



# LEGISLATIVE SESSION: BI-PARTISAN COOPERATION GIVES BEST OUTCOMES

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Government Affairs & Advocacy Group

**WITH LESS THAN TWO WEEKS UNTIL THE**

2021 legislative session gavels in, it is already shaping up to be unlike any session in Nevada’s history, as early indications point to a predominately virtual process with limited to no access to the legislative building for the lobbying core or the general public.

However, what we are still lacking is a formalized plan laying out how session will be conducted, which has left many to rely solely on rumors. We know public access to the building will follow Governor Sisolak’s directive of only 25% capacity during the beginning of session, which will be reached by legislators and staff.

There is hope the public will be allowed back in the building as the session progresses, even if it’s with limited capacity once more vaccines have

been distributed.

During the two special sessions held over last summer, the lack of access to the legislative building and lawmakers was devastating to the legislative process.

What may have been overlooked is the core responsibility of lobbyists. Lobbyists play a critical role in representing client interests and advocating for their cause, however it also the responsibility of lobbyists to educate legislators.

Yes, you read that correctly. Lobbyists educate legislators and staff on specific policies and budgetary items important to their clients as well as provide subject matter experts to discuss how policies can positively or negatively impact specific industries, regions, or groups.

Legislators rely on the knowledge of lobbyists and their clients to make informed decisions on the policies they will be voting on. As we move



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into the upcoming session it should be the hope of everyone that lobbyists and the public have access to legislators and staff in order to provide timely information on the matters in front of them. Without the insight of experts, policy is made with a narrowed lens which inevitably leads to policy that negatively impacts Nevadans.

If we have learned anything over the past year, its unity is needed now more than ever and what has happened at the federal level has no room in our state.

The Nevada Legislature has a long and successful history of working in a bipartisan fashion. It is behooved of all Nevadans – whether Republican, Democrat, or Non-Partisan – to bridge the gap of partisan issues and recognize the best decisions are made when we see ourselves not as a party but as a Nevadan.

It would be an unrealistic expectation to think Republicans and Democrats will agree on every issue brought forward, but what should be expected is open dialogue and a resounding commitment from lawmakers to bettering the state. It has been said countless times, the best policies are both created by and disliked by both parties.

The Economic Forum originally estimated the state’s biennium budget would have a \$1.8-billion shortfall. After the release of Governor Sisolak’s proposed budget, the

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# NRF STATEMENT REGARDING RIOTS IN WASHINGTON DC

## THE NATIONAL RETAIL FEDERATION TODAY ISSUED

the following statement from President and CEO Matthew Shay regarding the attacks on the U.S. Capitol as Congress was meeting to certify Joe Biden's win in the 2020 presidential election.

"For more than two centuries we have prided

ourselves as Americans on our democratic principles, our nation of laws and the unique experience of peaceful transfers of power from one administration to the next, regardless of party affiliation."

"This is a sad and distressing day for our country. For more than two centuries we have prided ourselves

as Americans on our democratic principles, our nation of laws and the unique experience of peaceful transfers of power from one administration to the next, regardless of party affiliation.

"Our retailers, the millions of associates they employ and the communities they serve across the country want and need our elected

officials to focus on the priorities that ensure faith in our government through stability. Today's riots are repugnant and fly in the face of the most basic tenets of our constitution, and the Administration must move quickly to provide the leadership that will end this affront to our democracy." ■

## BI-PARTISAN COOPERATION

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state's monetary shortfall does not seem as daunting as before and with the anticipation of President Biden's \$1.9-trillion package being introduced and passed, Nevada may be breathing a little easier.

The continued focus to diversify Nevada's economy will be a driver not only during the legislative session but as the state moves forward in creating a more robust economy.

During Governor Sisolak's State of the State, he announced his plan to create more than 165,000 permanent jobs over the next decade through five new initiatives:

- Passing a bold energy bill this upcoming session to increase transmission, storage and distribution of

- all forms of clean energy. This includes lithium mining, an important aspect in electricity storage, and Nevada is already home to the most successful lithium reserves in North America.

- Creation of "Innovation Zones" to help attract groundbreaking technologies to the state, without having to use tax abatements or public financing. Companies such as Blockchains LLC are committed to investing in "smart cities" in northern Nevada which will run solely on Blockchain technology and will operate outside of the typical county parameters.

- Preparing Nevada's workforce for the new

- emerging economy. This includes the creation of a "Nevada Job Force," a private-sector job training work program for people who have lost their jobs during the pandemic, or because of automation. Governor Sisolak also called for the creation of a "Remote Work Resource Center" to help workers find remote work opportunities, and announced plans to transition Nevada's community colleges out from under the authority of the Nevada System of High Education (NSHE) to a new, independent authority.

- Building of infrastructure by launching the State Infrastructure Bank through \$75

- million set aside in the budget which will help leverage outside capital to fund projects that will include rural broadband, renewable energy, and road improvements.

- Making government work better, including improvements to Nevada's Department of Employment, Rehabilitation and Training, which was found to be woefully flawed after the COVID-19 pandemic created a massive unemployment claim burden. The Department, which typically addressed on average 20,000 claims a week, jumped to 370,000 claims a week virtually overnight. ■