

# Vision & Voices

NEVADA WOMEN'S LOBBY A VOICE FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES

The Organization Dealing with Issues Concerning Women, Children and Families

## NWL 20th ANNIVERSARY—OUTSTANDING WOMEN LEGISLATORS HONORED



Photos Courtesy of Frank Haxton, Digiman Studio

### RENO PARTY FOR 20TH

Over 200 guests gathered in Reno at Cathexes to celebrate Nevada Women's Lobby's 20th anniversary and recognize Nevada's outstanding women legislators. Thirteen of the honorees are shown above.

We thank the sixteen co-sponsoring groups which each sponsored a legislator for the event. They are listed on our [website](#).

Thanks to all who helped make this such a success by joining us and by donating music, food, wine, and hard work.

### HALL OF FAME

NWL created the Women Legislators Hall of Fame to recognize women legislators for their work on behalf of women and families.

The names of sixteen women were added in 2009. They join the fourteen women honored on NWL's 10th anniversary in 1999. In addition to these honorees, three freshman assemblywomen are being recognized as Rising Stars.

### Honorees

**Special Honoree**  
Assembly Speaker  
Barbara Buckley

**Senators**  
Maggie Carlton  
Bernice Mathews  
Valerie Wiener  
Joyce Woodhouse

**Assemblywomen**  
Vonne Chowning  
Dawn Gibbons  
Marilyn Kirkpatrick  
Ellen Koivisto  
Sheila Leslie  
Kathy McClain  
Genie Ohrenschall  
Bonnie Parnell  
Peggy Pierce  
Gene Segerblom  
Debbie Smith

**Rising Stars**  
Marilyn Loop Dondero  
April Mastroluca  
Ellen Spiegel

### 20th GALA IN LAS VEGAS

NWL continues it's 20th Anniversary celebration March 23rd at the Blue Martini Lounge in Town Square in Las Vegas 5:30 to 7:30 pm (rescheduled due to the legislature's special session). The awards will begin at 6:15 when nineteen women legislators will be recognized for their leadership on women and family issues. Light refreshments and a cash bar will be available.

Reservations are \$25 before March 23rd and \$35 at the door. RSVP and get details at our [web-site](#). You can also support this event as an event donor with a contribution of \$100 or more. For information on donor levels and benefits: [info@nevadawomenslobby.org](mailto:info@nevadawomenslobby.org).

### SPECIAL SESSION

What to expect at Nevada's special session of the legislature starting February 23? See related stories on State Budget, Education and Economic Forum on page 3.

## BUCKLEY RECEIVES MAYA MILLER AWARD

As NWL celebrates its 20th anniversary with events in Reno and Las Vegas, Assembly Speaker Barbara Buckley receives our Maya Miller Egalitarian Award. NWL



NWL Co-Chair Dinah Jordan presents the Maya Miller Egalitarian Award to Assembly Speaker Barbara Buckley

named our most prestigious award after Maya Miller who dedicated herself to helping those less fortunate and to protecting the rights of all people.

Barbara Buckley exemplifies Maya's ideals by championing women's rights and children's rights. During her legislative career, Buckley worked to create the Legislative Committee on Children, Youth and Families, to strengthen child support enforcement, and to provide foster children with tools for a productive future. She fought for full-day kindergarten, the Office of Minority Health and mandatory mediation for home foreclosures.

NWL's Maya Miller Egalitarian Award was first given to Maya in 2003. It also was awarded to Jan Gilbert and Jon Sasser in 2004 and to Bobbie Gang in 2007.

## INTERIM COMMITTEES

During the interim between legislative sessions, critical issues are reviewed by legislative [interim committees](#). Hearings are held, issues are examined, and bill drafts are requested by these committees. NWL is monitoring the following committees and will testify when necessary.

- Interim Finance Committee and Subcommittee on Federal Stimulus Oversight
- Advisory Committee on the Administration of Justice and Subcommittees on Victims of Crime and Juvenile Justice

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## WHY CHOICE STILL MATTERS

As we commemorate the 37th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, we face the remarkable possibility that the U.S. Congress will enact landmark health care reform legislation that singles out abortion from all other medical procedures, with unprecedented and unnecessary restrictions that will jeopardize women's health. These restrictions will make it nearly impossible for millions of women to purchase private health insurance that covers abortion and would effectively result in a ban on abortion coverage in health care reform.

The fight for health care reform has never been closer to success or more urgent. That's why we are calling on Congress to get health care reform done now and to get it done right! Getting it done right means keeping all provisions that extend affordable health care coverage to millions of women, providing access to affordable preventive screenings for cancer and other life-saving tests, protecting women against gender discrimination by private insurers and ensuring that women have access to comprehensive reproductive health.

Right here at home we are fighting for our rights as we face a ballot initiative. In October, the Nevada Personhood Initiative submitted proposed ballot language for the 2010 election that would define "person" in the Nevada Constitution. The initiative has severe consequences including banning abortions and commonly used forms of birth control. It could also interfere with a doctor's ability to treat life-threatening pregnancies, miscarriages and infertility in addition to banning stem cell research.

On January 8 Nevada's District Court Judge James Russell threw out the Personhood Initiative, stating that the proposal was too vague and general to be put before voters. While this was a win, this fight is not over and the backers of the proposal have appealed the decision to the Nevada Supreme Court. Similar ballot questions are being presented in other states.

## COMING TO YOU FROM NWL

- **HOUSE PARTIES**
- **LUNCHEONS**
- **POLI SCI 101**

Wondering how Nevada's legislative system works? Want to hear about issues, meet like-minded people or find out how you can get involved in NWL's work? Please join us for one or more of the following.

**Monthly Luncheons** at Reno's Rapscaillon, 1555 S. Wells, the first Tuesday monthly at 11:30, with a series of thought-provoking speakers. Lunch, with several entrée options, is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members.

March 9 features Kate High from the Women and Children's Center of the Sierra. See their website, [waccs.org](http://waccs.org), for information on their job training and other programs and their DragonfliesCafe.

Please RSVP to 828-1346 or [desertrosef44@yahoo.com](mailto:desertrosef44@yahoo.com). See our website for future speakers.

### House Parties in Southern Nevada: You, the State of Nevada and Nevada Women's Lobby:

Would you and your friends like to learn more about lobbying? Discuss the issues challenging our state? Then invite your friends over for a "house party" and NWL will come and lead the discussion. Just a couple of hours out of your busy schedule to eat, drink and talk about what you can do to influence our elected officials and learn more about NWL.

If you are interested in hosting a "house party" please email [BStraight59@embarqmail.com](mailto:BStraight59@embarqmail.com).

**Poli Sci 101** (Las Vegas) is designed to lead you through the mysteries of Nevada's legislative and political systems and processes. You'll take away the tools to take action on your issues and make positive changes in our state. No charge; all are welcome. A Las Vegas date will be announced soon by email and at our [website](#).

## ECONOMIC FORUM BAD NEWS

Heard at Nevada's Economic Forum, January 22:

- Nevada is at least two years away from emerging from this recession
- We will have \$580 million less than expected in tax revenue this biennium
- The budget deficit could rise to as much as \$900 million
- Companies are expected to cut out 90,000 more jobs in the next two years

Nevada's five-member Economic Forum forecasts general fund revenues for budget guidance to the Governor and the Legislature. Their final figures are scheduled to be issued May 1.

## OREGON VOTERS RESCUE SCHOOLS

Oregon voters bucked decades of anti-tax and anti-Salem sentiment in January, raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy to prevent further erosion of public schools and other state services. These changes are projected to generate \$727 million of funds already budgeted by their 2009 legislature for these programs.

## NEVADA FAMILIES LACK ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH COVERAGE

*By: Congresswoman Shelley Berkley*

Nevada has one of the highest rates in the nation when it comes to the number of our friends and loved ones who are uninsured. One reason is that families continue to lack access to affordable health coverage.

Without action to change the status quo, the cost of insurance will continue to rise. Family health insurance, for example, is expected to grow from an average cost of \$11,000 to more than \$19,000 over the next 10 years.

Parents should not have to stay awake at night worried about the cost of a doctor visit when a child gets sick or for ongoing treatment of juvenile diabetes and other chronic conditions.

I have met with Nevadans who have been denied coverage because of existing health issues or who have reached insurance coverage caps. I support elimination of lifetime limits on coverage and an end to exclusions for those with pre-existing conditions, including survivors of cancer.

Bankruptcies tied to medical costs are another problem faced by large numbers of Nevadans. Many of these men and women are also dealing with the loss of a job or home, combined with a hospital stay or medical treatment for a son or daughter.

While these changes are not the only steps needed to be taken for reform, both would help families in Las Vegas and nationwide maintain access to affordable health coverage.

## GOVERNOR VS. EDUCATION

After many legislative sessions advocating for improvements to Nevada's education programs, Nevada Women's Lobby is disappointed to read the governor's proposal to remove earmarks that fund class-size reduction and all-day kindergarten. Our position relies on studies that demonstrate smaller class size and all-day kindergarten improve student performance.

NWL has long opposed private school vouchers, which transfer public funds to private schools and deplete much-needed funds for our public schools. The governor's proposal may not talk about vouchers, but clearly provides for "scholarships" for private school tuition in grades 1 – 12.

We also question the purpose of replacing the elected State School Board with one appointed by the governor and the legislature (with the governor's appointments making up the majority). These and other sweeping changes should not be taken up in the special session, but would better be considered in a regular legislative session, after careful consideration by the Interim Committees studying various aspects of education.

## STATE BUDGET ON CHOPPING BLOCK

Governor Gibbons will set the agenda for the February 23 special legislative session, and he can limit topics to expenditures and not revenues. He has firmly renewed his commitment to no new taxes and claims our government programs are bloated. See his list of [recommended cuts](#) online, and also view [cuts to Health and Human Services](#).

Balancing the budget without new revenue leaves no good options. Interim Finance Committee hearings are under way, examining the devastating impact these cuts would have, such as increasing the number of homeless, more applications for state services, and moving more elderly from home care into institutions, all of which will ultimately cost the state more.

As a grassroots organization, we call upon our members and supporters to stand up for what is right. Legislators need to hear from their constituents that these basic human needs (these are not wants!) must be funded. A civilized society takes care of its needy, and government-funded safety nets are critical parts of this care. So far, most of the testimony has been from lobbyists. Let your voices be heard at hearings. Let our legislators know that you support finding additional funding sources to provide needed services in this state. And if the governor will not allow consideration of revenue sources in the special session, you will support major changes to our tax structure in the 2011 legislative session.

Despite many gains over the years, Nevada remains at the bottom of social indicators. The time has come for state legislators and the governor to carefully develop a fiscal plan that will work for generations to come. Such changes cannot be done in a special session but could be a major campaign issue for the fall elections.

### NWL Urges Action

- **Now:** Contact your [legislators](#)
- **February 13:** Attend/View [Public Hearings in Las Vegas, Reno](#)
- **Week of February 15:** [Watch continuing hearings](#) on cuts

Continued from page 2: **Interim Committees**

- Legislative Committee on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice
- Legislative Committee on Education
- Legislative Committee on Health Care
- Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs
- Study on Governance and Oversight of System of K-12 Public Education
- Study of Group Homes

### NWL MEMBERSHIP

We invite you to join or renew for 2010. During this year, we follow the work of the interim legislative committees and prepare for lobbying in the 2011 session. Please support our work with your membership dues and/or donations.

### NWL GOES GREEN

NWL newsletters and other communications will arrive henceforth by email — getting news to you quickly and saving resources for our advocacy work.

### JOIN ONLINE OR BY MAIL

Join online: [nevadawomenslobby.org](http://nevadawomenslobby.org)  
or mail to: P.O. Box 5565, Reno, 89513

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (day) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (night) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Dues:  Individual \$40  
 Living Lightly \$15  
 Sustaining \$100  
 Circle of Empowerment \$250  
 Organization \$75  
 \*Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*NWL strives to represent all women and families. Any contribution you are able to make entitles you to membership.

*Sorry, but payments to NWL are not tax-deductible*



**Primary Election June 8**  
Nevada's primary is early this year. Some races will be determined in that primary. Don't miss this chance to elect those who agree with your views and are ready to take action.  
Early voting will be May 22 to June 4. Ask your county clerk about absentee ballots.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEVADA WOMEN

NWL recently hosted conferences in Las Vegas and Reno to highlight federal stimulus funding opportunities for women. NWL contracted with the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, Region 9. Nevada was a priority state for the Women's Bureau, due to rising foreclosure and unemployment rates. Jenny Erwin, Regional Administrator of the Women's Bureau, shared that "Women, especially in Nevada, are dealing with serious economic challenges, and the *Economic Recovery: What Women Need to Know* conference is an opportunity for participants to learn what's available locally. The Women's Bureau is pleased to be working with the Nevada Women's Lobby to bring this program to Las Vegas and Reno and to help women and their families"

Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, Chair of the Interim Finance Committee's Subcommittee on Stimulus Funding Oversight, provided an overview and update on stimulus funding in Nevada at both events. Topics of discussion included green jobs and the emerging green economy, unemployment benefits, COBRA insurance extension and premium assistance, weatherization assistance for low-income families and seniors, domestic violence outreach and prevention, social services, job training opportunities, housing assistance and small business assistance.

Attendees had the opportunity to connect with conference speakers, and with representatives from organizations that are assisting people in these difficult economic times, at an on-site information fair. A number of state and local agencies and non-profit organizations were represented, including the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, Nevada Division of Housing, Las Vegas-Clark County Urban League, Community Services Agency, Blackbox Consulting Group, Nevada Partners, Safe Nest, Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence, Crisis Call Center, The Shade Tree, Small Business Administration, Nevada Microenterprise Initiative, Food Bank of Northern Nevada, and HELP of Southern Nevada.

**NWL Principles of Unity**  
Nevada Women's Lobby is a voice for women and children. We are dedicated to equity, non-violence and reproductive choice.  
The lives of all people are inherently valuable and worthy of respect and dignity; therefore, we actively work to remove barriers of race, class, age, gender, religion, physical ability and sexual orientation. Beginning with our own actions and language, we promote non-violence in all aspects of personal, economic and organizational relationships.  
We support every woman's right to reproductive choice and self-determination.

**Nevada Women's Lobby**  
*A non-partisan statewide coalition presenting a strong voice on issues affecting Nevada's women and families*

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