

# Vision & Voices

**NEVADA WOMEN'S LOBBY** **A VOICE FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES**

*The Organization Dealing with Issues Concerning Women, Children and Families*



NWL's Byllie Andrews addresses rally for all-day kindergarten. Supportive legislators pictured include Senators Dina Titus, Valerie Wiener, Joyce Woodhouse, Maggie Carlton and Steven Horsford, and Assemblymembers Ruben Kihuen, Sheila Leslie, Debbie Smith, Marilyn Kirkpatrick, Kelvin Atkinson and Mo Denis.

## VIEW FROM THE LEDGE

*Julianna Ormsby,  
NWL Lobbyist*

Greetings from Carson City! The 74<sup>th</sup> Nevada Legislative Session ended at 2:49 a.m. on June 6, 2007, and reconvened later that day for a quick special session. As a first-time lobbyist, it was a terrific hands-on learning experience for me, and one that I was so thankful to be a part of.

I'd like to take a moment to thank the Nevada Women's Lobby Steering

Committee, our valuable members, friends and allies in the Legislature who have made it such an amazing experience for me. It has truly been a privilege to represent NWL. Together, we made a positive difference in the lives of many Nevada women and families. As always, there is still much work left to do, but we have a lot to be proud of this session.

Besides the legislative successes, NWL continued to build coalitions with our progressive partners and allies; and worked with legislators on both sides of the aisle. As a result of this teamwork, we saw increased funding for full-day kindergarten, passage of a bill that will ensure more young girls have access to the HPV vaccine, funding for transitional housing and services for the homeless, the first increase in Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) grants in 15 years (see page 2), and funding to provide health insurance to more Nevadans.

Additionally we worked to fight bad legislation, including a bill that would have established fetal personhood which ultimately did not pass (see page 2), a bill that would have created a putative fathers' registry, and a bill that would have required voters to produce photo identification cards at the polls.

## NWL'S LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

For the 2007 legislative session the Nevada Women's Lobby established a number of priorities within the key areas of families in poverty, youth at risk, health and education. The process of selecting bills on which to take a position and give instructions to our lobbyist, Julianna Ormsby, was straightforward but not always easy.

Bills relating to our issues were selected and steering committee members with expertise in that subject read the bills and made recommendations. The legislative team then decided whether to oppose or support the bill, and

determined how active we wanted Julianna to be. We could also take no position or monitor bills, so we needed to keep updating our information during the session. At the beginning of the session bills were being drafted at a rapid pace. In one marathon meeting the legislative team considered over 120 bills that pertained to our issues.

A significant number of bills, both good and bad, died midway through the session when they did not come out of committee in the house in which they had been introduced. Some we supported but which failed were: AB 442 to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; and AB 172 to increase the number of property tax refunds to the elderly. Among those we opposed which did not get to a vote were: AB 86 which required drug testing for welfare applicants; AB 588 to reduce the amount of state taxes on banks; SB 286 authorizing school teachers to carry concealed firearms; and numerous bills that would have excluded undocumented residents from Nevada's Millennium Scholarship program.

## NWL Issues

Two specific topics we selected to work on were child care subsidies and child support enforcement. These are two areas where adequate funding can make all the difference to families, especially to single-parent families, working to achieve self-sufficiency. NWL took the position that co-payments required for child care subsidies are beyond the reach of many families that would otherwise be eligible for support. Unfortunately no budget or

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needs assessment proposal was approved to change the current situation. Even more critical than state subsidies for needed services is ensuring that families receive the child support to which they are entitled. AB 536 dealing with child support enforcement did pass, and will reorganize responsibility for this within the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. However it will not go into effect until 2011.

There were many additional bills for which the Lobby provided information and testimony. A number of legislators requested our support for bills they had introduced. Throughout the session it was clear that even those legislators who did not always agree with our position on issues nonetheless valued the information we provided. Congratulations to Julianna Ormsby for establishing herself as a knowledgeable and effective presence in Carson City.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF NWL BILLS

#### Bills We Supported

**AB 126:** Provides transitional housing and supportive services to the homeless. Passed.

**AB 157:** Provided funding to expand full-day kindergarten to all schools, one of the hot button issues of the session. Although AB 157 itself failed, additional funds to expand the program were added in another bill.

**AB 168:** Expands health insurance coverage to more pregnant women in Nevada. Passed.

**SB 409:** Requires health insurance companies and Medicaid in Nevada to cover the HPV vaccine, Gardasil, for girls ages 8-12. The vaccine has been proven to prevent cervical cancer and is approved by the FDA. Passed.

#### Bills We Opposed

**SB 299:** Originally sought to establish the rights of a fetus as separate from the pregnant woman in crimes against women who are pregnant. Died. (See article.)

**SB 325:** Would establish English as the official language of Nevada and prohibit discrimination in employment against employees who could only speak English. Died.

**SB 377:** Would privatize services currently offered by Nevada Early Intervention Services by diverting 20% of the funds they receive to private providers. Died.



### A GREAT LOBBYING TEAM

Julianna Ormsby, NWL's new lobbyist, was recognized by legislators as one who does her homework and keeps legislators well informed on the issues. Julianna also supervised our intern Lindsay Burrows, a UNR student, who assisted with hearings and tracking the progress of bills. What a team! We are pleased and proud of their work this session, and we're not the only ones. Here's what some of our partnering organizations, all seasoned lobbyists, have to say:

Victoria Riley, Nevada Trial Lawyers Assoc.: *"Intelligent, articulate and a quick study, Julianna has a great future among the lobbying corps."*

Patty Elzy, PPMM: *"Julianna hit the ground running lobbying for NWL this session. She researched, analyzed, collaborated, and eloquently articulated on our core issues affecting women and families."*

Jan Gilbert, PLAN: *"How wonderful for the NWL to have Julianna! She was a joy to work with and did an amazing job for our Nevada families."*

Barry Gold, AARP: *"It was a pleasure to work with NWL and Julianna this session. The issues that impact consumers must be protected."*

### TANF GRANTS INCREASE!

For the first time in 15 years, Nevada families receiving Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) assistance, will see a 10% increase in their cash grants. The current TANF grant for a family of three is approximately \$348, which amounts to an additional \$34.80 per month. Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie initially proposed a 15% increase, and ultimately legislators supported a 10% increase. It doesn't seem like much, but consider this- the TANF rate has not been increased in Nevada since 1992. And when you consider how it played out, in the final days of the session with a number of competing priorities, it truly is a victory for Nevada families.

What makes the 2007 TANF increase especially poignant is that it was in honor of Maya Miller, a woman known to many Nevadans for her tireless humanitarian efforts, not just in Nevada, but in the world. Maya passed away last year at the age of 91. For more on Maya's extraordinary life, go to <http://www.wand.org/news/mayamiller.htm> and visit her website, [www.mayamiller.com](http://www.mayamiller.com). For more on the Nevada welfare rights movement and the pioneering work of women like Maya Miller, Ruby Duncan, and many others, check out Annelise Orleck's book, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*. Orleck documents Nevada's grassroots welfare rights movement and the monumental struggle to bring Nevada's welfare policy into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### EROSION IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS AVERTED

Nevada's legislators declined to pass the much-amended SB 299 which could have set a dangerous precedent eroding a Nevada woman's right to make decisions about her own body. The bill would have elevated the legal status of the fetus to that of an adult human being, by considering a pregnant woman and her fetus "separate and distinct victims" for the purpose of prosecuting a violent crime. It did nothing to protect pregnant women from violence.

## GRASSROOTS LOBBY DAYS



Grassroots Lobby Days (GLD) was a huge success with more than 225 Nevada women and men participating in the three-day March event in Carson City. Over 35 groups and organizations were represented, from social work students to AARP members. They journeyed from 19 different Nevada cities and towns to our state capitol to learn about and get involved in Nevada's law making process.

Some comments by attendees:

*"this was my first experience with legislators. It really demystifies the process."*

*"the panel of legislators was the best part of the day. I loved that they took time out and came to talk to us."*

*"What a wonderful and educational day."*

*"Being new to Nevada, today has been most enlightening and empowering! Thank you!"*

*"It was wonderful seeing the process in action, to participate in the Education Rally and to speak one on one with our legislators was amazing."*

NWL thanks the co-sponsors, attendees, speakers, scholarship donors, and volunteers who made Grassroots Lobby Days a success.

### GLD Co-Sponsors:

AARP

AAUW Nevada and

Chapters: Capitol, Fallon, Reno  
After-School All-Stars

Committee to Aid Abused Women  
Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention  
Task Force

Communities in Schools

Foster Consulting

Jan Gilbert

League of Women Voters Las Vegas  
National Assoc. of Social Workers, NV  
NV Network Against Domestic Violence

Nevada Power Company

Nevada Women's Agenda

Nevada Women's History Project  
Organization of Women Lawyers (OWL)

Paula Berkley and Associates

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte  
Progressive Leadership Alliance of NV

R & R Partners

Rogan Group

Sierra Pacific Power

Soroptimist of the Truckee Meadows  
Vicki LoSasso

Victoria Riley and Associates

Wingfield Nevada Group

## INTERNATION VISITORS LEARN ABOUT NWL

The Nevada Women's Lobby is now known in some far corners of the world. The Northern Nevada International Center at UNR hosts many visitors from overseas, and last November NWL steering committee member Jill Winter met with a group to talk about the Lobby. Nineteen men and women were here as guests of the U.S. State Department to learn about citizen activism. The nature of their own systems of government varied greatly – they were from nations in Europe (Estonia, Hungary, Poland), Africa (Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria), Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines) and the Middle East (Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon).

In subsequent reports by the staff accompanying the group it was clear that information about the Lobby would be put to good use. One wrote: "Jill Winter gave an excellent presentation on the work of her organization. What set Ms. Winter's approach apart from many presentations was that it combined ideas, techniques and advice on how to advance a legislative agenda along with insightful comments about the substance of many of the specific issues on that agenda, issues that the Nevada Women's Lobby fights for. I found her to be one of the most straightforward, persuasive and helpful speakers we encountered during the entire 25-day program." Another commented: "Ms. Winter did an excellent job of presenting and discussing the strategies employed by this NGO to maximize its impact on public policy at the state level."

### Principles of Unity

Nevada Women's Lobby is a voice for women and children. We are dedicated to equity, non-violence and reproductive choice.

## BERKLEY BILL HONORS SUFFRAGISTS

Thanks to Nevada's Congresswoman Shelley Berkley, America's suffragists will be honored nationally on July 19. Berkley's Resolution 105, which unanimously passed the U.S. House of Representatives, was inspired by Las Vegas students Hannah Low and Destiny Carroll, who sought recognition for the American pioneers who struggled for decades to give women the right to vote.

"Those who took part in the suffragist movement are role models who continue to inspire generations of young Americans through their words and deeds," said Berkley. "Were it not for these pioneers, I would have never had the opportunity to serve as a Congresswoman. As Americans, we must never forget the struggle they waged in order to guarantee women the right to vote," said Berkley.



Photo Courtesy of LWVLVV

## NEVADA SUFFRAGE DAY EVENTS

League of Women Voters of Las Vegas Valley and their partners will recognize the July 19 National Women's Suffrage Day with multiple Las Vegas events, and a voter registration drive at each affair.

**June 30:** Kick-off luncheon, Mesquite Club, Congresswoman Shelley Berkley and the student-performed *Suffrage History Play*.

Repeat performances of the play: **July 17**, Boys and Girls Club, and **July 19**, Henderson Rec Center

**July 19**, the movie *Iron Jawed Angels* to be shown in several Las Vegas-Clark County Libraries.

See: [www.lwvlasvegasvalley.org/NWSD%20Luncheon.pdf](http://www.lwvlasvegasvalley.org/NWSD%20Luncheon.pdf)

**Nevada Women's Lobby**

Invites You to Join Us

**General Membership Meeting  
and**

**Reception for Southern Nevada  
State Legislators**

**Wednesday, June 27**

6:30 p.m. Reception; 7:30 Meeting  
Grant Sawyer Building, Las Vegas  
555 East Washington Ave., Room 1100

Legislative Update by

Julianna Ormsby, NWL Lobbyist

Light Refreshments will be Served

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

*Plan to attend the*

*Nevada Womens Lobby  
Celebration in Reno*

*Thursday, September 20*

*5:00 to 8:00 p.m.*

*Invitations will be sent in August*

**JOIN NWL NOW**

Please support Nevada Women's Lobby. As one session ends, we look forward to the next as our work continues during the interim. Between legislative sessions, NWL monitors interim committees, testifies when needed, and identifies key issues important to women and families. Dues are our main source of funding and your membership is very important to us! Check the mailing label; if it says "2007" you are a member in good standing, and we thank you. If not, will you join or renew your membership now?

**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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**PLEASE JOIN US**

Send to:

**Nevada Women's Lobby**

P.O. Box 5565,

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

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City \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

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Dues:

- Individual \$40
- Living Lightly \$15
- Sustaining \$100
- Circle of Empowerment \$250
- Organization \$75

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