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NOTE FROM THE ISSUE EDITOR

BY SCOTT G. WASSERMAN, ESQ.

The Nevada Legislature has oftentimes been called a "citizen legislature." This term is used to describe a legislature whose members hold outside occupations and are not full-time professional politicians. It is practically impossible to be a full-time professional politician in the Nevada Senate or Assembly, as the members are only paid a daily salary for the first 60 days of the regular legislative session. Unless called into a special session (and then salary is limited to 20 days of a special session), the Nevada Legislature only meets in odd-numbered years. While legislators do receive travel expenses, housing expenses and per diem for living expenses during the entire length of the legislative session, and they do receive a stipend for days they attend an interim committee meeting, the sum of these allowances would likely not be sufficient for a member of the legislature to consider it a sufficient living in lieu of a salary earned from an occupation outside the legislature. Hence, with the exception of the few retired members that may serve during a given legislative session, this means that the vast majority of Nevada legislators have full-time occupations in which they are employed outside of legislative sessions: a true citizen legislature.

While a citizen legislature brings a variety of occupational experience and knowledge to the legislative arena, it also means that its members must rely on the expertise of lobbyists and citizens who testify before them to bring additional light to the intended and sometimes unintended consequences of proposed legislation, especially legislation outside of a member's personal expertise. It is natural then, that a "citizen legislature" not only relies on, but invites the participation of the citizens in the legislative process.

This issue is devoted to providing members of the Nevada bar with tools and knowledge of ways of participating in the legislative process in Nevada. Our legislature is very accessible to the bar. Committee meetings are broadcast online via the legislative website. Many committee meetings connect the north and south of the state via videoconference, and testimony can be provided by attending in Carson City or Las Vegas via videoconference. Even if you are unable to attend a meeting, the legislative website lists the contact information for both legislative members and staff. The members' telephone and email information is available on the legislative website. (For ease of reference, the legislative office telephone number for each member of the legislature is included on page 33.) We urge members of the bar who would like to express support, opposition, concerns, questions or general comments regarding proposed legislation to use the available information to communicate with legislators.

The members of the Nevada Legislature are generally not only accessible, but would invite your input into the legislative process. The intent of the information in this issue is to encourage you to communicate with members of the legislature and their staff regarding the many bills that are now proposed and will be proposed (and can be tracked online) during the legislative session. **NL**

FOR MORE ABOUT SCOTT WASSERMAN, SEE PAGE 23.



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