

June 15, 2020

Nevada Legislature
401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Speaker Frierson, Majority Leader Cannizzaro, and Nevada Legislators:

As community partners and advocates, we would like to thank all of you for your leadership and the work you've done to ensure all Nevadans remained safe and well during the COVID-19 pandemic. We applaud the timely and difficult decisions that were made to close non-essential businesses to minimize the spread of the virus across the state. As Nevada begins to reopen, we are facing the most severe budget crisis in our state's history, with Applied Analysis modeling the upcoming shortfall at \$1 billion to \$2 billion. As the state looks to balance our budget for the upcoming fiscal years, the below organizations and advocates request that our state legislature assess all potential revenue options prior to making budgetary cuts that would negatively affect and potentially harm Nevadans in the short and long term.

According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy's Inequality Index, Nevada has the fifth most unfair state and local tax system in the country.¹ Our state's regressive taxation policies place a higher tax burden on our lowest wage earners compared to all other wage earners. For example, Nevada's lowest 20% of wage earners pay an estimated 10.2% of their family income in taxes compared to Nevada's top 1% of wage earners only paying 1.9% of their family income in taxes. As the state looks at potential revenue options, we encourage the review of progressive revenue options that levy taxes on those who can afford to pay and do not disproportionately harm lower-wage earners.

Recognizing that Nevada will most likely not be able to raise a sufficient amount of revenue to offset the pending budget deficit, we urge the legislature to review each and every proposed cut through a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lens. COVID-19's effects have underscored the ways our nation's history of racism, bias, and discrimination are embedded in our health, social, and economic systems.² Going forward, we urge the state to work towards aligning budgets and policies to reflect a more equitable and inclusive approach for all communities and an economic recovery that extends to *all* people regardless of race. In doing so, we urge the state to do the following:

- Target aid to those most in need due to the COVID-19 and consequent economic crises.
- Advance long term anti-racist and equitable policies to dismantle persistent racial, gender, and economic inequities and other barriers that non-dominant groups and identities experience.

¹ <https://itep.org/whopays/nevada/>

² <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/3-principles-for-an-anti-racist-equitable-state-response-to-covid-19>

- Avoid further increases of regressive taxes and fees, such as state sales tax, which harm people living in poverty.
- Protect state finances to preserve the foundations of long-term economic growth and opportunity.

We recognize that there are many difficult choices to be made over the next few months and during the upcoming 81st Nevada Legislative Session. We are here to support you and are available for consultation throughout the process. The below organizations and advocates are committed to working together to keep Nevada strong and moving forward.

Sincerely,

ACTIONN
 AFGE Local 2152 at Reno VA Hospital
 Battle Born Progress
 CARE Coalition
 Center for Biological Diversity
 Children's Advocacy Alliance
 Collaboration Partners
 Communities In Schools of Western Nevada
 Community Chest, Inc.
 Community Health Alliance
 Community Services Agency
 Culinary Union
 Eagle Quest
 Educate Nevada Now
 Fallon Food Hub
 Family to Family Connection, ISD 13
 Food Bank of Northern Nevada
 Foster Kinship
 United Way of Southern Nevada
 FUSED
 Great Basin Resource Watch
 High Sierra AHEC
 HOPE For Nevada
 Human Services Network
 Sandy Miller, Former First Lady
 Immunize Nevada
 Indivisible Northern Nevada
 Indivisible Owls LV
 Jennifer Kalas Consulting, LLC
 Latino ARTE and Culture
 Leaders in Training
 League of Women Voters of Nevada
 Little House Day School
 Make It Work Nevada
 Make The Road Nevada
 Minkaboo LLC
 Ms. Gayle's Little School
 Community Action Against Rape DBA The Rape Crisis Center

Naral Pro-Choice Nevada
 National Association of Social Workers, Nevada Chapter
 Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children
 Nevada CASA Association
 Nevada Coalition Against the Death Penalty
 Nevada Conservation League
 Nevada Homeless Alliance
 Nevada PEP
 Nevada Primary Care Association
 Nevada Public Health Association
 Nevada State Education Association
 United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra
 Washoe Education Association
 Women of Color + Coffee
 Nevada Women's Lobby
 Northern Nevada RAVE Family Foundation
 One APIA Nevada
 Paradise Las Vegas Indivisible
 Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
 Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada
 Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
 Purdue Marion & Associates
 SAFY
 SEI
 SEIU Local 1107
 Silver State Equality
 State Innovation Exchange
 Sunshine Childcare
 The Adoption Exchange
 The Children's Cabinet
 The Grassroot Girls
 Three Square Food Bank
 Transgender Allies Group
 YMCA of Southern Nevada
 Crisis Support Services of Nevada
 Foundation for Positively Kids
 Nevada Justice Association
 Turning Point, Inc.
 Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition