



Nevada Commission for Persons that are Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Legislative Subcommittee

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time of Meeting: **Tuesday, September 19, 2023
2:30 PM**

Location of Meeting: **ZOOM**

1. **Roll Call and Opening Statement:**

Members: Eli Schwartz, Beth Jones, Susan Beckett, Catherine Nielsen
Guests: Autumn Blattman, Doralee Martinez, Eric Wilcox, Miles Terrasas
Staff: Obioma Officer, Executive Director; Lorraine Belt-Dolan, Administrative Assistant III
Accommodations: Ava Smith, Interpreter; Elizabeth Anthony, Interpreter; Becky Van Auken, Captioner.

2. **Public Comment:**

- Eric Wilcox, chair of the Nevada Commission for the Deaf and hard of hearing, wanted to raise two issues prior to the next legislative session, the Executive Director position is in a classification that places the individual in a less secure and more poorly compensated standing relative to other employees of the State of Nevada. The funds for this position are entirely paid for from the telecommunication surcharge, which is over subscribed and potentially unsustainable source of funding as we've discussed in other contexts. If memory is correct the compensation is prescribed in legislation which precludes advancement for the person in this role. In my opinion this was poorly structured from the start when the position was written into law and should have been written in such a manner that person in the role retains the same ability for career security and advancement as any other employee of the State of Nevada. Ideally the funds would come from the general fund rather than from the telecommunication surcharge. I would ask the committee to investigate appropriate amendments to the law to correct those what I consider mistakes in the way that position was structured.

- The second item was a public comment received about a year ago, that I want to bring back to the forefront of the discussion about a legislative proposal. Essentially it is noted many of the complaints that we hear coming to the commission from members of the community amount to violations either of the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA. Such individuals with a grievance have little recourse in the state of Nevada besides complaining to the commission which really doesn't have much authority to act besides just simply amplifying a message that many are still suffering from injustices in Nevada. This public comment noted other states have passed laws that strengthen the state's enforcement of the ADA and IDEA provision and that such a law would provide for resources to individuals about their rights, recourse, to pursue justice and state oversight of ADA and IDEA violations which could include things like state fines for violations. Two examples were included in that original public comment, the New Jersey law against discrimination and the New York State human rights law. I would suggest that perhaps this committee could seek to determine if there were aspects of either of those two laws or other examples from other states that would be valuable to pursue incorporating into state law here in Nevada.
 - Catherine Nielsen would like to let us know that our Partners in Policymaking class applications are now open this is open to individuals with disabilities and their family members who would like to learn about policy-making changes and local, state, Federal level, pretty much everything that has to do with the disability community and making change in policy. It is free and the applications are open through the end of October.
3. **For Possible Action:** Approval of Minutes of the July 11, 2023, meeting.
 - Beth Jones made a motion to approve the minutes, Susan Beckett seconded, motion carried.
 4. **For Possible Action:** Nominations, Elections, and/or reappointment of subcommittee members.
 - Susan Beckett made a motion to add Catherine Nielsen to the Legislative subcommittee, Beth Jones seconded, motion carried.
 5. **For Possible Action:** Commission Directive Topic(s): For Discussion and approval to bring to the Commission for final approval if needed.
 - a) Discussion and approval of recommendations for Deaf Day at the Legislature 2025.
 - We will be having a conference on December 15th and 16th and on the 17th NVAD will host a winter Gala and all funds raised will be used for the next Deaf Day. The conference will focus on Deaf Day legislation.

b) Discussion and Approval of Recommendations for new BDR's needed in the next legislative session.

- In talking with the early hearing detection intervention agency (EHDI) they are looking to propose legislation on a virus called cytomegalovirus commonly known as CMV, this is something that potentially could be dangerous or life-threatening to infants and can cause deafness. It can be detected by a blood test and most newborns are getting a heel prick and blood tests already and they would like to add it to the newborn panel. 19 other states have already passed legislation for it.
- Continued support for language access plans, there's still a misunderstanding that ASL is not English it is its own language and having conversation around that.
- Continue having conversations about voting and voting access in polling places, possibly getting access to ASL Anywhere in the voting booths so that people have an interpreter to explain to them what is on the screen and how to vote, you're not allowed to have your phone at the polling booth, so maybe having stationary iPads that only have the ASL Anywhere app downloaded on them would be an option.
- During the deaf day at the legislature, the interpreters were not accessible to all, making the legislative process more accessible needs to be addressed.

c) Review the following bills to provide additional support for compliance:

- The chair tasked the members to look over the list of Bills, listed on the agenda, and come up with ideas for the next meeting.

6. **Presentation and Discussion:** Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS) review and advocacy of recent bills of the 82nd Session for Bills that include the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and general navigation of NELIS.

- Miles Terrasas shared how to access and track bills in NELIS.
- For the public they have access to track 10 bills for free, and then more would be paid for. As state employees we have unlimited tracking of bills.
- There is a place to add tags to bills that you are tracking to help you keep organized.
- Miles let the commission know as an advocacy body for ADSD he could help us track the implementation of the bills we are following.

7. **For Possible Action:** Approval of Agenda Items for Next meeting,

- Presentation on CMV possibly by Perry Smith of the early hearing detection intervention agency (EHDI).
 - Discuss possible BDR's.
 - Language access, and ADA violations and voting access.
8. **Public Comment:**
- No Public Comment.
9. **Adjournment: 3:43**
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Accommodation Requests and Meeting Materials:

NOTE:

- Supporting public material provided to Commission members for this meeting may be requested from Lorraine Belt-Dolan, Commission Administrative Support, ADSD at Lorrainebelt@adsd.nv.gov and is/will be available at the meeting locations and ADSD website at [Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired \(nv.gov\)](http://Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired (nv.gov))

AGENDA POSTED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

Notice of this meeting was posted at the following Aging and Disability Services Office at 3208 Goni Road, Building I, Suite 181, Carson City, NV. 89706. Notice of this meeting was posted on the Internet through the Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division website at www.adsd.nv.gov and Nevada Public Notices website at <https://notice.nv.gov>