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Summary of the July 2020 Special Session of the Nevada Legislature

Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak has signed a bill into law that will enact deep budget cuts to almost every aspect of the state government.

During the 2019 Nevada Legislative Session, Governor Sisolak and lawmakers appropriated some \$29.4 billion in state spending for the 2020-2021 biennium. The closure of casinos and bars and many other businesses in March of this year to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus put a \$1.2 billion dollar hole in a \$14.7 billion 2020-2021 budget.

Governor Sisolak called a special session of the Nevada State Legislature which lasted from July 8 to July 19 to tackle the shortfall. The Nevada State Assembly passed AB3 (Assembly Bill 3) which constitutes the primary plan to address the General Fund shortfall for fiscal year 2020-2021. It is significant to note that practically no non-essential government workers were laid off or received a pay cut, though they will be furloughed 6 days. Following this Summary is an article from NPRI (Nevada Policy Research Institute) that describes this issue in great detail.

AB3 passed the Assembly by a 29 to 13 margin. Only 6 Republicans voted against it: John Ellison, Jim Wheeler, Al Kramer, Greg Hafen, and Chris Edwards. AB3 passed the Senate by a unanimous vote of 21-0 which means all Republican Senators voted for it. Following is a list of notable budget cuts.

Nevada System of Higher Education	-22.65% (average %)
Department of Health and Human Services	
Nevada Medicaid Contribution	-14.25%
Autism Treatment Assistance Program	-61.88%
Washoe County Child Welfare	+ 2.72%
Clark County Child Welfare	+ 8.80%
Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Services	+ 1.83%
Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services	- 1.14%
Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services	- 2.22%
Rural Clinics	- .34%
Assistance to Aged and Blind	+ 3.79%

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	0.0%
Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services	- 1.14%
Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Service	- 2.22%
Problem Gambling	-39.25%
Office of Veterans Services	-11.90
Support for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency	-14.00%
The Governor's Office Administrative Staff	- 3.97
The Office of Lieutenant Governor	- 2.69%
Secretary of State	-17.17%
State Library	- 4.8%
Governor's Office of Economic Development	-14.9%

Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs

Nevada Arts Council	-13.49%
Reno Historical Society	-16.00%
Nevada Humanities	0.0%
Stewart Indian School Living Legacy	- 5.64%

Nevada Department of Education

Office of the Superintendent	-18.52%
Office of Early Learning and Development	-30.35%
Assessments and Accountability	- 7.39%

-Numbers from the Sierra Nevada Ally

From Nevada Policy Research Institute:

Lawmakers cut millions from education and healthcare to appease politically connected unions [Michael Schaus, Robert Fellner](#)

Nevada lawmakers have put the concerns of politically connected government unions over those of taxpayers, students and at-risk Nevadans.

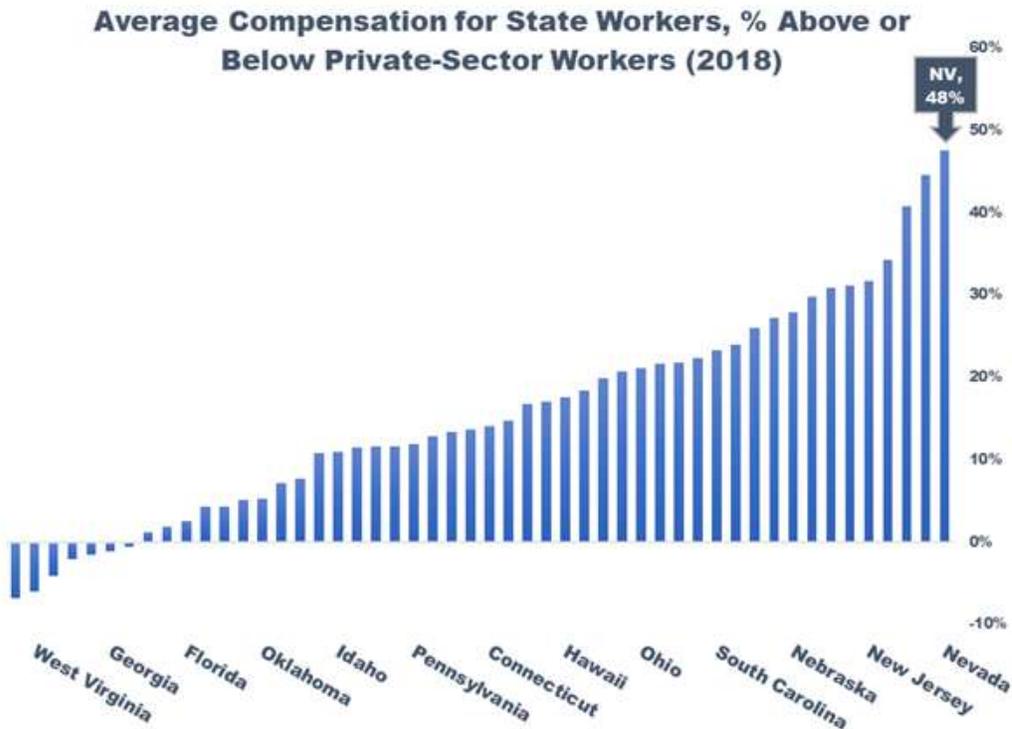
Rather than restoring funding to education and healthcare services, the Legislature instead chose to put roughly \$40 million back into the pockets of state government workers by reducing the number of furlough days and pay freezes initially proposed by Governor Sisolak.

The Legislature's preferential treatment of state workers, at the expense of other public services such as education and health care, cannot be explained on legitimate public policy grounds given state workers already enjoy disproportionately high compensation levels.

In 2018, the average state worker in Nevada received \$87,925 in total compensation, according to newly released data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

That amount was higher than what the average state worker in 42 other states received, and 4th highest after adjusting for the different price levels between the 50 states.

It was also 48 percent more than the \$59,584 received by the average private-sector Nevada worker, a disparity which was the largest nationwide:



The new data serves as an update to a [Nevada Policy study](#) released last year, which also found that Nevada state workers earn significantly more than both private-sector Nevadans as well as their government peers in most other states.

The data make clear that Governor Sisolak’s initial proposal of a merit pay freeze and a single monthly furlough day was already incredibly generous and favorable to state employees, almost all of whom will avoid the mass unemployment facing most Nevadans.

The Legislature’s decision to spend precious resources on enriching state workers — while simultaneously slashing funding for education, healthcare and other services — makes clear that lawmakers have prioritized the concerns of newly-unionized state employees over those of everyday Nevadans.

It also demonstrates how organized labor’s outsized political influence has corrupted the democratic process at the expense of ordinary Nevadans who are struggling to endure the worst economic crisis of their lives.