



Fwd: Letter to the Board of Regents

Wed, May 11, 2016 at 3:51 PM

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From: **Pat Hickey** <PatHickey@dataclonemail.com>

Date: Tue, May 10, 2016 at 7:43 AM

Subject: Letter to the Board of Regents

To: "dean_gould@nshe.nevada.edu" <dean_gould@nshe.nevada.edu>

Dear Mr. Gould—I would appreciate if you would extend a copy of my enclosed remarks to every member of the Board of Regents, as well as having it read into the record for Thursday's Board meeting on NSHE. Thank you...Pat Hickey

"I am former Assemblyman Pat Hickey. I served on the Legislature's Interim Committee in 2012 that reviewed Nevada's higher education's funding formula and made recommendations to the full Legislature that resulted in long overdue changes to the formula. I also served on the legislative committee that made historic changes to the "Nevada Plan," the complex K-12 funding vehicle that had not been significantly reformed since 1967. Having served in the Legislature in two-different decades, and in fact two different centuries [1997 & 2010-2016], I've been a witness to the at times, "contentious" atmosphere that accompanies these kind of major institutional changes.

I've also been a political reporter in Carson City, observing firsthand the process that is often referred to as "sausage-making," or lawmaking. Like the legendary metaphor—that which goes into the "sausage" may be questionable and sometimes smelly—but it's the final product that should be judged worthy or not.

I believe the final product—of a new, more equitable funding weighted formula based on graduation rates [as opposed to simple enrollments], was a major reform step for the higher education system in Nevada.

Given that perspective, and serving as the ranking minority party member on that Interim Committee, it was no surprise to me that tensions existed between NSHE and the committee chairman. Members like myself, knew fully well that both sides [NSHE and the Legislature] had consultants, "advocating" for the constituency they were hired by. That's how "Life 101" works in the real world of a state legislative process.

At no time during the process did I feel that I was not receiving enough information. Varnished as it may have been by both sides—it was "transparent" enough for me to make an informed and reasoned decision on what the elements of the new funding formula should be. The committee spent a significant part of the year in numerous day-long committee meetings—carefully going through all the recommendations being proposed.

The fruit of that tedious process was a new funding formula that passed in the 2015 Legislature with the support of some lawmakers who—in hindsight, and with help from the press—are now critical of their previous product.

The job of a state lawmaker is to filter through the various recommendations, seeing through the frequent regional and partisan tensions—and then coming up with alternative policy recommendations that change and improve the way things were previously done.

In hindsight, accusations about the actual process can both be provocative and seemingly newsworthy. I know, I've been on both sides of that game.

Moving forward, if there are constructive changes that should be made to the process—then NSHE and the Legislature, should do so. Playing the "blame game" after the fact, seems to me—to be nothing more than an attempt to grease the skids of certain political and press agendas.

5/11/2016

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In my opinion, Chancellor Klaitch should neither be signaled out for praise or condemnation. He simply did his job as did members of both political parties and the public who served on the committee. If members of the Board of Regents or future Nevada Legislatures—want to change the funding formula, or the process of how it was arrived at, it is their right to do so.

Doing so may require looking critically at the past in order to construct a better future. It doesn't have to mean, destroying the reputation of someone in the present, in order to do what you need to do next."

Pat Hickey
Former Assembly Minority Leader
Current State Board of Education Member

Sent from my iPad

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