



Legislative Update

Assemblywoman Marilyn Kirkpatrick

JUNE 2009

Assembly District 1

Marilyn Kirkpatrick

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I'm on the Web!

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Dear Friend,

The 75th session of the Nevada Legislature adjourned as required by our state constitution on June 1. I want to provide you a brief overview of the session, and I hope you will email me or call me for more information or to discuss any of these issues.

If you DO NOT want to receive these newsletters, please reply to this message and I'll be happy to remove you from the list.

Budget and Revenue

Our state has the worst budget deficit in the nation, with our state revenue down 44%, but we could not cut essential state services-education, health care and public safety-almost in half. Democrats and Republicans worked hard together to pass a balanced state budget that does not destroy vital services. We cut more than a billion dollars in spending, eliminating 916 positions from state government. We rejected the Governor's proposed budget that would have decimated our public schools, cut funding for higher education by 36%, could have caused emergency rooms or even entire hospitals to close, and would have closed a prison.

We also worked with businesses to develop a revenue plan that allows us to continue to fund these vital services without putting an undue tax burden on any business, family or individual. That plan actually lowers the business tax for 74% of Nevada businesses, while increasing it about one-half of one percent for big businesses. The increased tax burden on an average household (one with an income of \$60,858) would be \$87 per year.

For more details on the budget or revenue plan, please email me at mkirkpatrick@asm.state.nv.us.

Helping our Economy Recover

Jobs

Early in the session, we quickly passed legislation allowing our state to receive federal economic recovery funding to help with our high unemployment rate. We also created a legislative oversight committee to ensure that we closely monitor the spending of all economic recovery funds.

Looking to the future, we also passed legislation to spur the development of renewable energy in our state in a way that creates new jobs. Our comprehensive energy bill, AB 522, will provide financial incentives to renewable energy companies that provide high-paying jobs to Nevada workers. Companies receiving the incentives are required to provide annual reports to ensure that renewable energy projects are meeting the minimum hiring standards in order to continue receiving the incentives.

Reducing the number of foreclosures

We have the highest rate of foreclosures in the nation, and we came to the legislature determined to enact meaningful legislation to reduce the number of people losing their homes. We passed a bill requiring good faith mediation between a lender and borrower, if the borrower requests mediation. We also passed legislation to protect homeowners from foreclosure scams and renters from immediate, unannounced evictions if the home they are living in is foreclosed.

The Governor vetoed a measure intended to deal with the effects of mortgage lending fraud. The bill would have established a trust fund to help those who are harmed by the actions of mortgage bankers, brokers and agents. This bill will be re-introduced in the next session.

Looking to the Future

We passed legislation to reform our budget process and to require more accountability from state government. We established a forced savings account for our state, enacted systems to better track those businesses failing to pay the taxes they owe, and we cracked down on the unnecessary use of expensive outside consultants by state agencies.

Unfortunately, two reform measures we passed were vetoed by the Governor: a rainy day fund for education and a bill requiring long-term planning by each state agency. These bills will be re-introduced in the next session.

Improving the Lives of All Nevadans

We passed legislation requiring safety training for workers on construction projects in an effort to avoid future workplace fatalities like the ones we have witnessed in the last 18 months.

We authorized the creation of a veteran's court.

We passed legislation to make it easier for homeowners to put solar panels on their homes, to increase the amount of our energy required to be generated from renewable sources and to expedite transmission of renewable energy from where it is produced to where it is needed.

We passed legislation in the aftermath of the Hepatitis C health care crisis in Southern Nevada to require the inspection of ambulatory surgery centers and certain doctors' offices, to make sure that unsafe health care facilities can be closed down quickly, and to protect health care professionals who report unsafe practices from retribution in the workplace. We also passed legislation to require increased reporting of sentinel events, like the Hepatitis C crisis, to allow for an audit or inspection of a facility reporting an event, and to impose a fine on a medical facility that fails to report a sentinel event.

Contact Me

Please feel free to contact me at any time to discuss any issues or concerns. My home number is 702-655-0332 and my email address is mkirkpatrick@asm.state.nv.us.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Kirkpatrick