

NEVADA LEGISLATURE

Eighty-First Session, 2021

ASSEMBLY DAILY JOURNAL

THE NINETY-SECOND DAY

CARSON CITY (Monday), May 3, 2021

Assembly called to order at 11:06 a.m.

Mr. Speaker presiding.

Roll called.

All present.

Prayer by the Chaplain, Reverend Thomas Ha.

God, our Heavenly Father, You have created us as men and women in Your image and likeness and bestowed on us each with gifts and talents to enrich one another's lives. We ask that You give us grace and strength to fulfill our duties with care and bring us to a common ground where we experience the genuine love and unity in diversity.

We ask all this in Your Name.

AMEN.

Pledge of allegiance to the Flag.

Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson moved that further reading of the Journal be dispensed with and the Speaker and Chief Clerk be authorized to make the necessary corrections and additions.

Motion carried.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Commerce and Labor, to which was referred Senate Bill No. 35, has had the same under consideration, and begs leave to report the same back with the recommendation: Do pass.

SANDRA JAUREGUI, *Chair*

Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Revenue, to which were referred Senate Bills Nos. 25, 74, has had the same under consideration, and begs leave to report the same back with the recommendation: Do pass.

LESLEY E. COHEN, *Chair*

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

SENATE CHAMBER, Carson City, April 29, 2021

To the Honorable the Assembly:

I have the honor to inform your honorable body that the Senate on this day passed Assembly Bill No. 1.

SHERRY RODRIGUEZ
Assistant Secretary of the Senate

IN JOINT SESSION

At 11:10 a.m.

Mr. Speaker presiding.

The Secretary of the Senate called the Senate roll.

All present except Senator Kieckhefer, who was excused.

The Chief Clerk of the Assembly called the Assembly roll.

All present.

Representative Dina Titus delivered her pre-recorded message as follows:

MESSAGE TO THE LEGISLATURE OF NEVADA
EIGHTY-FIRST SESSION, 2021

Thank you, Speaker Frierson and Leader Cannizzaro, for allowing me to speak with you all today. I'm just sorry I could not be with you in person because the Nevada Legislature is such a special place to me, having served there for 20 years. And I always enjoy coming to Carson during the session, meeting with our executive members across the lawn who are doing such a great job for Nevada; hanging out with old friends like Marlene and Roger, Helen, Don, and Randy; dinner at the JT; dancing at the Timbers; and that wonderful morning-after party we have at Adele's. So much has changed. I want to thank every one of you for continuing to do the people's business in the face of the pandemic. Serving in the Nevada Legislature has always involved sacrifices—time away from family and jobs—but never before has it carried the personal risk of meeting together while our state is fighting a virus that has taken the lives of more than 5,400 of our fellow Nevadans. We mourn for those we have lost—the people in our own lives and the loved ones of our friends and neighbors. But our job as public servants—yours here in Carson City and mine in Washington—is to give our fellow Nevadans hope, hope that they can keep a roof over their heads, hope that their children can learn in a safe and healthy environment, hope that they can get back to work without fear of illness. That's exactly what you all have done.

And we're seeing positive signs as a result. As more people are being vaccinated, the spread of COVID-19 is slowing within our population. Nevada has now administered more than two million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. The percentage of Nevadans testing positive for COVID-19 has fallen from more than 20 percent in December to below 6 percent. I am optimistic that we will beat this deadly virus. Please remind your friends, family, and constituents that the COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, free, and available to everyone, regardless of legal status. Getting vaccinated is the patriotic thing to do. It's the key to returning to normal, saving lives, and bringing about economic recovery. Fortunately, scheduling an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine in Nevada has never been easier.

With this incredible tool in our pocket, I know that Nevada's best days are ahead. Under the great leadership of Governor Steve Sisolak, you have laid the groundwork for a strong recovery. Meanwhile, I've been working hard in Washington to pass measures that will help put shots in arms, money in pockets, workers in jobs, and our students safely back in schools. The linchpin is the American Rescue Plan [Act of 2021], a comprehensive relief package that we passed to crush this virus and get our economy back on track. Especially in southern Nevada, our tourism-based economy has been devastated by the pandemic, with visitation last year down more than half across the state. Even as we turn the corner in the battle against this virus, we sadly still rank

among the top states in our percentage of unemployed workers. That is why I pushed so hard to ensure that in the American Rescue Plan, the hardest hit states receive the highest share of aid. As a result, the state of Nevada, our counties, and cities will receive over \$4 billion in flexible funding to help address budget gaps, accelerate vaccine distribution, keep frontline workers on the payroll, and provide rent and food assistance to the most vulnerable. Meanwhile, our neighbors in Utah, a state with a slightly higher population than us but with a lower unemployment rate, will receive around \$2.5 billion. So I mean it when I say the American Rescue Plan was designed to help those who need it the most.

As you are all aware, the impact of this pandemic on Nevada's students has drawn national attention. To get our students, teachers, and school personnel safely back into the classroom, the American Rescue Plan is providing over \$964 million for Nevada's schools. This funding can be used to address learning loss, improve ventilation, provide PPE [personal protective equipment], and hire critical staff including nurses and counselors.

The American Rescue Plan will also dramatically expand access to quality and affordable health care, cut the child poverty rate in half by increasing the Child Tax Credit, and provide unemployment assistance to Nevadans in need, through no fault of their own. And of course, we cannot forget the direct payments in the bill that will go to 87 percent of all adults in Nevada and 86 percent of children. These dollars will help people in our state put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads, while helping businesses across our state that may have otherwise had to close their doors. In southern Nevada, we have some of the best restaurants in the world. The American Rescue Plan provides \$28.6 billion for direct relief to struggling independent restaurants. The bill also adds funding to save our stages, so that live performance spaces will have access to \$16 billion in relief.

We need these resources to get our economy quickly moving in the right direction again, but we also need longer-term opportunities to make Nevada more resilient during economic downturns. We have got to make it easier for Nevadans to find jobs. That is why I advocated, in my position as the Chair of the Economic Development Subcommittee, to provide \$3 billion in grants to be administered by the U.S. Economic Development Administration [EDA] to boost local economies across the country. I was proud to put my mark on the American Rescue Plan by ensuring that \$750 million of these grants will specifically go to states like Nevada that have experienced a significant loss of travel and tourism-related jobs. This is the first time in our nation's history that the EDA will have a mandate to provide grants to communities like ours.

So there is a lot of good news for Nevadans in the American Rescue Plan. It is critical that our state and local communities take advantage of the opportunities that are available with this new relief. I am confident that under the leadership of Maggie Carlton, your money committees will do just that. But please do not hesitate to contact my office to discuss how we can work together to bring additional resources to Nevada.

I know what a difference you all are making. For example, you unanimously passed AB 106, which will allocate an additional \$50 million in federal aid to small businesses and nonprofits impacted by the pandemic. And you are considering important legislation to address learning loss in schools because of the pandemic. I am proud to support the "back on track" bill to provide options for at-risk students to attend in-person or virtual summer school in an effort to close the widening achievement gap. Senator Dondero Loop and Assemblywomen Anderson and Torres know from experience what our schools and students need.

We know it is not good enough though to return to life as it was before the pandemic. We need to build back better. That is why you are hearing President Biden announce bold new plans to invest in our nation's future, especially when it comes to infrastructure. As a senior member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I will continue to ensure that Nevada has a seat at the table in this discussion. I am focused on improving our transportation infrastructure with construction of I-11, the interstate to Phoenix; addressing congestion on Interstate 15; and supporting projects like Brightline West that will bring high-speed rail service between southern Nevada and southern California. These projects are key to diversifying our state's economy and keeping our unemployment rate low even at times when the tourism industry is facing trouble. And through President Biden's American Jobs Plan, we will put millions to work in good-paying union jobs to update and improve our infrastructure and ensure that every American has access to

clean water and high-speed internet. In the twenty-first century, we shouldn't settle for anything less.

Last week, the President announced the companion American Families Plan, a new proposal to make it easier to get into the middle class and stay in the middle class. In the United States of America, preschool, quality child care, and paid leave should not be luxuries reserved only for the lucky few. Best of all, we can fully pay for the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan without raising taxes on anyone who makes less than \$400,000 per year. In fact, President Biden's plans to make large corporations and the wealthiest among us pay their fair share would actually decrease the deficit. These proposals won't be easy to get across the finish line, but it will be worth it. I'm willing to work with anyone, on either side of the aisle, who is serious about investing in America's future.

Of course, we have our work cut out for us in other areas as well. Climate change remains an existential threat. I'm grateful for the leadership in this area of Senator Chris Brooks and Assemblyman Howard Watts, and I thank you all for continuing to make it a priority. We must redouble our efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption and protect our public lands for future generations. Let's hear it for Assemblywoman González's "Thirty by Thirty Resolution."

Earlier this year, I introduced bicameral legislation with Senator Cortez Masto to ensure a consent-based siting process for nuclear waste disposal. Now that we have the White House on our side when it comes to rejecting Yucca Mountain, Nevada should be part of the solution in the federal discussion to find a new storage site.

When it comes to gun violence, people in Las Vegas know the consequences of inaction all too well. At the federal level, we should follow Nevada's example and emulate the courage of Assemblywoman Jauregui. Passing expanded background checks and extreme risk laws are the best way we can do that. These policies, we know, will save lives. I'm pleased that the Assembly has passed legislation to expand background checks for private firearm sales and transfers by banning ghost guns. President Biden has taken executive action to tighten restrictions on these self-assembled, untraceable firearms. I believe it's time for Congress to act as well. Let us find some common ground, because surely we can all agree that parents should not have to worry that their kids will not come home when they drop them off at school or a concert.

This session, you again passed Senate Joint Resolution 8, which would amend the state *Constitution* to guarantee equal rights for all Nevadans. This reinforces the Equality Act we have passed out of the House. I also commend your efforts on criminal justice reform under the leadership of Speaker Frierson and Attorney General Ford.

Homecare workers, who are disproportionately women of color, have been on the front lines of this pandemic. We must ensure adequate pay and protections for these essential workers. Like the American Families Plan, Senator Neal's bill will give them that important seat at the table. And let's come together to help get our hospitality workers back on the job now that tourism and business travel are on the rise.

We still need to raise the minimum wage across the country and take other federal action to address the systemic inequalities that exist in our society. I'm proud to co-sponsor legislation to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, which would give over 32 million workers a well-deserved pay increase. Let me thank our friends in organized labor for all the efforts to support working families. You're key to expanding the middle class.

I'm also hopeful you will pass Assembly Bill 213, which would remove citizenship requirements for higher education scholarship programs and secure access to in-state tuition for any graduate of a Nevada high school. That complements the bill we've already passed out of the House to provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and TPS [temporary protected status] recipients.

Finally, I want to discuss one major area where I am especially proud that Nevada is an outlier. Across the country, we have seen state legislatures advance voter suppression bills based on a big lie about the 2020 election. Let me be clear: Individuals who continue to promote these baseless conspiracy theories are a threat to U.S. democracy. Words have consequences, and I saw them first-hand when I was barricaded in my Washington, D.C. office for hours on January 6 as domestic terrorists attempted to prevent the peaceful transfer of power. I compliment Secretary of State Cegavske's oversight of our election here in Nevada. And now instead of making it harder for your constituents to vote, you all are considering comprehensive legislation to enhance access

and opportunities for eligible voters to make their voices heard in our democracy. That is just wonderful.

Let me conclude by saying I also believe that when it comes to presidential primary elections, Nevada should vote first. Over the last decade, Nevada has experienced immense population growth. Our state represents the diversity of this country: urban and rural, ethnically and racially, with a strong union and military presence. We are truly a microcosm of the nation. So I hope you will pass Assembly Bill 126, which would change our presidential caucus to a primary and make the Nevada primary the first in the nation.

Ultimately, I'm convinced we will bounce back from this past year stronger than ever. Nevada was Battle Born and it is battle weathered. We are a resilient state and we have proven it before. I know in my heart that our best days are ahead. Thank you all for working so hard and so smart to put us on the path to strong recovery. I hope to see you soon.

Assemblywoman Carlton moved that the Senate and Assembly in Joint Session extend a vote of thanks to Representative Titus for her timely, able, and constructive message.

Motion carried.

Assemblyman Leavitt moved that the Joint Session be dissolved.

Motion carried.

Joint Session dissolved at 11:33 a.m.

ASSEMBLY IN SESSION

At 11:33 a.m.

Mr. Speaker presiding.

Quorum present.

REMARKS FROM THE FLOOR

Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson moved that the Assembly adjourn until Tuesday, May 4, 2021, at 11:30 a.m.

Motion carried.

Assembly adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

Approved:

JASON FRIERSON
Speaker of the Assembly

Attest: SUSAN FURLONG
Chief Clerk of the Assembly