

Written Testimony for the Record

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United States House Ways and Means Committee

Full Committee Field Hearing: The One, Big, Beautiful Bill Delivering for American Workers

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Good morning, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Neal, and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Nicole Cannizzaro, and I proudly serve as the Majority Leader of the Nevada State Senate. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Nevadans I represent - families, small business owners, and seniors - who are going to be directly affected by this legislation.

My remarks today will be concentrated on three main issues of critical importance to Americans everywhere, but especially Nevadans: **health care access and affordability, energy, and food security**. In all three of these areas, Nevada has made tremendous progress in recent years - yet that progress may be derailed by the passage of the so-called “big, beautiful bill”. I’ll also touch on a couple of provisions that are uniquely impactful on our tourism-dependent economy.

First, health care.

When Nevada became the first state led by a Republican governor to announce its intention to expand Medicaid in 2012, our uninsured rate was second-highest in the nation - an astronomical 22 percent.¹ Following a successful implementation of Medicaid expansion in 2014 and more than a decade of steady progress thanks to the federal government and our state’s Department of Health and Human Services, Nevada’s uninsured rate today is at an all time low of 8 percent. Despite these gains, Nevada still ranks in the bottom quintile of all states with respect to the percentage of residents who lack insurance coverage.²

H.R.1’s provisions targeting Medicaid eligibility and cost-sharing will likely erase this progress and lead to tens of thousands of Nevadans losing coverage. According to the Kaiser Family

¹<https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-population/?currentTimeframe=10&sortModel=%7B%22coll%22:%22Uninsured%22,%22sort%22:%22desc%22%7D>

² <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/HealthInsurance>

Foundation, **nearly 800,000 Nevadans - almost 1 in 4 - currently rely on Medicaid.**³ Analysis from Nevada Medicaid suggests that **nearly 100,000 Nevadans could be at risk of losing coverage** due to more stringent eligibility verification requirements, paperwork barriers, and reduced funding, despite more than two-thirds of enrollees being employed.⁴

These 100,000 individuals, who often struggle with finding and keeping employment and stable living arrangements due to mental health, cannot afford the uncertainty of gaps in coverage. That's not a theoretical consequence, that's people forgoing cancer screenings, skipping insulin doses, or putting off a doctor's visit until it's an emergency room visit. We've seen the human consequences of these requirements in states that have implemented work requirements, and they aren't pretty.

Another 100,000 Nevadans acquire their health insurance through the Silver State Health Exchange.⁵ Thanks to the IRA, this figure reached an all-time high in 2025, affording individuals across all socioeconomic classes, but especially low-income individuals, the opportunity to obtain coverage with no or very low cost premiums and deductibles. Unfortunately, under H.R.1, the most vulnerable among us would be hit hardest, with some populations experiencing a 573 - yes, you heard that right - 573 percent increase in their premium payments.⁶ Across all income brackets, premiums are likely to increase by roughly 75 percent next year, which will almost certainly lead to more Nevadans forgoing coverage.

Taken together, these two changes alone will be devastating for Nevada. What does that look like in practice? Fewer people getting preventive care, more uncompensated emergency room visits, and long-term costs shifted to state and local health systems like Southern Nevada's University Medical Center and Reno's Renown Hospital. As the members of this Committee know, those costs don't disappear, they get passed on in the form of higher premiums for everyone else.

Another particularly concerning element of this bill is its cap on provider taxes, a tool Nevada has effectively used to secure federal Medicaid matching funds for a variety of providers and facilities, critically important in a state like ours, which has shortages of nearly every provider type in communities both rural and urban. In 2023, Nevada's private hospitals collectively

³<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/total-monthly-medicaid-and-chip-enrollment/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

⁴<https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/house-gop-budget-avoids-medicaid-biggest-fears-but-98k-nevadans-may-yet-lose-coverage>

⁵<https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/state-indicator/marketplace-enrollment/?activeTab=graph¤tTimeframe=0&startTimeframe=11&selectedRows=%7B%22states%22:%7B%22nevada%22:%7B%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

⁶<https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/issue-brief/inflation-reduction-act-health-insurance-subsidies-what-is-their-impact-and-what-would-happen-if-they-expire/#:~:text=The%20enhanced%20subsidies%20in%20the%20Inflation%20Reduction%20Act%20reduce%20net%20premium%20costs%20by%2044%25%2C%20on%20average%2C%20for%20enrollees%20receiving%20premium%20tax%20credits%2C%20though%20the%20amount%20of%20savings%20varies%20by%20person.>

contributed around \$830 million annually via these assessments, enabling approximately \$800 million a year in new Medicaid payments to providers.^{7 8} This mechanism also helps fund children's behavioral health and long-term care services.

Under H.R.1's changes to the provider tax structure, Nevada would lose an average of \$160 million in provider tax revenue each year over the next five years. That comes on top of more than \$1.5 billion in federal funding that Nevada is projected to lose over the next five years.⁹ The effect on our health care infrastructure, including facilities in rural areas and those providing acute care, would be devastating and swift. Though the bill includes a \$50 billion Rural Hospital Stabilization Fund from 2028 to 2032, the prospects of these facilities being made whole through this pot of money is quite slim. Already, Nevada hospitals struggle to attract and retain qualified personnel due to compensation, and these cuts are a direct hit to an already struggling system.

When provider tax cuts are combined with Medicaid eligibility tightening and reduced federal match, rural hospitals may reduce services, cut critical units like long-term care for seniors or labor and delivery, forcing residents to travel hundreds of miles for emergency or specialist care.

In a state as geographically dispersed as Nevada, these disruptions represent more than inconvenience - they're potentially life-threatening. The provider tax isn't a financial gimmick - it's a lifeline for rural health infrastructure. Stripping this tool puts our rural communities at unacceptable risk.

Next, let's talk about **energy costs**.

Members of the Committee who have spent any time outside during their time in Las Vegas can see clearly how important reliable and affordable energy is to Nevada. In a state like ours, where summer highs routinely exceed 110 degrees, air conditioning isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. In particular, Reno and Las Vegas consistently rank as the top two fastest-warming cities in the country, highlighting the need for a diverse and resilient energy mix.¹⁰

From the time I joined the Legislature in 2017, Nevada has been at the forefront of the energy transition. Over the past decade, with both Republicans and Democrats in the Governor's Mansion, we've taken action to increase the state's share of electricity that is generated by renewable sources of energy, help families and businesses upgrade to energy-efficient appliances, and build more transmission infrastructure to take advantage of the abundance of renewable energy and better connect Nevada with neighboring states. In nearly every case, these

⁷<https://nevadacurrent.com/2025/07/03/hospitals-health-care-providers-warn-medicaid-cuts-will-be-felt-by-people-not-on-medicaid/>

⁸https://dhcfp.nv.gov/Providers/PI/Provider_Assessments/

⁹ <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25997458-obba-fiscal-impact-estimates-july-10-2025/>

¹⁰ <https://www.climatecentral.org/climate-matters/earth-day-fastest-warming-cities>

have been bipartisan bills with broad consensus on the benefits to consumers, workers, and businesses alike.

Working together with our utilities, the federal government, and the business community, we've become a national leader in the renewables space, with Nevada holding vast potential for solar and geothermal power. The solar industry alone has created more than 8,000 good-paying jobs across more than one hundred companies.¹¹ Today, nearly half of our electricity generation is a direct result of investment in renewable technologies, with solar accounting for a third of all generation.¹²

At a time where we should be leaning head-on into this potential, H.R.1 instead discourages the development of cost-effective electricity generation, which will be particularly damaging for Nevadans. According to the non-partisan energy think tank Energy Innovation, Nevada families are projected to experience an annual increase of \$300 to their energy bills over the next five years. The same analysis shows these changes won't just hurt the pocketbooks of families across the state, it will wreak havoc on our economy, to the tune of several billions of dollars in GDP loss and thousands of jobs.¹³

Let's move on to **food security**.

Nevada has long struggled with food insecurity. Even before the pandemic, 12 percent, or more than 350,000 Nevadans were considered food insecure.¹⁴ By 2023, according to Feeding America, that number has grown to roughly 15 percent of the population, with one in five children in our state living in food-insecure households.¹⁵ All together, nearly half a million Nevadans, including seniors, veterans, and working parents are considered food insecure.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is one of the most effective tools we have to fight this crisis. In Nevada, over 500,000 individuals relied on SNAP benefits in federal fiscal year 2024 to make ends meet. These are not people gaming the system—they are working families, single mothers, caregivers, and people living with disabilities. And for every dollar in SNAP benefits issued, between \$1.50 and \$1.70 is returned to the local economy, through grocery stores, farmers markets, and corner stores across both urban and rural Nevada.¹⁶ This translates to nearly \$1 billion in economic activity for Nevada.

¹¹ <https://seia.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Nevada.pdf>

¹² <https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=NV#75>

¹³ <https://energyinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/OBBBA-impacts-on-Nevada.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2019/overall/nevada>

¹⁵ <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2023/overall/nevada>

¹⁶ https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_nevada.pdf

But this bill turns its back on that reality. It imposes stricter eligibility rules and an increased administrative burden, to the tune of more than \$20 million per year, while penalizing states for “error rates” that are often driven by federal system complexity and staffing shortages, not fraud. According to the USDA’s own analysis, the vast majority of SNAP payment errors are procedural or clerical, not intentional. But under this bill, states would face punitive financial consequences if we fail to meet compliance targets, without any new federal funding to handle the extra workload. While Nevada’s error rate currently falls below the threshold that would trigger cost-sharing for the state with respect to program expenses, that was not the case as recently as 2023.¹⁷

In effect, this means that thousands of eligible Nevadans could lose access to food assistance simply because our agencies are overwhelmed. This isn’t just cruel, it’s shortsighted. Because when a child goes to school hungry, or a senior skips meals to pay for prescriptions, the cost doesn’t vanish. It shows up in hospitals, in classrooms, and in community services down the line.

Finally, I’ll conclude with a focus on **two Nevada-specific provisions**.

At first glance, the “No Tax on Tips” proposal sounds like a win for Nevada’s service workers. But the reality is more complicated. For one, the tax exemption on tips is temporary, while the tax cuts for billionaires and large corporations in this bill are permanent. That’s not tax fairness, it’s tax theater.

And even this temporary benefit will only help Nevada’s tipped workers if we continue to have tourists to tip them. That’s no guarantee, especially amidst a year-over-year decline in visitation from both domestic and international tourists.¹⁸ If fewer visitors come to Nevada, there will be fewer tips, fewer shifts, and fewer jobs. The tip tax break won’t mean much if there’s no one at the gaming tables or no one dining out.

Changes to the deductibility of gambling losses - for which a fix has already been blocked by Republicans in the Senate - could have a chilling effect on high-volume and destination gambling - one of the core drivers of Nevada’s tourism economy. Already, industry leaders are sounding the alarm on this change, with clients indicating that they will move their business offshore.¹⁹ The gaming industry is the economic engine of our state, employing nearly half a million Nevadans, and a major contributor to our General Fund, contributing more than one-third of all revenues.²⁰

¹⁷ <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/qc/per>

¹⁸ https://assets.simpleviewcms.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/lasvegas/ES_May2025_ed1142ef-9992-4a32-b44d-5404dba18b8e.pdf

¹⁹ <https://www.ktnv.com/news/big-beautiful-bill-may-drive-gambling-business-offshore-casino-owner-says#:~:text=Derek%20Stevens%2C%20owner%20of%20The.serious%20implications%20for%20Las%20Vegas.&text=%22This%20affects%20everyone%20in%20Las.impact%20jobs%2C%22%20Stevens%20said.>

²⁰ <https://www.nevadaresorts.org/impact/>

So let's be honest: this is a bill that puts the interests of the wealthiest Americans first. It offers temporary reprieve for working families while locking in structural advantages for billionaires. It strips away state flexibility and burdens our agencies with compliance and reporting tasks we aren't resourced to meet. It does not promote economic growth, it redistributes risk downward.

In Nevada, we believe in opportunity. We believe in taking care of one another. We've made progress in expanding access to care, supporting clean energy, and improving food security - not because it's easy, but because it's right. This bill threatens all of that progress.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.