

# Vision & Voices

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

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

## PROUD PAST & BOLD FUTURE

As Nevada Women's Lobby celebrates our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we look at our history and to the future. These words by founding member Nancy Moore are as significant today as they were 20 years ago.

*In our quest for political strength and better pooling of our resources, most of us have discussed networking within our organizations. With the media spotlight on legislation in the areas of: childcare, affordable housing, education, and other crucial issues, the possibilities and advantages are greater than ever. THE TIME IS NOW AND WE HAVE BEGUN!*

The concept of a women's lobby came to Nevada with the arrival of Sarah Chvilicek who had worked with the Montana Women's Lobby. She championed a Nevada women's lobby to be a strong voice at the state legislature on women's and families' issues.

Organizing meetings were held in 1988 followed by the first general membership meeting in January 1989 at the YMCA in Reno. Over fifty women attended. Nine of the original organizing group made up the first steering committee: Sarah Chvilicek, Beth Elliot, Elaine Enarson, Diana Glomb, Helen Jones, Diane Loper, Nancy Moore, Elizabeth Pope, and Diane Williams.

We did not expect to take an active part in the 1989 session of the legislature. However when Aid to Dependent Children was put on the table, we believed women's voices had to be heard at that session, and we hired Helen Jones as our lobbyist. Bobbie and Leonard Gang lobbied for NWL for the 1991 session and Bobbie represented NWL for the next seven sessions until 2005. Beginning in 2007 Julianna Ormsby has been NWL's lobbyist.


In 1992 the southern division of NWL was formed and we became a statewide organization. This quickly expanded our membership and our influence at the legislature. Early organizers in Las Vegas were Jan Biggerstaff, Lana Buehrer, Gayle Burks, Laura Djakovich, Arlie Ann Goris, Jeanne Maust, Ann Marie Smith, and Barbara Straight.

NWL initiated Grassroots Lobby Days (GLD) in March 1991, making a powerful statement at the legislature as many organizations and individuals from around the state joined together to promote legislation supporting women and families. NWL has coordinated GLD every legislative year since then. We gather together in Carson City for three days, learning about our issues and the legislative process, meeting with legislators, and networking. Women's issues take center stage at the legislature during GLD.


In non-legislative years, NWL organizes the Women's Summit, a statewide conference held in Las Vegas. Inspired by the Beijing Conference on Women, the first statewide conference was organized in 1992 by NWL. In 2000, coordination of the Women's Summit was turned over to the Nevada Women's Agenda, a new educational arm of NWL. By 2007, the Women's Summit was co-sponsored by 27 community organizations and businesses.

Today our issues remain essentially the same as when we began; NWL has grown stronger with a broad and diverse membership. We are moving ahead with innovative ideas and new technology. Read about the new and bold changes in this newsletter.


◆ 20 YEARS ◆  
Evolution of a Logo




1989




1990



1999 10th  
Anniversary Logo



2000 NWL  
Summit



Thru 2008

**NWL's  
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.

(NWL operates using these principles, and decisions are made by consensus.)

## BUDGET CUTS

It's hard to believe that Nevada's 2009 session is only a few months away. It seems like we were just there...ah, yes, because we were. As you know by now, the Governor convened a special session of the legislature on June 27 to address the severe budget shortfall in our state. Prior to the special session, \$900 million had been sliced from the budget and the legislators were tasked with finding an additional \$275 million in cuts. At the end of the day, we saw an additional \$169 million in cuts, with K-12, higher education and state agencies left to determine where to make an additional \$106 million in cuts to their budgets. For more information on specific cuts, visit [www.leg.state.nv.us](http://www.leg.state.nv.us).

As a result of the cuts, some families receiving much-needed services for children with disabilities are getting letters stating they will no longer be receiving these services. We know in this economy more families are accessing services they may not have accessed before including local food banks, shelters, pawn shops and welfare assistance. We know that Nevada is facing difficult economic times, the scale of which we haven't seen before. Unemployment is at its highest level in Nevada since 1994 (even higher than post-9/11), and with rising gas prices, families are working harder than ever to make ends meet. We are committed to working with legislators, officials and agencies to do what needs to be done to ensure quality of life for people who call Nevada home.

## 2009 LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW

*By Julianna Ormsby, NWL Lobbyist*

Nevada's first round of 180 bill draft requests (BDRs) for the 2009 legislative session is available at [www.leg.state.nv.us](http://www.leg.state.nv.us). Some of the good and bad BDRs that may be of interest to NWL members include:

- ✓ a bill that would mandate insurance coverage for autism screening and treatment;
  - ✓ a voter ID bill;
  - ✓ a bill relating to chemicals in plastic products used by children;
  - ✓ a bill that would issue a birth certificate for a stillbirth; and
- a host of bills focusing on domestic violence and senior issues.

NWL is currently working on its legislative priorities for 2009 and would welcome your input, if you have expertise or an interest in a particular issue area.

In the interim between sessions, we have been following a number of committees/studies, including the Placement of Children in Foster Care, Health, Education, and the Seniors and Veterans committees. Each committee is now wrapping up and preparing work sessions, and we are seeing some of the committee recommendations in these BDRs.

For more information on the interim committees/studies, go to [www.leg.state.nv.us](http://www.leg.state.nv.us).

### Greetings from New Orleans!

I am here to represent NWL at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) at their annual conference. The conference brings together legislators, legislative staff, and advocates to discuss issues that are facing many states and to share solutions and best practices.

I am also excited to be on a panel at the NCSL conference with Nevada Assemblywoman Kathy McClain and others to share our experience with the National Education for Women's Leadership (NEW) project. We recently had the pleasure of meeting several 2008 NEW Leadership graduates at NWL's northern networking event and we hope to continue working with them in the future.

## NWL Blog !

**We are pleased to announce NWL's first-ever blog.**

**We'll be blogging live from the 2009 legislature, where we'll keep you posted on all of the issues we're working on and let you know how you can get involved.**

**Check it out at [www.nevadowomenslobby.blogspot.com](http://www.nevadowomenslobby.blogspot.com)**

## EDUCATION CUTS

*By Dotty Merrill*

*Nevada Association of School Boards*

This special session and the days leading up to it could be characterized as a period of incredible non-partisanship as well as moments of unexpected partisanship.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Raggio and Assembly Speaker Barbara Buckley were remarkable in working together before the Special Session with their colleagues from both Houses to craft an agreement that represented what they believed to be the "best" that could be done in response to a disastrous budget situation. Their leadership and collaboration demonstrated the finest features of this political situation. They were ably assisted by Assemblywomen Bonnie Parnell and Debbie Smith, long-term friends of public education.

Here is some information that may be helpful to the Women's Lobby membership about the full impact of cuts to K-12 public education over fiscal years '09 and '10:

\$92,700,000	Original 4.5% cuts
\$48,000,000	FY09 textbook reductions
\$36,400,000	Additional 3.3% agency/school district cuts
\$177,100,000	Total cuts, biennium

This picture is even more devastating if you look at just FY09 and its **cut of 10.79% in K-12 funding** from the total FY09 education base budgeted revenue — about \$1.2 billion, according to Dr. Keith Rheault, Nevada Superintendent of Public Instruction.

As if this news isn't bad enough, Dr. Rheault cautions that it is important to keep in mind the additional 14.12% in cuts from the FY09 base budget proposed for FY10 and FY11 in base budget instructions sent to state agencies by the State Budget Office.

These deeper cutbacks mean that the involvement of and input from educators, parents, our business communities and other advocacy groups will be even more critical than before as school boards deliberate about these new cuts. Moreover, there can be no doubt that this time around, there will be pain as these cuts reduce services, cut programs, and shrink staff.

## CUTBACKS FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

**RALLIES AUGUST 14,  
10:30am**

Reno - Brick Park  
Las Vegas - Grant Sawyer Bldg.

**HEARING AUGUST 19,  
9:00am**

Carson City: Legislative Bldg.  
Las Vegas: Grant Sawyer Bldg.

While the costs of supporting a family soar, more threats arise for Nevada's most fragile families — those receiving benefits through the TANF program. On August 19 five state proposals for rolling back TANF benefits will be heard.

Proposals would pull cash grants and family Medicaid coverage nine months early when recipients get jobs, taking away a safety net vital for transition and success. Also, sanctions on the whole family are proposed if one member does not comply with employment and training requirements for the Food Stamp Program.

The Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN) is rallying opponents (see above). PLAN's Jan Gilbert says the state must first use up TANF reserves saved from past years before cutting service.

More at: [planevada.org](http://planevada.org)

## \$ CRISIS \$

Nevada is not the only state in economic distress, but it ranked number three among states in the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' (CBPP) recent report. Rankings were based on three indicators: employment declines, increases in housing foreclosures, and increases in poverty.

CBPP warns that cuts states are making in services such as health care and education will deepen the nation's economic problems. They recommend that federal fiscal aid be sent to states, targeting only states in current economic distress as indicated by their rankings.

Nevada's rankings among states:

- # 1 in increased food stamp use
- # 4 in housing foreclosures
- #11 in employment declines

Full Report: [cbpp.org/3-3-08sfp](http://cbpp.org/3-3-08sfp).

## NWL WEBSITE A NEW LOOK

[www.nevadawomenslobby.org](http://www.nevadawomenslobby.org)

Our new website design is fresh, attractive and easy to use. Everything you need to know about NWL is still available in a neatly re-organized manner, and you will be able to pay your dues online. Web designer Jessica Brown has crafted an image that proudly defines who we are. The site will debut on September 1.

From our founding history and principles of unity, to our current programs and events, you can see it all. The main menu allows you to Take Action, Read About Our Issues, Learn About Grassroots Lobby Days and, of course, Join NWL. Sub-pages describe our activities. For example, you can see NWL's past legislative highlights, keep up to date about legislative activities of a current session, and link to the new **NWL BLOG** for updates about issues and actions that affect Nevada women and families.

As always, we invite your comments and suggestions for improvement. Use the link on the website to contact us.



## NWL HOSTS PROGRESSIVE WOMEN

NWL welcomed northern members and many other progressives interested in NWL's work at a summer party hosted by Diana Glomb-Rogan.

Glomb-Rogan told how and why NWL was formed twenty years ago, while NWL Lobbyist Julianna Ormsby talked briefly about our successes in the last legislative session, state budget cuts and the recent special session. NWL's member survey and its planned use in setting our goals for the coming legislative session were described by Bobbie Gang.

It was wonderful to spend time together in a relaxed social setting, strengthening the bonds that grow from our common interests and shared goals.

## MEMBERS SET DIRECTION

Thank you to the 96 members who responded to our January questionnaire. Your responses affirm our past actions and provide new ideas as we plan for the future. Most respondents were long-time members, but we were happy to hear from many who joined us more recently.

Sixty-seven of you rated NWL as effective or somewhat effective and only one indicated that we are ineffective. She said we are ineffective because Nevada is still the worst state and we have to do more to bring women with children out of poverty. NWL certainly agrees with her on this issue and much of our advocacy targets that problem. We will keep working on it.

When asked to rate the top three issues for NWL you responded:

- Health - 74
- Education - 64
- Equal Rights - 38
- Youth at Risk - 30
- Violence and Safety - 25
- Self-Sufficiency - 18

As you ranked NWL activities/functions relative to your expectations, the top four were:

- #1 Hire Lobbyist
- #2 Alerts in Session
- #3 Grassroots Lobby Days
- #4 Newsletters

We have read over the many comments and suggestions you sent. A notable suggestion from a member who has been involved in the state administration:

*Establish good relations with influential legislators and members of the executive branch.*

A comment made by a number of members:

*I appreciate all you do for those of us who cannot get personally involved.*

Several suggested that we involve members more, especially young women. We are looking at what we can offer to members who want to be more involved.

At NWL's steering committee annual fall retreat we will review our past years' work and set direction for the next few years. Your survey responses will help us map NWL's future.

Send additional comments and suggestions to [NVWL@aol.com](mailto:NVWL@aol.com).

**SAVE THESE DATES!**

**CITIZEN LOBBYING 101**

**November 15, Las Vegas  
NWL Presents:**

A "Cliff-Notes" Version of How Your State Legislature Works . . . and How You Can Make A Difference

Details will come in a later mailing, or you can email NVWL@aol.com

**GRASSROOTS LOBBY DAYS**

**March 8, 9, 10, 2009  
Carson City**

**CAN WE EMAIL YOUR NEWSLETTER?**

Save some trees and NWL funds. If this newsletter came in the mail but you are ready to switch to an email newsletter, please email your name and email address to *NVWL@aol*, with the subject "Email My Newsletter." Thank you to all who have already opted for email.



**JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE**

As we celebrate the past twenty years and plan for the next ten to twenty, please join us today. If your address label says PAID 08, you are a member in good standing. Our members are our strength and we greatly appreciate your support.

If you are not a paid member, we hope you will help us keep a strong presence at the legislature by joining today.

**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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**Blog** [www.nevadawomenslobby.blogspot.com](http://www.nevadawomenslobby.blogspot.com)

**BECOME A MEMBER**

Send to: Nevada Women's Lobby  
P.O. Box 5565, Reno, NV 89513

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City \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 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.

I prefer my newsletters to be sent by  Email  U.S. Mail

*Payments to NWL are not tax-deductible*

**VOTE!**

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**NEVADA  
WOMEN'S  
LOBBY**



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