DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

April 7, 2016

The meeting of the Commission for Women was called to order by Chair JoAnn Elston at 10:00am on Thursday, April 7, 2016, in the State Public Works Division Conference Room, 515 E. Musser Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 204 of the State Public Works Division Conference Room, 1830 E. Sahara Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Exhibit A is the Agenda. Exhibit B is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Department of Administration, Director’s Office.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:**

JoAnn Elston, Chair

Karla Scott

Brooke Westlake

Anna Thornley

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:**

Richann Bender, Vice Chair

Colleen Baharav

Durette Candito

Brenda Hughes

Allison Stephens

Diane Fearon

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Annette Teixeira

Mary Woods

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Joanne Goodwin, UNLV, Professor and Director, Women’s Research Institute of Nevada

Nancyann Leeder, Secretary, Nevada Women’s Lobby

Katie Armstrong, Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General’s Office

Diane Thornton, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau

Elisa Cafferata, President and CEO of Nevada Advocates for Planned Parenthood Affiliates

Marlene Lockard, Lobbyist, Nevada Women’s Lobby

**Agenda Item #1 & #2 – Call to Order & Roll Call**

**Chair Elston:**

I will now call this meeting to order and have the secretary call roll.

**Agenda Item #3 – Public Comment**

**Joanne Goodwin, Women’s Research Institute of Nevada**: We are in support of the Commission.

**Nancyann Leeder, Nevada Women’s Lobby**: We are in support of the Commission.

**Agenda Item #4 – For Possible Action Review of February 25, 2016, meeting minutes.**

**Chair Elston:** Do I have a motion to approve the minutes as presented to the Commission?

A copy of the meeting minutes from the February 25, 2016, meeting was given to each member on the Commission for review and approval.

Motion for approval from Brooke Westlake, with Diane Fearon as the second. All were in favor of approval of the minutes from February 25, 2016.

**Agenda Item #5 – Information Item – Commission Term Limits**

**Mary Woods, Department of Administration**: I would like to remind the members of the upcoming term limits and the process to apply through the Governor’s website: <http://gov.nv.gov/Boards/Application-Information/>

We have four members whose terms will expire June 30, 2016: JoAnn Elston, Richann Bender, Karla Scott, and Brooke Westlake.

**Chair Elston**: I will not be reapplying for the Commission. I will serve through June 30, 2016.

**Agenda Item #6 – Information Item – Review of NRS 233I**

**Mary Woods**: Reminder of the power and duties of the Commission. Please take time to review NRS 233I, Exhibit C.

**Chair Elston**: Please remember our mission is to propose legislation. We are on a short time frame for the upcoming session.

**Agenda Item #7 – For Possible Action – Present Ideas of Potential Topics the Commission may explore to develop meaningful Legislation for the betterment of women.**

**Mary Woods**: I will be referencing two documents, Exhibit D, Status of Women in the States, and Exhibit E, the table of the responses from the Commission members on their areas of interest. I went through the report and matched up the responses that were given from the Members on their topics of interest to try and get a consensus of most of the members, and connect the topic areas that have been selected from national state reports that give grades that have been given to Nevada, and opportunities to improve those grades. There are two areas that have the most interest in pursuing that are referenced on the report; political participation and poverty and opportunity. There was also interest in pursuing some type of legislation regarding violence and safety for women.

I have looked for potential legislation that was proposed last session and that did not make it through the legislative process that covered some of the interests of this body. I will be presenting you with the different ideas for possible topics.

Taking into account violence and safety issues connected to women, and in looking at Exhibit D, they identified different legislative pieces that Nevada is missing. If Nevada had these in place, we would be getting a higher grade on this report. The areas are: does the State provide Unemployment Insurance benefits to domestic violence victims, does Nevada have an unemployment rights law for victims of domestic violence or for individuals convicted of a domestic violence crime, and is there a gun possession restriction? Nevada does not have any of the mentioned items.

Other areas that Nevada does not have laws, but other states do are: Is there a gun possession law for individuals convicted of misdemeanor stalking crimes? No. Is there required surrender of certain firearms by persons convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence? No. We may contact the states that do have these laws on the books for further information.

Nevada does have SB 175 that was effective June 2, 2015, and sponsored by Senator Roberson. This legislation attempted to address the background check. The concern that other organizations have raised with the legislation is that it is a voluntary background check. There has been another initiative that was actually in a bill that was presented by Justice Jones in the 2013 Legislature that did not get voted in by the Governor but now there is a ballot initiative by the Nevadan’s for Background Checks that is going to be on the voting ballot this November. The language for that vote is being developed now by the Secretary of State’s office and should be public around August. This ballot initiative has much more strength. If it receives the votes, it will become law. The roll of the Commission on this would primarily be just as awareness and maybe help to gather votes, with an organized effort to help gather votes for the November.

**Colleen Baharav:** In looking at SB175 in my job as a prosecutor, it was our understanding that SB175 addressed misdemeanor convictions for domestic violence and the prohibition of possessing of a firearm is you have been convicted. Is there is some movement on SB175 that would that not be the case?

**Mary Woods:** It is my understanding that the ballot initiative is primarily focused on the background checks. I do not believe that it would take away from anything in SB175 that is already in place. The initiative is primarily focused on requiring background checks for guns sales.

**Colleen Baharav:** I have been amending our charging documents in our office to be more in line with the Federal Law. SB 175 indicated that if you have been convicted of a domestic crime as defined in federal law, that we would be able to charge that person with possession of firearm

by a prohibited person. I am not sure if this is in effect now, I am not that familiar with the law. If anyone is interested in learning more, this might address some of our concerns about safety with regards to firearms under this bill.

**Mary Woods**: Would you like this topic to be an agenda item at our next meeting?

**Colleen Baharav**: I just do not want to duplicate any efforts that have already been made. Maybe we can have an agenda item that addresses what SB 175 covers. Then clarification might be made when we are talking about safety.

**Diane Thornton:** Yes, you are correct that under SB 175 a person who has been convicted of a misdemeanor domestic violence in Nevada or any other state is prohibited from owning or having possession, custody or control of any firearm. Similarly, anyone who has been issued an extended order of protection against domestic violence may not purchase or otherwise obtain a firearm during the time the order is in effect. A violation of these is a category B felony.

**Colleen Baharav**: Regarding SB 175, it is my understanding that there is not a mechanism in place for forfeiture of those firearms. This might be a good place to focus our attention on this issue, making sure that those firearms are not in the hands of people that qualify under the statute.

**Diane Thornton**: I will happy to look into this and report back.

**Diane Fearon**: I would just like to reconcile the conversation. The first discussion was talking about the ballot proposal where background checks would be the focus as it relates to safety. Our other member has brought up the prohibition of possessing firearm. Are they an overlap or are they complimentary? Because if someone is convicted you mentioned the forfeiture which is an excellent additional element, but also a background check might be necessary that they not acquire firearms, whether additional or new so that both may be needed to have a full affect in this regard.

**Colleen Baharav**: They would be complimentary not duplicative.

**Mary Woods**: The ballot initiative is focused on the background checks. The items that I was reading before where Nevada received a “no ranking” were items that were about relinquishing the firearm, if there is a misdemeanor conviction of domestic violence. Would you like to have this as an agenda item at our next meeting?

**Chair Elston**: Yes, with the support we are seeing for this topic; let’s make this an agenda item.

**Mary Woods**: We will include this in Agenda Item #11.

On the Violence and Safety topic, there was legislation that was placed on the Chief Clerk’s desk in April 2015, but did not receive any further action, which was AB 336. It involved provisions surrounding human trafficking. Human trafficking might be a topic we could also look at. This is legislation that is developed.

**Agenda Item #8 – For Possible Action**

**Mary Woods**: I have researched and spoken to many different groups that have already been involved with the legislative activity, trying to learn from them, what they might suggest that this group look into and consider. The following are just ideas that I developed by making phone calls.

The first group on the list is the Women and Children’s Center of the Sierra. I spoke with Pam Russell, the Executive Director for the Women and Children’s Center of the Sierra. Pam sent me different ideas of the areas that she saw as a big concern for the clients that she serves, which are primarily low income women. She stated that some of the biggest issues that would help her clients would be to look at the minimum wage, raising it to $15.00 an hour. Low wages help keep women in poverty because they have to work more than one job. There was a recent calculation done for Reno and that a mom with two children must earn between $53,000 and $55,000 just for basic necessities. The financial aspect was a recurring theme throughout our conversation. I also spoke with Barbara Buckley and Dr. Nancy E. Brune from the Guinn Center and they also had the same theme in our conversation.

Pam Russell also shared that a need for young women is comprehensive sex education. The women that come to her still do not understand about birth control, how it is available, or if they need to bring their moms. She shared many comments that demonstrated this.

The third item that was discussed was child care and subsidizing child care to a greater extent. Currently the Division for Welfare and Supportive Services offers child care vouchers. But you have to already be working in order to qualify for these vouchers. This leaves out assistance to all of the young moms who are looking for employment.

The Division for Welfare and Supportive Services has a portion of their budget dedicated to child care assistance. The money goes to approved child care facilities or homes that are registered. We could potentially keep our finger on the pulse of this budget amount for the coming session, and if there is an increase in this section, that we show our support during the session. For the 2015-2017 Session, the state is funding $2.5 million dollars in each year.

**Allison Stephens**: Is part of this conversation including the income limits for women to be able to receive child care assistance through the subsidies? My understanding is that the limits are so low that what you have is a large number of women who are kind of the working poor, who do not qualify for any type of assistance, and yet the majority of their check is going to child care. I would like to understand if we are also going to address that piece of this, as far as who is going to be eligible to receive those child care subsidies.

**Mary Woods**: I know that DWSS does have public workshops where they get input from the public about different areas they would like to see changed in their requirements. There are different tiers of income and depending on how much subsidy you would receive or how much of a voucher you would receive. We could have someone come and talk to the Commission about this process.

**Allison Stephens:** I think that would be appropriate. I am generally concerned about those groups that are of a certain poverty level. Do they have access to the resources and those people that are a little bit above that, that do not necessarily qualify, but do not have enough income that get lost. I would like to focus on those individuals to understand how the process works for them. If we could get that as an agenda item I would appreciate it.

**Mary Woods**: I will make a note that we would like to find out more about the child care subsidy through DWSS.

The next item is diapers. The Women and Children’s Center distributes about 8,000 to 10,000 diapers monthly. Ms. Russell stated that they could give away three times the amount of diapers if there was funding. Diapers cannot be purchased by food stamps and women need to have disposable diapers in order to go to child care facilities. If you have children in diapers, you need disposable diapers in order to work. Child care facilities require disposable diapers. This might be an area the Commission might want to further investigate as an item to pursue. Currently, diapers are a taxable item. We might try to get them as a nontaxable item. Also included in this is feminine hygiene products are also taxed. There has been a recent news report that in Ohio there is a lawsuit looking at ending the tax on feminine hygiene products.

**Karla Scott**: The topics we have been talking about seem to focus on a certain demographic, would the diapers include also senior women, for adult diapers, if that tax would be removed for feminine hygiene?

**Diane Thornton**: It would depend on how you would define it. Currently, they are taxed through the sales and use tax.

**Mary Woods**: The final item on my list is Transportation Subsidies. This provides reliable transportation. Bus passes, such as the Reno bus service are $65 per adult, $32 per youth monthly. Having reliable transportation effects whether or not a woman can maintain a consistent form of transportation to and from work. Purchasing vehicles is also a risky endeavor for unprivileged women. In addition to possible being scammed, car upkeep, registration, and insurance are often an issue.

All topics above are centered on financial security.

**Agenda Item 8., B:**

**Mary Woods**: UNLV has a Women’s Research Institute which is a self-supporting research arm of UNLV. We discussed with the Institute the possibility of having an in-depth report done on the different aspects of women, possibly by geographic location in Nevada. A comprehensive report to supply data and research to make decisions moving forward. The last report was done in 2004. We do have smaller reports which are more recent. The last one was 2014.The proposal would be to propose legislation to help fund the report. If the funds go through this upcoming legislative session, the funds would be available July 1, 2017, for potential research for the report. The time frame would be now to start thinking about the funding in order to be able to complete the report.

The National Institute for Women’s Policy Research produces smaller, state comparison in an attempt to do an apples-to-apples comparison and provide a grade. This is the report I used to match to the commission members’ topics of interest I talked about earlier. (Exhibit D).There may be other areas that we might want to look at in depth that are not captured in the reports.

Dr. Goodwin also had an idea to look to NSHE faculty to ask them about doing executive papers to look at the categories the national reports have identified, or categories we have identified.

Dr. Nancy Bryne at the Guinn Center is also interested in considering doing a research focus on something that we might want them to look into. They have a board that advises them as to the topics of research projects.

**Richann Bender**: Is there a cost involved with the Executive Papers?

**Dr. Goodwin**: No.

**Brenda Hughes:** Is there anything that prohibits us as members of the Commission from raising private funds if there is not money available through the Legislature?

**Mary Woods**: We are actually able to per the commissions creation document NRS 233I.090. We have a link to the NRS on our website, [www.admin.nv.gov](http://www.admin.nv.gov) along with links to other research and resources, one of which is for the Women’s Institute of Nevada.

**Chair Elston**: Due time, we will carry over to our next meeting the rest of Agenda Item 8.

**Agenda Item #9**

**Elisa Cafferata, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada**: I am here today on behalf of the Nevada Coalition for Women. My report has been submitted to the commission secretary and is posted on your website (Exhibit F). I am going to do a summary of the report. I looked at the Commission’s topics of interest and I looked at them a little differently. If you lumped all of the votes for economic issues, they came out as the top priority for the Commission. The next issue was civic engagement, health, and then safety. Interestingly enough Education only received one vote of interest. I would make a case for you that there a lot of advocates for these issues. One of the things we really do not have a lot of advocates for is pay equity, equal pay of women. For so many Nevada families this would make a fundamental difference. To highlight a couple of the key statistics, almost half of our Nevada families are being supported by either a single woman or is the major wage earner. When you start looking at women making 70 cents per dollar if you are a white woman or as low as 30 cents in some studies per dollar, you see it is hard to keep these families afloat when you are making a fraction of what men are making. There is a great quote from the “Make it Work” Campaign saying, “I do not get charged less at the grocery store as a woman, so why do I not make the same amount of money?”

Pay Equity is an issue that you can champion. Pay is fundamental. It is immediate and it helps families across the board with all of these issues. There were several bills proposed and introduced last session. I did list a couple in my report. The stronger bill allowed for civil penalties and punitive damages. There is language available and we can share that with you to support a bill. Part of your conversation should be what would the priorities be and how would we approach it.

**Erika Washington, State Director, Make it Work**: The Make it Work Campaign has three top priorities. One being equal pay for women, affordable child care, and paid family leave. I am here today to offer myself and the Make it Work Campaign’s research as a resource for the Commission. Also, to add to the memo that Coalition put out. We would also like to see if a public database that shows more transparency of employers and how much money they pay for various jobs and how it is broken down by sex, race, ethnic background, and paycheck fairness. I am based in Las Vegas, but I do travel to Reno as well. If you go to our website, [www.makeitwork.org](http://www.makeitwork.org), you find our full polices and proposals for all of our top issues.

**Stacey Shinn, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada**: We came together because we want to pass an equal pay piece of legislation. But, being women who see issues in all areas of employment for women, we actually came up with a questionnaire that we are sending out to candidates for the Legislature, Exhibit G. Our focus is women in the workplace. In addition to equal pay for equal work, we want to ask the legislators if they support access to affordable birth control and family planning, increasing the minimum wage to $15 an hour, mandatory paid leave for illness and maternity and paternity leave, and family care. We know that women are the majority of domestic workers, which do not fall under the minimum law and are mostly women of color. We are asking for legislation to protect these worker’s rights.

We are also highlighting affordable child care. We want to make sure that the cost is not more than 10% of a household income. Strong enforcement of title 9.

We ask that you support the equal pay legislation. If you are interested in any of these other issues, I am sure we will be working on them in the next legislative session.

**Agenda Item #10**

**Mary Woods:** We have been asked by the Legislative Sunset Committee to have an update about the activities of the Commission. The meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2016. We will need a commission member to present.

**Chair Elston:** Is there anyone available to attend this meeting?

**Richann Bender**: I will attend the meeting.

**Mary Woods**: The meeting will be video-conferenced to Las Vegas.

**Allison Stephens:** I can also attend.

**Agenda Item #11 – For Possible Action – Sunset Committee**

**Chair Elston:** When I asked you all to list your two main concerns I thought that you would all come back in with one item. But, not one of the items was duplicated. We will be having speakers come in and speak on the Equal Pay for Women. This is a national problem not just a state problem. We will need direction on where we can help.

**Mary Woods**: This is the time we can focus on what we would like to accomplish at the next meeting. I have speakers willing to come. I have information about the firearms and then the child care subsidy. We have a focus on the employment – funding for those areas.

**Chair Elston**: Are these the areas we would like to cover in the next meeting or at least get information on them?

**Anna Thornley:** I agree that the equal pay is an important issue. I also would like to look at the paid leave for families when they have children. This might work in with equal pay.

**Colleen Baharav**: I agree that equal pay is also an issue, and I think that if we have speaker come in and talk about bills that were addressed previously, that maybe we would have a better grasp and be able to address your questions. As to what and how we would like to proceed on this issue. The issue is that it is such a broad question, we can have clarification.

**Chair Elston**: I do agree we seem to have an interest in the firearm legislation and also equal pay. Speakers for both of these issues would be helpful. We can then support these issues.

**Annette Teixeira**: We are looking at a new venue for our meetings. This will allow for a longer period of time to meet.

**Agenda Item #12 – For Possible Action – Next Meeting**

**Chair Elston**: I am looking at the next meeting to be held on May 19th.

**Richann Bender:** Can we also have a discussion on trying to get funding for our Commission? Is that appropriate to ask through the Legislature?

**Chair Elston**: Yes, we will be putting this on the next agenda.

**Diane Fearon**: I would also like to have on the agenda for the next meeting that we move forward with NSHE executive reports which do not have a cost.

 **Agenda Item 13 - Public Comment**

**Amber Joiner, Assembly District 24, Assemblywoman**: I want to express appreciation for all of the work you are doing. I remember attending a meeting in the 1990’s, and I am glad you are back up and running. I offer my support and my help in any way I can. I just did an article about paid leave, equal pay and affordable child care. These are issues I care about, and am happy to help.

**Stacey Shinn**: We can offer to present potential legislation. We have already drafted language for the upcoming session. If you look at AB190 from the last session, Senator Spearman’s bill, we can look at this for potential legislation. It has stronger language if the employer was not complying with law.

**Chair Elston:** This meeting is adjourned. Motion made by Richann Bender, and a second by Diane Fearon.

**Chair Elston**: This meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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**APPROVED:**

CHAIRWOMAN, JOANN ELSTON

VICE CHAIRWOMAN, RICHANN BENDER

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| Exhibit A | Agenda – 3 pages |
| Exhibit B | Attendance Roster - 2 pages  |
| Exhibit C | NRS Chapter 233I – 2 pages |
| Exhibit D | Status of Women in the State – 4 pages |
| Exhibit E | Topics of Interest & Focus – 1 page |
| Exhibit F | Nevada Coalition for Women’s Equity – Proposed Leg. Pay Eqty |
| Exhibit G | Nevada Coalition for Women’s Equity – Sample Survey 2 pages |
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