

# Committee on Public Affairs

Senate of the Associated Students 86th Session  
Minutes for Friday, October 5, 2018 at 12:30 p.m.  
Joe Crowley Student Union Room 320

## 1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Senator Alvarez called the Committee on Public Affairs to order at 12:30 pm in room 320 on the Third Floor of the Joe Crowley Student Union. Presiding secretary, Breanna Czerlanis.

## 2. ROLL CALL

Senator Alvarez, Senator Aziz, Senator Green, Senator Mata, and Senator Rogers were all present.

A quorum was present.

## 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Senator Mata said the Committee on Public Affairs could pair up with the Department of Legislative Affairs. Senator Mata said many students are registered to vote in their hometowns. Senator Mata would like to investigate the ballot questions for the Bay Area and Las Vegas.

Senator Alvarez said they can talk to Director Worrall about looking into those. She asked if there was any other public comment.

There was no other public comment at this time.

## 4. MINUTES

### a. Minutes from the Meeting on September 14, 2018

Senator Green motioned to approve the minutes from September 14, 2018 by unanimous consent.

There was no dissent; motion carries.

## 5. REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Director Worrall said that herself and Policy Director Cailles were excited to talk about the seven ballot initiatives.

Policy Director Cailles said he is the Policy Director of the Department of Legislative Affairs

Director Worrall said they're going to start with Question 1.

Policy Director Cailles said they handed out something for the Senators to use to follow along with the presentation. He said Marsy's Law is the crime victims' rights amendment. He said it

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Posted at the ASUN Offices in the Joe Crowley Student Union, Frandsen Humanities Building, the Pennington Student Achievement Center, Mathewson- IGT Knowledge Center, and online at [www.nevadaasun.com](http://www.nevadaasun.com).

If you would like a copy of any of the agenda items listed, please contact Senator Alvarez at [senatoralvarez@asun.unr.edu](mailto:senatoralvarez@asun.unr.edu).



would be an amendment to the Nevada constitution that would remove the current laws that require the legislature to provide statutory rights for crime victims and replacing them with a more comprehensive victims bill or rights. Policy Director Cailles listed some of the rights to be included.

Director Worrall said if the Senators have questions, they can be addressed after each slide.

Dr. Beattie asked for clarification about the right for victims to be present at all meetings.

Policy Director Cailles said it would be incorporated at things such as parole hearings if the victim would like to appear and give feedback. He gave background information on Marsy's Law and why it was created. He said there have been a long history of victim crime rights movements in Nevada. Policy Director Cailles said proponents argue victims need to be better protected.

Director Worrall asked if there were any questions about the proponents.

There were no questions at this time.

Policy Director Cailles said it is not a perfect policy and there are some things that need to be considered. He said constitutional amendments take a long time to be adjusted if they need to be. He went through some of the arguments against question number one. He posed the question about whether the law would be too costly and slow down the legal process. He said that would need to be considered. Policy Director Cailles said the violation of due process for those accused could be violated. He said many other options have been presented and a lot of different aspects need to be considered.

Director Worrall said Question 2 deals with the tax exemption for menstrual products and the formal name is sales tax exemption for feminine hygiene products. She said she chose menstrual products because they tried to be more open as a society about talking about the period and calling tampons and pads what they are, the use of the words sanitary or hygiene implies periods are unhygienic, and the use of feminine applies gender and is not inclusive. She said some people have been trying to change the language but is not involved in this ballot question. Director Worrall gave some background information on why the issue is on the question. She said proponents argue that tampons and pads are a medical product and medical products have been exempted from the sales tax. She said other arguments for it show sales taxes disproportionately affect low income citizens and people claim it is discrimination based on anatomy. She said opponents say the tax will take away revenue for public services out of the state budget. Director Worrall said it is more of a question about the tax system in general and if it needs improvements. She said the price of tampons or pads in general and the accessibility are issues that should be looked into as well. She said it is one question on a ballot, but so much more comes into play after the voters decide to vote yes or no.

Policy Director Cailles said Question 3 is not a matter of just protecting Nevada, it is an extremely complicated question. He said the energy initiative creates policies to open the energy market. He said right now all Nevadans get their power from NV Energy, but if this Question were to go into effect it would allow other organizations to sell energy. Policy Director Cailles said proponents argue they would be allowed to purchased energy from other providers instead of NV Energy and it would cause better prices to be set. He said opponents to the Question say there are less regulations which leads to the state not promoting renewable energy as much. He said if Question 3 does not work it would take another constitutional amendment to fix it.

Policy Director Cailles said other states that have attempted to deregulate energy, such as California, have often been afflicted with problems such as rolling blackouts and higher prices. He said Question 4 is about medical equipment sales tax exemption. He said if the Question passes, sales tax would be removed from medical items such as wheelchairs, oxygen tanks, and other types of durable medical equipment. Policy Director Cailles said proponents believe it will be easier for patients to access necessary medical equipment. He said it will be building off past laws exempting medical equipment from taxation, as Director Worrall mentioned before. He said opponents argue that Nevada budgetary revenues are already constrained, and Question 4 is vaguely worded and up to interpretation. Policy Director Cailles said Question 5 is about automatic voter registration at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). He said in the 2014 midterms only 36.4% of eligible citizens voted. He said Question 5 is an attempt to increase voting by making it easier to turn out. He said. Qualified voters, United States citizens above eighteen years of age, who would change their address, renew or apply for their driver's license, or apply for an identification card would automatically be registered to vote at the DMV unless they specifically requested in writing to not be registered. He said right now applications at the DMV ask if people want to be registered, with Question 5 it would become automatic. Policy Director Cailles said proponents argue it would increase the number of voters while opponents argue it would make it harder for people to decide themselves if they would like to register to vote and it would make it harder to opt out of the system.

Senator Alvarez asked if people would receive a voter registration card if they are automatically registered to vote.

Policy Director Cailles said he is not sure. He said they can look up that information after the presentation. He said other officials have concerns about the oversight of the automatic registration and could increase the number of unqualified individuals being registered to vote.

Senator Alvarez asked for clarification on the meaning of unqualified.

Policy Director Cailles said unqualified would be anyone who is under the age of eighteen and not a United States citizen. He said if you have been convicted of a felony sometimes your voting rights could be taken away. He asked if there were any questions.

There were no questions at this time.

Director Worrall said Question 6 will amend Article 4 of the Nevada Constitution. She said it requires that after 2022 electricity companies in Nevada will generate or require larger pieces of renewable energy than nonrenewable. She said by 2030 they will have not less than 50% of energy from renewable resources. Director Worrall said right now there is a renewable portfolio standard that the legislature has jurisdiction over, and right now it states by 2025 they should have 25% of energy come from renewable resources. She said the electric utility services need to meet the standard and it would add a requirement to what they need to do. She said if the Question passes now it would need to pass again in 2020 and would require the legislature to pass any relevant things to meet the standard. She said the ballot question does not state what renewable energy would be, but it is assumed to be solar, wind, geothermal, and hydroelectric. Director Worrall said Nevada receives the largest amount of direct sunlight but does not receive much energy from renewable resources and receives 80% of energy from out of state. She said proponents say the Question will lower energy costs, create jobs, and investments to Nevada's economy. She said the opponents say the infrastructure and the cost were high for it to happen and the increase is too fast for the resources for the state. She said the biggest critique of the ballot question is Nevada lawmakers are not getting the chance to create this, instead a

billionaire is getting the chance. She said opponents also say it will hurt consumers by raising the rates, but there is not much information to back the claim. Director Worrall said it has been brought up that Question 3 and Question 6 have an effect on one another. She said Question 6 has said no matter if Question 3 passes, Question 6 will still have renewable energy. She said Question 6 should be thought of as its own thing and not meshed together with Question 3. Director Worrall said the idea has been a part of the environmentalist movement for a longtime. She said how renewable energy could be set up in the state poses questions as well. She said it's not specified in the language of the question if it would be utility renewable energy, such as big solar farms, or distributive renewable energy, such as on a house. Director Worrall said right now a large solar farm in the Mojave Desert harms the ecosystem, a large amount of birds are killed and a large population of Desert Tortoises have been affected by the solar farm since it disrupts their migration patterns. She said the Question does not say if it will be regulated and if it will be better for the environment. Director Worrall said only people from Washoe County can vote on Washoe County Question 1. She said back in 2017 there was a big flood in Reno and there has been a history of floods within the last decade which caused a lot of damage. She said the county budget is not very big so it was hard and devastating to the infrastructure. She said last session a committee was created to assess the need for projects. She said the projects would fix levees and contract new things to ensure there are no more floods. She said the committee's recommendations were to set the Board of County Commissioners required to pass their recommendations unanimously and send them to a vote. She said they are going to increase property tax to raise 89 million dollars, which they say will happen in thirty years and then the tax will go away. She said the tax will be used for the flood prevention project which will construct levees and flood walls along the Truckee River, widen the Truckee River channel, elevate homes within the home elevation boundaries, and secure federal funds to match what the county raises for the project. Director Worrall said proponents say that floods cause a lot of damage and use a lot of emergency resources that could be used for other emergencies. She said properties directly affected would also be paying extra to help the project. She said if it is not passed then they will not receive the federal funds to match what the county raised, and the project will be thrown out. Director Worrall said opponents of the question say mostly people in areas are greatly affected and the project will not do anything about it. She said one argument is that the problem is that they have closed basins that trap the water, and nothing can be done about it. Director Worrall said everyone in Washoe County will have their property taxes increased even though not everyone was affected by the flood. She said the federal funding has yet to be approved by Congress but will supposedly be matched. She said a resident from Lemon Valley who spoke at the County Commission meeting said the entire area had concerns that are still waiting to be addressed and the project will only do it for a select few.

Director Worrall and Policy Director Cailles said that was the end of their presentation.

Policy Director Cailles asked if they smelled the wonderful smell in the air. He said it is the wonderful smell of democracy and it smells beautiful.

Director Worrall said one last thing on Washoe County Question 1. She said all of these effect students in some way. She said it is important that they let students know that they are paying

attention and they get information out to students to help them vote. She said also property taxes can cause rent to go up and Lemon Valley is still affected by the flood.

Policy Director Cailles asked if there were any questions.

Senator Rogers asked if there was a ballot question that was trying to make someone with a felony not be able to vote.

Policy Director Cailles said that ballot question is in Florida.

Senator Rogers said she could not remember where she heard it and apologized.

Senator Green thanked Director Worrall and Policy Director Cailles for the presentation. He asked when the flood mitigation would begin if the initiative was approved.

Director Worrall said the bill that was already passed had started the project, but now they're running out of funds. She said if the initiative does not pass the project will stop due to lack of funds.

Senator Alvarez asked if they could send the presentation to them.

Director Worrall and Policy Director Cailles said yes.

Senator Green asked what environmental restorations were a part of the flood project.

Director Worrall said she did not know, but she can research the topic.

Senator Alvarez asked if there were any further questions.

Senator Green asked when the federal funds would be approved by Congress.

Director Worrall said they would probably be approved after, but it comes down to politics and whether it is put on the agenda.

Policy Director Cailles said in order to come up with matching funds they have to demonstrate that they are capable of raising those funds. He said the measure would have to be passed first.

Senator Rogers asked if for the automatic voter registration at the DMV people would be charged a fine.

Director Worrall asked for clarification.

Senator Rogers said the fine that would be charged if the people qualified.

Policy Director Cailles said he believed the fines would be assessed to the individual. He said if the DMV accidentally registers someone to vote it could be a complicated mess. He said they might not have enough safe guards in place.

Senator Mata said they are from Arizona and their license does not expire until 2064. Senator Mata asked how often licenses have to be renewed in Nevada.

Senator Aziz said every five years.

Senator Alvarez asked if there were any further questions.

Director Worrall said disproportionate people are going to the DMV anyways. She said it is a step forward though, especially for young people who do not want to vote.

Senator Green said Question 3 was on the ballot back in 2016 and now NV Energy poured a bunch of money into the no on Question 3 side and revealed new solar projects. He asked if Question 3 is passed while the new NV Energy projects would not go into effect.

Policy Director Cailles said he would have to research the matter. He said those projects would not be prohibited by Question 3, however, if NV Energy has to begin competing with other providers it might make it harder for them to put the project together. He said right now there are laws and committees to keep NV Energy in its place and conduct its projects will be changed if Question 3 passes.

Senator Alvarez asked how sixteen-year-olds will be impacted by the automatic voter registration at the DMV.

Policy Director Cailles said it only applies to eligible voters. He said problems like that would occur if there were no safe guards in place.

Senator Alvarez asked about what safe guards were in place.

Policy Director Cailles said there are ideas, but they need to be determined.

Senator Green asked if Question 6 would also have to be passed in 2020.

Director Worrall said yes.

Senator Green asked if there would be a conflict if Question 3 and Question 6 were both passed.

Policy Director Cailles asked if Senator Green meant by doing both at the same time.

Senator Green said yes.

Policy Director Cailles said if you look at the texts of the Questions, it shows that the legislature would be able to establish regulations on buyers. He said all regulations do not need to be

removed in order to have competition in the market. He said they can still find ways to mandate how they get half their energy from renewable resources.

Director Worrall said Question 6 applies to all electricity companies.

Policy Director Cailles said it does not matter if they are public or private. He asked if there were any other questions.

Director Worrall asked what the path forward was.

Senator Alvarez said they will discuss their thoughts and write a resolution based on each ballot question. She said all the questions impact students. Senator Alvarez thanked Director Worrall and Policy Director Cailles for the presentation. She asked if there were any other thoughts.

Senator Green asked if there was a way to get some information to the students.

Director Worrall said the Department of Legislative Affairs has thought of the best way to get the information out. She said they thought about tabling from 11am to 3pm and inviting organizations so students can stop by. She said they also thought about presenting what they just presented to the Committee on Public Affairs at an event and inviting speakers. She said

they also thought about passing out a digest while tabling. She asked for their thoughts on the ideas.

Senator Rogers said an informal event during the day might be helpful.

Director Worrall said okay. She said if any of the Senators would like to help it would be wonderful.

Policy Director Cailles said decisions are made by those who show up.

Director Worrall asked if they had any ideas for other ways to get the information out to the students.

Senator Mata said mass emails are a good way to get information out.

Director Worrall thanked Senator Mata.

Keegan Murphy said they could do a question of the day and feature a different ballot question each day.

Director Worrall said it was a great idea.

Izzy Westerman said she is registered to vote in California and appreciates knowing the information for Nevada. She said she does not know anything about the ballot questions for California and she asked if it would be possible to have information for California as well.

Policy Director Cailles said he does not mind helping create an information digest for California as well.

Director Worrall said she wished they could inform everyone about the ballot questions for where they are from.

Senator Mata said if the Department of Legislative Affairs does branch out to provide ballot question information for other places, the best ones would be the Bay Area and Las Vegas.

Senator Alvarez asked if Director Worrall had anything further to report.

Director Worrall said no.

Senator Alvarez asked if there were any further questions.

There were no questions at this time.

Director Worrall thanked Policy Analyst Del Turco for her help with the presentation as well.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business discussed at this time.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Approving the Budget for the Veteran's Luncheon**

Senator Alvarez asked the Senator to look at the back of the agendas for the breakdown of the budget. She said they will have a salad bar to accommodate for people who are gluten free. She said the lapel pins will be ordered through the Wolf Shop. Senator Alvarez said the budget has been broken down between the Committee on Public Affairs, the Senate, the Committee on Budget and Finance, and the Executive Board. She said President Jackson and Speaker Martinez were kind enough to give them \$200 out of their budget to pay for the lapel pins since the Committee on Public Affairs' budget could not accommodate everything. She asked if there were any questions.

There were no questions at this time.

Senator Mata motioned to approve the Veteran's Luncheon budget.

Senator Aziz seconds.

Senator Alvarez asked for discussion on the motion.

Senator Mata asked if the budget was looked over by the Committee on Budget and Finance.

Senator Alvarez said they have not looked it over yet and this is just their budget as a whole. She said after the event she believes they, or her, have to go to the Committee on Budget and Finance to show the committee where they spent the funds and what was left over.

Senator Aziz asked if they would go to the Committee on Budget and Finance after the event.

Senator Alvarez said yes.

Aziz said that would be a financial review. He explained how the financial review would work.

Alvarez asked if there was any further discussion.

There was no further discussion at this time.

There was no dissent; motion carries.

### **b. Senator Updates**

Senator Alvarez said she will be skipping the Senator Updates due to the meeting being long. She said there will not be a meeting next week. She would like the Senators to have their resolutions done by next meeting. Senator Alvarez would like the Senators to present

on what they have accomplished and need to work on. She said she will send out an email to remind them. She said she would like to see how the Senators are doing and what they would like to do moving forward. She asked if they had any questions.

There were no questions at this time.

**8. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Senator Green said he heard back from Jason Geddes and confirmed he will be meeting with the committee on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Senator Alvarez thanked Senator Green.

Senator Mata asked who Jason Geddes was.

Senator Green said Jason Geddes is from the Nevada System for Higher Education Board of Regents. He said the committee will be able to ask Jason Geddes about some of the fee increases or the divestment campaign.

Senator Alvarez asked if there was any further public comment.

There was no other public comment at this time.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Senator Alvarez adjourned the meeting at 1:25 pm.