



# Council for a Better Nevada

## 2006 Annual Report

*I am pleased to present the 2006 Council for a Better Nevada Annual Report.*

*It seems that just a brief time has passed since the Council for a Better Nevada's 1st Annual Meeting of the organization in November of last year. Yet in the year that has passed since that time, the CBN has quickly demonstrated a willingness to engage in issues that will impact the quality of life for all citizens in our state. Most of our time and resources were utilized on the public education issue and the TASC ballot initiative, two community issues whose historical complexities, existing participants and timing constraints required very different paths to follow for effective CBN involvement.*

*I would like to share a few reflections I've experienced on the past year's work with you and with the community on these issues:*

- **Most people, even on opposing sides of an issue, want a better community and way of life for everyone.** We have demonstrated an ability to bring together individuals and groups in a trusting and collaborative manner on these issues.
- **Never, never, never give up:** It is a privilege to work with a Board of Directors who are so adept at turning 'no' into 'yes' in their own private businesses. We have allocated that talent to issues of critical community interest and are exploring new ways to address problems many said were too entrenched or simply too hard to solve.
- **Change is hard:** Shifting existing patterns of behavior, thought processes and perceptions surrounding a community concern to a new paradigm requires understanding one common trait every citizen shares- human nature. We don't like change, even when we know we need it. Our effectiveness will increase by understanding the need to balance the urgency for change with both patience and perseverance.

*As we move forward to 2007, it is very clear to me that we face many current and emerging issues that pose a risk to our state's quality of life. One could easily be overwhelmed by the challenges before us as a community and as a country. But we should never forget, as Nevadans and as Americans, that no one ever said that being an American citizen would be easy. We all understand how hard it is to preserve what good we have created and to change what things we must improve. Being American comes with no guarantees, and certainly no free passes to a safe and prosperous community. But it does present us with the opportunity to create that for ourselves. Through the continued example of good people stepping forward on behalf of their community, it is my belief that this honorable effort will ultimately prevail in Nevada. This legacy of our generation depends upon our ability to make it so.*

*Maureen Peckman, Executive Director*

2006 LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

CHAIRWOMAN

Heather Murren
Nevada Cancer Institute

SECRETARY

Donald Snyder
Smith Center for the Performing Arts

TREASURER

James Rogers
Sunbelt Communications

DIRECTORS

Table with 3 columns of directors: Mark Brown, Robert Lewis, Larry Ruvo, Randy Garcia, Gary Loveman, Michael Saltman, John Haycock, William Martin, Phil Satre, Dr. Ikram Khan, T.J. Mathews, Peter Thomas, Terrence J. Lanni, Curtis Myles, Dan Towbin, Duncan Lee, Phillip C. Peckman, Terry Wright.

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of those acts will be written the history of this generation."

Robert F. Kennedy

Executive Committee

Heather Murren
Donald Snyder
James Rogers
Terry Wright

Public Education

Sub-Committee
Duncan Lee-Chairman
Mike Saltman
Randy Garcia
William Martin
Phillip Peckman

## THE MISSION

The Council for a Better Nevada is an organization of concerned citizens who seek to improve the quality of life in Nevada. Our intention is to identify and engage in community issues whose outcomes will greatly affect the lives of Nevadans. By bringing together talent, resources and leadership from the private, public and non-profit sectors, our goal is to assist in providing solutions to those issues that will create a sustainable, healthy and prosperous Nevada community.

## THE CONNECTION

*"The CBN is comprised of individuals who the community has come believe will be successful in achieving real change for all our kids in the CCSD. Thank you for all you have done and all you will do"* Louis Overstreet, Las Vegas Urban Chamber of Commerce (edu)

*"I have lived in Las Vegas for 11 years. Only when I saw the community coalesce around the CBN during the Superintendent search did I finally know that our community really existed"* Bob Linden, Chairman Education Impact Council, United Way of Southern Nevada (edu)

*"The state of Nevada owes you (CBN) an enormous debt of gratitude for your work on the TASC initiative "* NV Assemblywoman Barbara Buckley, (TASC)

*"Because of you (CBN), a strong and organized community coalition was put in place that labor was honored to work beside on the TASC initiative."* Danny Thompson, AFL-CIO, (TASC)

*"Create and stir others to create."*

Robert Frost

## THE HONORS

2006  
Urban League of Las Vegas  
education award

2006  
Urban Chamber of Commerce  
education award

2006  
Nevada Partnership for In-  
clusive education award

2007  
Trumpet Foundation "High  
Heels in High Places" public  
education award

## 2006 PLATFORM ISSUES

### The CBN adopted 4 platform issues at our 2005 Annual Meeting

Public Education Reform

TASC Ballot Initiative

Ballot Initiative Reform

Health Care Reform

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

This has been the issue of greatest engagement of time and resources on the part of the CBN. When reviewing a variety of potential community issues at the 2005 Annual Meeting, it was said that **“if we can get K-12 public education right at the front end, we would see so many of these other societal issues significantly mitigated at the back end by virtue of having a more educated citizenry.”** With that notion, the issue was adopted unanimously as the primary issue for engagement.

Effects of CBN participation in the issue to date:

- Media coverage: Increased on the issue 350% in the last 12 months. (print and TV coverage)
- Community awareness: Nevada candidate/issue polling consistently ranks public education reform as the #1 priority for 45% of all likely voters. 85% of all likely voters rank public education in the top 3 priority issues.
- Community partnerships: civic and non-profit groups now communicate with each other about their public education needs and interests. CARE was short-lived as an organized group, but created invaluable alliances and common issues of interest that now enables the community to often speak as one on the issue. (United Way of SNV, LV Paiutes, Urban Chamber of Commerce, LV Chamber of Commerce, NV Partnership for Inclusive Education etc.)
- Launching of four elementary empowerment schools in the CCSD. Three of the four schools are being sponsored by CBN members. The CCSD has set aside \$4 million for support of these schools. The NSEA (Teachers Union) has relaxed collective bargaining agreements in order to allow staffing to be more flexible and performance-based. Principals and teachers have greater control over curriculum, staffing, budget and school day length in exchange for greater accountability for student performance.
- Legislative engagement: CBN provided Bill Ouchi as a resource to the interim committee on education on the issue of deconsolidation (breaking up the school district) as well as the autonomy model. In addition, the Democrats have introduced their legislative platform that includes mandatory conversion of 5% of all CCSD schools to the autonomy model.
- CCSD Board of Trustees: There is greater awareness within the community of who the school board Trustees are, the importance and impact of the position on the CCSD and what expectation there should be of people who sit in those elected positions.

“Only the  
educated  
are free”

Epictetus

## TAX AND SPENDING CONTROL INITIATIVE

The cumulative effect of booming growth, elastic state tax policy and a population of aging retirees would have presented Nevada with a detrimental future had the TASC ballot initiative become a reality for the state. CBN, while not a formal face on the anti-TASC campaign, was the primary force behind the formation of the coalition between labor, community and business as well as a source of funding from many of our members (Gary Loveman, Terry Lanni, Mike Saltman, Phillip Peckman, Jim Rogers, Larry Ruvo, Don Snyder, T.J. Mathews) that ultimately prevented the TASC initiative from qualifying for the 2006 election ballot.

Effects of CBN participation on the issue:

- **Anti-TASC coalition:** Once adopted as a platform issue, The CBN quickly organized a formal community coalition to defeat the initiative.
- **Legal Challenge:** A Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of the TASC ballot language was issued on Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup> disqualifying the TASC initiative from the 2006 election ballot
- **Weakness of current petition process:** An organized effort to educate the voters about the negative consequences of signing the TASC petition during the signature collection phase uncovered significant counts of fraud, forgery and misconduct. This has been a strong catalyst for reform on the CBN's 3<sup>rd</sup> platform issue, ballot initiative reform.

"Your current  
safe  
boundaries  
were once  
unknown  
frontiers"

Unknown

## THE COALITION

Harrahs Entertainment, Greenspun Corporation, The Vista Group, Southern Wine & Spirits, Asian Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO, IGT, Latin Chamber of Commerce, Sunbelt Communications, LV Police Protective Assn, Nevada State Education Association, Station Casinos, Culinary, Urban Chamber of Commerce, Nevada Women's Lobby, Southern Nevada Homebuilders, Associated General Contractors (North and South), Professional Firefighters of Nevada, Clark County Education Association, Reno Police Protective Association, Boyd Gaming Corporation, AARP, Phil Maloof, Scott Feinberg, NV Resort Association, A T&T, B&E Auto Auction

## BALLOT INITIATIVE REFORM

This is an issue of growing importance as the number of ballot initiatives presented to the voters grows with each election cycle. With the increasing attention that has been brought to the culture of signature gathering within the petition process, the importance of initiative reform is more critical than ever before.

Effects of CBN participation on the issue to date:

- Community / Legislator awareness: There is a heightened awareness in the community and in the elected offices of state and local governments of the potential effects of a weak ballot initiative process. A willingness to address the process is at a higher level than ever before due to the work of the CBN on the TASC initiative.
- Proposed legislative reform: A working group made up of business, labor and law enforcement representatives has been established to develop ideas for legislative consideration that would create more enforcement measures within current law and serve to make the process more honest.

## HEALTH CARE

Whether it be the nursing shortage, lack of available medical insurers, or adequate services available to our aging population, healthcare is an issue yet to be formally addressed by the CBN.

Currently, CBN member Don Snyder is the Chairman of the Governor's Commission on Medical Education, Research and Training. The Commission has provided a forum to enable a broad cross section of healthcare and general business professionals to develop a better understanding of the prioritized healthcare needs of the State. The Commission was tasked to provide an improved method for the State's political leaders to meet our healthcare challenges by better leveraging limited resources to achieve improved healthcare outcomes.

The Commission, which first met in January of this year, has completed their work and the report can be found in it's entirety on the Nevada state website: <http://www.mert.nv.gov>

"He who has  
health has  
hope; and he  
who has hope  
has  
everything"

Arabian  
proverb

## 2006 FINANCIAL REPORT \*

### Sources of Support:

Membership dues: \$165,000.00

### Expenses:

Through November, 2006: \$138,707.88

#### **Administration: 2%**

*Board of Directors Insurance policy*

*Stationary and letterhead*

#### **Staff: 54%**

*Fees for Executive Director*

#### **Public Education: 43%**

*Education consulting fees*

*Superintendent candidate travel/reimbursements*

#### **Board of Directors meetings: 1%**

*Monthly meetings (9 per year)*

Nevada State Bank provides banking services to the CBN

*\*Financial report through November 8, 2006*

## PRO BONO SERVICES

Tax services were contributed by The Greenspun Corporation  
Legal services were contributed by the law firm Marquis & Aurbach

## COUNCIL FOR A BETTER NEVADA

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The Council for a Better Nevada is a 501 C-4 organization. Founded in 2005, the CBN is currently headed by its Executive Director, Maureen E. Peckman with administrative and research assistance provided by Mr. Paul Chaffee.

**“A better quality of life for all Nevadans”**

## OUR HISTORY

Prior to the creation of the Council for a Better Nevada, there was in place for many years a much smaller and more informal group of community-minded individuals who would meet to discuss issues facing the community and state. The community was small and the issues well known. It was a time when problems were more easily understood and solutions more readily attained. It wasn't until just a few years ago that these people recognized that the enormous population growth of the State was creating never before seen community dynamics and increased reliance on government resources. Water, power, child welfare, homeland security, transportation, public education, healthcare....these were but a few of the issues that seemingly had grown overnight from a concern to an immediate priority. From that recognition, and from the belief that the Nevada private sector could do more to assist in the continued progress of our community and of Nevada, the Council for a Better Nevada was formed.