoed by the Governor and returned to the Legislature. No attempts were made to override or sustain those vetoes during the regular session. When Governor Brian Sandoval indicated that he would not call the Legislature into special session for redistricting, the task fell to the courts. Following a number of hearings, judicial briefs, motions, and pleas, the First Judicial District Court Judge appointed three Special Masters to accomplish redistricting. As directed by the court, the Special Masters held public hearings in Las Vegas and Carson City on October 10 and 11, 2011, respectively. Their report and completed plans were submitted to the District Judge on October 14, 2011. Following certain plan changes requested by the court, an order adopting and approving the Special Masters’ report and redistricting maps as modified by the court was filed on October 27, 2011. An addendum to the October 27, 2011, order to facilitate the transitional period was filed on December 8, 2011. When no appeals were filed to these court orders, they and their redistricting plans were considered to be adopted.

The plan includes four congressional districts (an increase of one), while the size of the Nevada Legislature is retained at 63–21 members in the Senate and 42 members in the Assembly. Archived information on reapportionment and redistricting can be found on the Nevada Legislature’s website at: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Districts/Reapp/2011/index.cfm>.

### ***Membership Qualifications***

To be eligible to serve as a Senator or member of the Assembly, a person must be at least 21 years of age, a qualified elector in the respective county and district, and an actual citizen resident of Nevada for a minimum of one year next preceding the election. However, the *Nevada Constitution* declares that “[e]ach House shall judge of the qualifications, elections and returns of its own members . . . and with the concurrence of two thirds of all the members elected, expel a member.”

No person holding a federal office of profit (with the exception of postmasters earning less than \$500 per year or commissioners of deeds) or a lucrative office under any other power may serve as a legislator. Persons are also disqualified from holding legislative office if they have been convicted of embezzlement of public funds or bribery in the procurement of election or appointment to office. A legislator may not be appointed to any civil office of profit in the State that was created, or the salary for which was raised, during the legislator’s term of office and for a period of one year after the expiration of the term.

Members of the Assembly are elected every two years by the qualified electors in their respective districts. Senators, on the other hand, serve four-year terms, which are staggered so that, as near as possible, one-half of the number of Senators is elected every two years. A constitutional amendment approved by the voters in 1996 limits legislators to 12 years of service in each house (six terms for members of the Assembly and three terms for Senators). Therefore, a legislator may serve up to 12 years in one house and up to another 12 years in the other house. As applied to members of the Legislature, term limits first had an impact during the 2010 election cycle.

Members of both houses are elected on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of even-numbered years, at intervals of two or four years, depending upon the house in question. Their terms of office begin on the day following their election, but members typically are not sworn in by oath of office until the first day of the legislative session (first Monday of the following February for a regular session).

### ***Legislator Compensation and Allowances***

Legislators are paid a salary for the first 60 days of a regular session and for up to 20 days of a special session. The daily salary for legislators is \$146.29. Thus, for the 2015 Regular Session, a legislator received a maximum salary of \$8,777.40; for a special session in 2015 or 2016, the maximum salary is \$2,925.80.

Legislators receive additional payments for their travel and per diem during a legislative session. The per diem, which is intended to cover the legislator’s lodging, meals, and incidental expenses, is equal to the federal rate for the Carson City area, which is currently \$148. This per diem amount is paid each day that the Legislature is in session.

For travel to and from Carson City for the legislative session and for a presession orientation conference, each legislator is entitled to one day’s per diem plus reimbursement of actual travel

expenses. Each legislator whose permanent residence is more than 50 miles from Carson City, and who enters into a lease or other agreement for housing during session, is also entitled to a supplemental housing allowance during the session. This allowance is equal to the fair market rent for a one-bedroom unit in Carson City, as published and revised each year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The most recent rate for the Carson City area is \$684 per month. Costs associated with travel during a session (moving expenses, housing and furniture rental, and travel related to legislative business) are reimbursed, subject to an overall limit of \$10,000 during a regular session and \$1,200 during a special session.

In addition to these amounts, each legislator is entitled to a communications allowance of \$2,800 and a postage allowance of \$60. Legislators who chair standing committees or hold leadership positions are entitled to an additional \$900 allowance. Each member also is entitled to a certain number of business cards, stationery, and envelopes from the State Printing Office of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB).

When the Legislature is not in session, each Senator and member of the Assembly is entitled to receive a salary and the per diem allowance and travel expenses provided by law for each day of attendance at a conference, meeting, seminar, or other gathering at which the legislator officially represents the State of Nevada or its Legislature. The salary per day varies depending on the activity but does not exceed \$146.29.

### ***Ethics and Conflicts of Interest***

*Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) expands upon what constitutes legislators' and other public officers' breaches of ethics and conflicts of interest in the "Nevada Ethics in Government Law" (Chapter 281A of NRS). This law contains a code of ethical standards for a public officer relative to: (1) accepting gifts, services, favors, employment, or honoraria; (2) negotiating or executing contracts in which the public officer has a significant pecuniary interest; (3) accepting compensation from private sources for the performance of public duties; (4) using information acquired through public duties to further the pecuniary interests of himself or herself or other persons or business; (5) suppressing any governmental report that might tend to affect unfavorably the officer's pecuniary interests; and (6) using government time, property, or equipment for the private benefit of the public officer. During the 2009 Session, the Legislature enacted legislation codifying the constitutional doctrines of separation of powers and legislative privilege and immunity, protecting legislators from having to defend themselves from various legal challenges when they perform certain legitimate legislative activities. The measure also clarifies that statutory provisions concerning disclosure, voting, and abstention do not apply to State legislators or allow the Commission on Ethics to exercise jurisdiction over State legislators with regard to these activities.

In addition to the general requirements of the code of ethical standards, the Nevada Ethics in Government Law requires the disclosure of any significant pecuniary interest in matters under consideration. The law further specifies that a public officer of the Legislative Branch shall not vote upon or advocate the passage or failure of, but may otherwise participate in, the consideration of a matter with respect to which the independence of judgment of a reasonable person in the same position

would be materially affected by: (1) acceptance of a gift or loan; (2) pecuniary interest; or (3) commitment in a private capacity to the interest of others.

Standing Rule 23 of both houses addresses legislators' ethics. In each house, a Committee on Ethics will be established to consist of members appointed by both majority and minority party leadership. Standing Rule 23 provides in part that:

. . . if a Legislator knows he or she has a conflict of interest . . . the Legislator shall make a general disclosure of the conflict of interest on the record in a meeting of a committee or on the floor . . . as applicable . . . . If, on one or more prior occasions during the current session of the Legislature, a Legislator has made a general disclosure of a conflict of interest on the record in a meeting of a committee or on the floor . . . the Legislator is not required to make that general disclosure at length again regarding the same conflict of interest if . . . the Legislator makes a reference on the record to the previous disclosure.

Further, Standing Rule 23 provides in part that:

[i]n determining whether to abstain from voting upon, advocating or opposing a matter concerning which a Legislator has a conflict of interest . . . the Legislator should consider whether: (a) The conflict impedes his or her independence of judgment; and (b) His or her interest is greater than the interests of an entire class of persons similarly situated.

This rule does not prohibit a legislator from requesting or introducing legislation or require a legislator to take any particular action before or while requesting or introducing a legislative measure.

### ***Financial Disclosure***

Every candidate for the Legislature is required to file financial disclosure statements with the Secretary of State. Such statements must be filed no later than the tenth day after the closing of candidate filing and then once a year thereafter, including the year that the term expires, on or before January 15.

Under the law, statements of financial disclosure are required to contain specified information concerning the candidate's: (1) length of residence in Nevada and the legislative district; (2) sources of income; (3) real estate holdings valued at \$2,500 or more (except for a personal residence); (4) specified creditors to whom the candidate or members of the candidate's household owe more than \$5,000; (5) certain gifts received by the candidate with a value of \$200 or more; (6) a list of all business entities in which the candidate or a member of the candidate's household is involved as a trustee, beneficiary, director, officer, owner, partner, or shareholder of at least 1 percent of the stock; and (7) a list of all public offices presently held by the candidate for which financial disclosure statements are required. A legislator who fails to file the statement of financial disclosure in a timely manner is subject to a civil penalty and payment of court costs and attorney's fees.

In 2015, the Legislature revised the reporting requirements for legislators, public officers, and candidates for public office. These individuals must now disclose any educational or informational meetings or trips provided by interested persons, including lobbyists and any group of persons acting together, if they have a substantial interest in legislative, administrative, or political actions of a public officer.

### ***Officers and Employees***

Each house of the Legislature employs such staff as is necessary to its operation. During the legislative session, this staff expands to approximately 210 committee managers, secretaries, assistants, and others who ensure that the session functions smoothly. Several positions are permanent and full-time when the Legislature is not in session: the Secretary of the Senate, the Chief Clerk of the Assembly, and at least one executive assistant and one technical assistant for each house.

The legislative employees are under the supervision of the elected officer of each house. In the Senate, this is the Secretary; in the Assembly, the Chief Clerk. The Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the Assembly are elected as officers by the members of the houses they serve. They, in turn, supervise the work of the legislative employees.

The Secretary and Chief Clerk perform many varied duties. They are present at each daily session of their respective houses, and during those sessions they “read” each bill and resolution—though in greatly abbreviated form—to the members of the house. The Secretary and Chief Clerk maintain all records of the Senate and Assembly, supervise compilation of the daily journals and histories of their respective houses, and advise the officer of each house on matters of parliamentary procedure or the house rules.

When the Legislature is not in session, the permanent legislative officers and employees assist legislative leaders with administrative matters that arise during the interim, oversee the publication of the final certified journals and histories, speak with school and civic groups about the legislative process, represent the State at national conferences of legislative officers, and prepare for the next session. Although the legislative officers and employees are not part of the LCB, their offices are located in the Legislative Building.

## **INTEREST GROUPS AND MEDIA**

### ***Press***

The news corps is an important adjunct to the Legislature. Public awareness is vital to the democratic process, and it is the function of the press to present, analyze, and interpret the news so that the public is informed and can, therefore, more effectively express itself to and through its elected representatives. Press representatives are granted official accreditation in each chamber through adoption of a simple motion to accredit named individuals at the beginning of the session or at selected times during the session. Space in each chamber is provided for members of the news media to televise or otherwise cover legislative proceedings.

## *Lobbyists*

Legislative agents or representatives, commonly known as lobbyists, represent various organizations, interests, and causes before the Legislature. Like the news media, they are important to the legislative process as sources of information, channels of communication between constituents and their representatives, and major protagonists in efforts to influence legislation. They frequently point out concerns in bills, suggest amendments, provide valuable testimony, and in general assist the Legislature in assessing the merits of proposed legislation.

The activities of lobbyists in Nevada are controlled by the “Nevada Lobbying Disclosure Act” (Chapter 218H of NRS). The law requires lobbyists to register with the Director of the LCB and provide various information about themselves and the groups or individuals they represent. A lobbyist must file a report each month during a legislative session and within 30 days after the close of a session concerning his or her lobbying activities. Each report must include the total expenditures for the month and, if the lobbyist had expenditures of \$50 or more during the month, the report must itemize expenses in connection with any event hosted by an organization that sponsors the registrant; expenditures for entertainment, gifts, and loans; and other expenditures directly associated with legislative action. With the exception of expenditures associated with a function to which every legislator was invited, the reports must identify the legislators on whose behalf the expenditures were made. Data on each lobbyist’s personal expenditures for food, lodging, and travel expenses or membership dues are not required in the monthly reports. Violation of the Act is a misdemeanor.

Revisions enacted by the Legislature in 2015 require lobbyists to disclose expenditures made for educational or informational meetings, events, or trips provided to legislators, public officers, and candidates. The Legislature also revised the definitions of “expenditure” and “gift” as those terms relate to reporting by lobbyists and public officers. A lobbyist shall not knowingly or willfully give any gift to a member of the Legislative Branch or a member of the legislator’s family, and a member shall not accept any gift from a lobbyist. This prohibition applies whether or not the Legislature is in session.

Other sections in NRS also address improper influence exerted upon legislators. For example, any person who interferes with the legislative process is guilty of a gross misdemeanor. Any person who improperly obtains money or other things of value to influence a member of a legislative body in regard to any vote or legislative action is also guilty of a gross misdemeanor. It is a misdemeanor to misrepresent any fact knowingly when testifying or otherwise communicating to a legislator, though witnesses are absolutely privileged to publish defamatory material that is relevant to a proceeding. Moreover, both the giving of a bribe to a legislator and receiving a bribe are crimes against the legislative power and are subject to severe punishments under the law. Although lobbying activities are customarily prohibited on the floor of both chambers, lobbyists may appear before any committee of the Legislature.

Upon leaving office, some legislators have chosen to become lobbyists. To slow down this practice, known as “the revolving door,” the Legislature enacted legislation in 2015 to prohibit any former legislator from receiving compensation to lobby before the Legislature for a period beginning when the legislator leaves office and ending at the adjournment of the next regular session. Exemptions are

provided for a former legislator if lobbying is a duty of the individual's full-time employment and the former legislator does not act as a lobbyist for any other employer or client.

## **LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE**

Regular sessions of the Nevada Legislature are held biennially in odd-numbered years, convening on the first Monday in February after the election of members of the Senate and Assembly. During the interim between regular sessions, the Governor may call a special session by proclamation. Because the voters approved an amendment to the *Nevada Constitution* in 2012, the Legislature may call itself into a special session if two-thirds of the members of each house make the request by signing a petition.

Legislative activities, including committee hearings, are open to the public. The *Nevada Constitution* also stipulates that neither house may, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days nor move to any place other than where it is holding its session. The Joint Standing Rules of the Senate and Assembly specify that one or more adjournments, for a duration of more than three days, may be taken to permit standing committees, select committees, or the LCB to prepare the matters respectively entrusted to them for the consideration of the Legislature as a whole. The total time taken for all such adjournments is not to exceed 20 days during any regular session. The 1991, 1993, and 1995 Legislatures adjourned for two weeks early in the session to allow the Senate Committee on Finance and Assembly Committee on Ways and Means to work full-time on the review of proposed State agency budgets. During this same period, the remaining "morning" committees of the Legislature held hearings on bills and other legislative matters in the Las Vegas area. Beginning in 1999, the two "money" committees have conducted informational hearings in Carson City during the two weeks immediately preceding the start of session.

In the case of a disagreement between the two houses with respect to the time of the Legislature's final adjournment, the Governor is constitutionally empowered to adjourn the Legislature to such a time as deemed proper, but not beyond the time fixed for the meeting of the next Legislature.

### ***Legislator Duties***

The *Nevada Constitution* vests the lawmaking authority for the State in the Nevada Legislature. Generally, the Legislature is empowered to enact the laws of the State; levy taxes on individuals, businesses, property, and sales; appropriate the funds collected for the support of public institutions and the administration of State government; propose amendments to the constitutions of the U.S. and Nevada; and consider legislation proposed by initiative petitions. In addition, the Legislature is directed to establish a State university; a public school system; and a statewide, uniform system of county and township government. The Legislature also has the power to create, revise, or abolish certain county positions; determine the compensation of legislative officers and employees, certain State officials, Supreme Court Justices, and judges in the district courts and court of appeals, and specified county officers; decide the winner of a tied election for a district or State office or the office of U.S. Senator or Representative; impeach the Governor, other State officials, or any judge, except a justice of the peace; and pardon, reprieve, or compel the enforcement of a sentence for the conviction for treason. The Legislature also provides oversight of the Executive and Judicial Branches of



government through the budget and audit processes and reviews the regulations developed by State agencies.

Most of the Legislature's work, however, consists of generating, revising, and occasionally repealing the laws of the State. Through a process defined by the *Nevada Constitution*, State law, and legislative rules, the members of the Legislature consider over 1,000 bills and resolutions throughout each regular session.

During the session, legislators have several responsibilities. They shepherd the measures they introduce through the legislative process by providing testimony at hearings, working with others to improve the legislation, and encouraging their colleagues to vote in favor of their bills. Legislators also serve on the committees that review each piece of legislation. Each legislator is typically assigned to three standing committees. As committee members, legislators listen to and question witnesses about the provisions of a measure, participate in subcommittees created to focus on a specific bill or issue, and vote on whether the bill or resolution should be transmitted to the full house.

Legislators are required to attend the daily meetings of their respective houses, commonly referred to as "floor sessions." In order for a bill or joint resolution to pass, the *Nevada Constitution* requires that a majority of the members elected to the body vote for the measure. Bills or joint resolutions which create, generate, or increase public revenue through taxes, fees, or similar mechanisms require approval by two-thirds of the members elected in each house unless the measure is referred to the voters by a majority vote. All votes on final passage are by roll call and are recorded in the journal of the chamber taking the action.

At times, all legislators may be required to participate in a committee of the whole. Such a committee is usually formed only once or twice during a session. Much more common are the conference committees, formed to resolve differences between amendments proposed by each house to the same bill. Occasionally, legislators may be assigned to a joint committee of the two houses.

When not on the floor or in meetings, legislators confer with constituents who call or visit, with lobbyists who represent organizations or certain opinions, and with staff who provide assistance and requested information. Legislators are frequently asked to speak to various groups and attend numerous community functions, most often on days when the Legislature is not in session.

When the session ends, legislators continue to make speeches, assist constituents, serve on special legislative committees, and compile information in preparation for the next session. Often, legislators serve as facilitators among various groups. For example, a legislator might contact a government agency on behalf of a constituent or bring opposing factions together to solve a problem. In addition, legislators monitor the implementation of certain bills passed during the preceding session. In this capacity, a legislator might attend a hearing conducted by a State agency formulating pertinent regulations.

Between sessions, a legislator may serve on one or more interim committees. Some of these committees study a specific subject, provide oversight of ongoing issues, or are part of national

organizations that bring together legislators from the various states to discuss similar problems. Permanent committees of the Legislature are created through statute. Temporary committees usually originate in concurrent resolutions passed in one session and are dissolved by the beginning of the next.

The foregoing description of legislative responsibilities is not comprehensive. Like employees in the private sector, legislators are often responsible for other duties as assigned. Any legislator who chairs a committee or assumes a leadership role conducts those duties in addition to the ones mentioned. Legislators are also expected by their political parties and communities to perform certain functions, such as attending party caucuses and important local events. In addition, most legislators hold full-time jobs and must fulfill their responsibilities to their employers. Although Nevada prides itself on having a citizen Legislature, it demands a significant commitment of time and effort from each of its citizen representatives.

### ***Session Deadlines***

Sessions are limited to 120 calendar days following the approval by voters of a constitutional amendment in 1998. Previous sessions were unlimited in length following the repeal in 1958 of a constitutional provision setting a 60-day maximum limit on the duration of a session. Since 1958, there has been only one regular session of fewer than 60 days, that being the single annual session of 1960, which lasted 55 days. Between 1975 and 1997, regular sessions in Nevada ran between 113 and 169 days.

Prior to each session, the Legislative Commission's Committee to Consult with the Director considers methods of improving the operation of the session. The recommendations of the Committee to the next Legislature may affect many procedural rules, including limitations on the number of bills that may be requested; deadlines for the submission, introduction, and passage of legislation; and the procedure for obtaining waivers. These procedures are generally contained in the Joint Standing Rules of the Senate and Assembly, which are adopted at the beginning of each session. Measures within the jurisdiction of the Senate Committee on Finance or the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means, bills required to carry out the business of the Legislature, and concurrent or simple resolutions are commonly exempted from these limitations. Also exempt are emergency requests submitted by the Majority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the Minority Leaders in the Senate and the Assembly.

## **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU**

In March of 1945, the Nevada Legislature recognized a need for more information and assistance to deal with increasingly complex tasks. This need is described in the preamble to the bill creating the Legislative Counsel Bureau:

At each biennial session of the legislature, that body is confronted by requests for legislation expanding and changing the functions of and increasing the appropriations of numerous offices, departments, institutions, and agencies of the state government;

and . . . notwithstanding the information provided by the messages and budgets of the governor and the reports of public officers, it is impossible for the legislature or its committees to secure sufficient information to act advisedly on such requests in the time limited for its sessions.

The 1945 law establishing the LCB charged it with assisting the Legislature to find facts concerning government, proposed legislation, and various other public matters.

During the next several years, the duties of the LCB and its staff were modified and expanded. In 1963, the Nevada Legislature reorganized the LCB, giving it structure and responsibilities similar to those it has today. One part of this change was the incorporation of the Statute Revision Commission into the LCB as the Legal Division. The Statute Revision Commission was originally created by the Nevada Supreme Court in 1951 and became involved in bill drafting as an adjunct to its statute revision work. The 1963 legislation also added a Fiscal and Auditing Division and a Research Division.

Today, the LCB consists of the Legislative Commission, the Interim Finance Committee, a Director, and five divisions (Administrative, Audit, Fiscal Analysis, Legal, and Research). The divisions are made up of professional nonpartisan staff who provide a variety of services to legislators. The following sections describe activities of these units.

### *Legislative Commission*

The LCB is supervised by the Legislative Commission, which also takes actions on behalf of the Legislative Branch of government when the full Legislature is not in session. At every regular session of the Legislature, the Senate and the Assembly each designate six members and their alternates to serve on the Commission. Between sessions, the Commission meets every few months to provide guidance to staff of the LCB and to deal with other interim matters. A prominent subcommittee to the Commission reviews the permanent administrative regulations of Executive Branch agencies.

A primary responsibility of the Commission is to provide oversight to and establish the priorities for interim studies. During each regular session, the Legislature passes several bills and resolutions directing the Legislative Commission to study particular subjects and report when the Legislature reconvenes. The Commission accomplishes its tasks by creating subcommittees drawn from the entire membership of the Legislature and assigning staff resources to the subcommittees. The interim subcommittees hold hearings, direct research, and deliberate on proposed legislation for the next session of the Legislature.

Typically, every member of the Legislature is involved in interim subcommittee work between sessions. In addition, several ongoing statutory committees meet regularly, including, but not limited to, the Committees on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice, Education, Energy, Health Care, High-Level Radioactive Waste, Public Lands, the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System, and Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults With Special Needs.

### ***Interim Finance Committee***

In 1969, the Legislature created the Interim Finance Committee to function within the LCB between sessions and administer a contingency fund. This fund was set up to provide provisional funds for State agencies when the Legislature is not in session. The Interim Finance Committee also reviews State agency requests to accept certain gifts and grants, to modify legislatively approved budgets, and to reclassify State merit system positions in certain circumstances. Composed of the members of the Senate Committee on Finance and the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means who served during the preceding session, the Interim Finance Committee makes final decisions for the Legislature during the period between regular sessions and endeavors to maintain an adequate fund balance to meet unforeseen financial emergencies.

### ***Director***

The Director is the Chief Executive Officer of the LCB and supervises all of its daily administrative and technical activities. The Legislative Commission appoints the Director and, in turn, the Director, with the Commission's approval, appoints the chiefs of the various divisions. The Director serves as Secretary to the Legislative Commission, has the statutory responsibility of registering lobbyists, and consults with a committee of the Legislative Commission concerning the general management, organization, and function of the LCB and the necessary preparations for the next regular legislative session.

### ***Administrative Division***

The Administrative Division provides operating and technical support to the other divisions of the LCB and to the Legislature. The Division is responsible for accounting and human resources; lobbyist registration; audio and video services; communications equipment; control of inventory; information technology services; janitorial services; maintenance and remodeling of buildings; maintenance of legislative grounds and vehicles; purchasing; legislative police; parking; shipping and receiving; utilities; and warehouse operations.

The Chief of the Administrative Division oversees the units of the Administrative Division that are based in Carson City, and the Legislative Services Officer oversees the Las Vegas Office.

### **Las Vegas Office of the Legislative Counsel Bureau**

The Las Vegas Office provides complete assistance to legislators with full access to all LCB information and services, including computer laptop support and videoconferencing capabilities. Similar information assistance is provided to the public, subject to legislative priorities. Meeting rooms are also available at this location for viewing and participating in videoconference hearings during the session and the interim. In addition, legislators may reserve a room for meetings with constituents or other legislative purposes.

### ***Audit Division***

The Audit Division performs audits of the Executive and Judicial Branches of State government. The Audit Division also performs special audits of local governments as required by legislation or at the direction of the Legislative Commission. The purpose of the legislative audits is to improve government by providing independent and reliable information to the Legislature about the operations of State agencies, programs, and functions. The findings of the Audit Division are published in audit reports, which include constructive suggestions for improvements.

Audit reports are presented to the Audit Subcommittee of the Legislative Commission, and later to the full Commission, at public meetings. After becoming a public document, the reports are distributed to legislators, State and local officials, and the public. The Legislative Auditor is the Chief of the Audit Division.

### ***Fiscal Analysis Division***

The Fiscal Analysis Division provides the Legislature with the capability for independent review and analysis of budgetary, tax, and fiscal matters. The Division examines the Governor's *Executive Budget* and suggests possible changes, provides expenditure and revenue analyses to aid the legislative budget and tax committees, and assists the Legislature in the interpretation of factual data related to fiscal aspects of the operation of State and local governments. The Division is headed by the Senate Fiscal Analyst and the Assembly Fiscal Analyst. The Division serves as the primary staff to the Interim Finance Committee, the Senate Committee on Finance, the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means, the Senate Committee on Revenue, the Assembly Committee on Taxation, and interim studies relating to budget or tax issues.

### ***Legal Division***

The Legal Division, with a staff of lawyers, paralegals, editors, indexers, and document technicians, drafts bills and resolutions, reviews administrative regulations, and provides certain other legal assistance when requested. The Division is headed by the Legislative Counsel. The Legislative Counsel is the legal adviser to the Legislative Branch of State government and provides legal counsel for legislative committees. Just as the Attorney General responds to requests within the Executive Branch, the Legislative Counsel issues opinions during the legislative sessions and the interim upon the request of a member or committee of the Legislature, the Legislative Commission, or LCB staff. The Legislative Counsel also represents the interests of the Legislature in court and administrative proceedings.

The Legislative Counsel is responsible for assimilating, codifying, indexing, and publishing the *Advance Sheets*, *Statutes of Nevada*, *Nevada Revised Statutes* with Annotations, *Nevada Administrative Code*, and several compilations of selected portions of NRS, as well as creating and publishing the Bill Index and Tables during the legislative sessions. As part of the Legal Division, the State Printing Office prints copies of bills, statutes, and other legislative publications, and provides printing services to the divisions of the LCB and other State agencies. The Legal Division also sells and provides customer service for these publications as well as souvenirs of the Nevada Legislature and the State of Nevada in the Gift Shop.

### ***Research Division***

The Research Division functions as the policy analysis arm of the Legislature. The Division's primary responsibilities include: responding to legislators requesting general information and policy development; serving as lead staff (committee policy analysts) to standing committees of both houses (except appropriations and revenue committees); functioning as the primary administrative and policy staff for most interim study committees between legislative sessions; and assisting legislators in responding to their constituents' problems with State and local government agencies. Legislative documents and research materials are available through the Division's Legislative Research Library.

The Research Division also answers requests for information from national organizations, government agencies in Nevada and other states, and the public. In addition, the Division prepares numerous publications, reports, and issue papers relating to public policy. The Research Director administers the Division.

### **SUMMARY**

The staff services of the LCB are furnished throughout the year for any legislator. Legal advice, fiscal information, and background research are furnished upon request. Services of a more extensive nature are executed when the Legislature so orders by means of a law or resolution. Between sessions, such projects may be requested through the Legislative Commission.

### **SELECTED PUBLICATIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU**

- *Appropriations Report*: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Fiscal/Appropriation%20Reports/>.
- Research Briefs or Issue Papers on issues determined to be of interest during the next legislative session: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/ResearchBriefs/index.html>.
- *Biennial Report of the Legislative Auditor*: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/audit/documents/Biennial%20Reports/Biennial%20Report%202014.pdf>.
- Bulletins—reports from interim committees: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/DivStudyLegReport.cfm>.
- *Fiscal Report*: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Fiscal/Fiscal%20Report/>.
- Policy and Program Reports: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/PandPReport/index.html>.
- End of Session Speech (only available to legislators).
- *Summary of Legislation*: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/SoL/index.html>. You may also search for individual bill summaries at: <http://search.leg.state.nv.us/ResearchBillSummaries/BillSummaries.html>.

- *The Guide to the Nevada Legislature*: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/Guide/Guide2015.pdf>.
- *Nevada Legislative Manual*: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/LegManual/2015/index.html>.
- *Directory of State and Local Government*: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/Directory/index.html>.
- *Nevada Revised Statutes* and *Statutes of Nevada*: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/law1.cfm>.
- Bill Indexes of the Senate and Assembly (various indexes are available under the Tables and Index heading on this page): <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Reports/>.
- Histories of the Senate and Assembly: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/History/>.
- Journals of the Senate and Assembly: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Journal/>.

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## WEBSITES

- Nevada Legislature Online: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/>.
- Research Library: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/library/>.

## Government

- Nevada Secretary of State Election Center: <http://nvsos.gov/index.aspx?page=3>.
- Nevada's Commission on Ethics: <http://ethics.nv.gov/>.

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