

THE NINETY-SECOND DAY

CARSON CITY (Monday), May 3, 2021

Senate called to order at 11:14 a.m.

President Marshall presiding.

Roll called.

All present except Senator Kieckhefer, who was excused.

Prayer by the Chaplain, Pastor Jason Ching.

Father, what a difficult year it has been and what a difficult job You have given this Senate. They face a struggling world and a divided public on top of their already challenging work.

Lord, You are the God of all wisdom. Would You be their wisdom and their help. Lead them and shine Your light on their path. In all of their ways, may they acknowledge You, and would You make straight their paths. Guide them in this important stewardship You have given them.

In Jesus' Name, I pray.

AMEN.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

By previous order of the Senate, the reading of the Journal is dispensed with, and the President and Secretary are authorized to make the necessary corrections and additions.

Senator Cannizzaro moved that the Senate recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Motion carried.

Senate in recess at 11:16 a.m.

IN JOINT SESSION

At 11:17 a.m.

President Marshall 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 message as follows:

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

Thank you, Speaker Frierson and Senate Majority Leader Cannizzaro, for allowing me to speak with you all today. I am 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. 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; having dinner at the JT; dancing at the Timbers and that wonderful morning-after party we would 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 such as 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 and hope that they can get back to work without fear of illness. That is exactly what you all have done, and we are 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 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 is 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 have 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 of this 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. Our tourism-based economy has been devastated by the pandemic, especially in southern Nevada, with visitation last year down more than half across the State. Even as we turn the corner in the battle against this virus, we still sadly 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 our 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. 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 and hire critical staff including nurses and counselors.

The American Rescue Plan will also dramatically expand access to quality and affordable healthcare, 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. 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 of direct relief to struggling independent restaurants. The bill also adds funding to save our stages so 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 need to make it easier for Nevadans to find jobs. That is why, in my position as the Chair of the Economic Development Subcommittee, I advocated 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.

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. 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 Assembly Bill No. 106, which will allocate an additional \$50 million in federal aid to small businesses and nonprofits impacted by the pandemic. You are also 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. 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 21st Century, we should settle for nothing 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 childcare 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 will not be easy to get across the finish line, but it will be worth it. I am willing to work with anyone, on either side of the aisle, who is serious about investing in America's future.

We have our work cut out for us in other areas as well. Climate change remains an existential threat. I am 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 us 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 am pleased 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 is time for Congress to act as well. Let us find some common ground. 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 No. 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 frontlines 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. Let us 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 am proud to cosponsor 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 of the efforts to support working families. You are key to expanding the middle class.

I am also hopeful you will pass Assembly Bill No. 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 have already passed out of the House to provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and 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. 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. Instead of making it harder for your constituents to vote, you 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. I hope you will pass Assembly Bill No. 126, which would change our presidential caucus to a primary and make the Nevada primary the first in the Nation.

Ultimately, I am convinced we will bounce back from this past year stronger than ever. Nevada is 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 a 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.

SENATE IN SESSION

At 11:34 a.m.

President Marshall presiding.

Quorum present.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Madam President:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which were referred Assembly Bills Nos. 35, 138, has had the same under consideration, and begs leave to report the same back with the recommendation: Do pass.

JULIA RATTI, *Chair*

MESSAGES FROM THE ASSEMBLY

ASSEMBLY CHAMBER, Carson City, April 29, 2021

To the Honorable the Senate:

I have the honor to inform your honorable body that the Assembly on this day passed Assembly Bill No. 452.

Also, I have the honor to inform your honorable body that the Assembly on this day passed, as amended, Assembly Bills Nos. 167, 194, 231, 278, 356.

CAROL AIELLO-SALA

Assistant Chief Clerk of the Assembly

MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND NOTICES

Senator Cannizzaro moved that Assembly Joint Resolution No. 7 be taken from the Resolution File and placed on the Resolution File for the next legislative day.

Motion carried.

INTRODUCTION, FIRST READING AND REFERENCE

Assembly Bill No. 167.

Senator Ratti moved that the bill be referred to the Committee on Education.

Motion carried.

Assembly Bill No. 194.

Senator Ratti moved that the bill be referred to the Committee on Education.

Motion carried.

Assembly Bill No. 231.

Senator Ratti moved that the bill be referred to the Committee on Education.

Motion carried.

Assembly Bill No. 278.

Senator Ratti moved that the bill be referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services.

Motion carried.

Assembly Bill No. 356.

Senator Ratti moved that the bill be referred to the Committee on Natural Resources.

Motion carried.

Assembly Bill No. 452.

Senator Ratti moved that the bill be referred to the Committee on Natural Resources.

Motion carried.

SECOND READING AND AMENDMENT

Assembly Bill No. 150.

Bill read second time and ordered to third reading.

Senator Cannizzaro moved that the Senate adjourn until Tuesday, May 4, 2021, at 11:00 a.m.

Motion carried.

Senate adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

Approved:

KATE MARSHALL
President of the Senate

Attest: CLAIRE J. CLIFT
Secretary of the Senate