



NEVADA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 82nd regular session of the Nevada Legislature began on February 6th, 2023, and was the first session since 2017 where the Executive and Legislative branches were not controlled by the same party. With federal pandemic response money continuing to bolster the state's revenues, how to spend those extra funds was a source of partisan tension throughout the session.

Making additional investments in Nevada's school system was a priority on both sides of the aisle. Governor Lombardo submitted a recommended budget with approximately \$2 billion more in funding for K-12 public schools than that of the previous biennium, and that aspect of the budget was approved readily by the Legislature. He also pressed for an expansion of school choice, seeking to create new financial supports for charter schools as well as increased funding for Opportunity Scholarships for parents looking for options outside the public school system. While some key reforms, including a reinstitution of the state's Read By 3 program, were able to be negotiated, major changes were not enacted on school choice this session. Where real changes were made was in the restorative justice discipline procedures implemented in schools in 2019. Increasing reports of violence by students towards teachers prompted both the Governor and legislative Democrats to introduce and pass legislation to roll back certain provisions of restorative justice to make schools safer.

Another area of significant focus was the crisis in state employee staffing. With an average vacancy rate around 20%, compensation adjustments for state workers were a top priority for the Governor as well as the Legislature. Over the biennium, state workers will see a substantial rise in base pay, as well as step increases and retention bonuses.

In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, codifying additional protections for out-of-state abortion-seekers and the health care professionals that provide those services was a top priority for the Legislature. Governor Lombardo indicated he would and ultimately did sign a bill to continue those protections. The Legislature was less successful in its efforts on gun control, with three bills delivered to the Governor to restrict access to firearms marking his first vetoes of the session.

Two large economic development projects were proposed this session. The first called for a major expansion of the state's film tax credits to incentivize development of studio space in Las Vegas and establish the film industry more firmly in Nevada. The second was a combination of tax incentives and

public financing to build a Major League Baseball stadium for the Oakland A's to move to Las Vegas. Neither bill received a vote in the Senate Finance committee before the end of session.

When the session adjourned sine die on June 6th, one of the five major budget bills, to set out the program of capital improvement projects for the upcoming biennium, was still outstanding. A special session was called to pass CIP implementation, which began and ended on June 6th. On June 7th, a second special session was called to consider the A's stadium, which is ongoing.

As the dust settles, the final bills of regular session have made their way to the Governor's desk. After session, the Governor has ten days (excluding the day of delivery and any Sundays) in which to sign, veto, or allow bills to become law without his signature. We will be in touch regarding vetoed bills as those are released.