

Solutions 2013



**A Sourcebook for
Nevada Policymakers**

Foreword

When current and would-be policymakers look ahead to the 2013 Nevada Legislature, the challenges facing the Silver State are truly daunting.

America's Great Recession still takes its heaviest toll within our borders. Not only national mistakes, however, are behind this. It's also a legacy of bad decisions by previous state legislatures.

Unemployment remains in double digits. The state's high school graduation rate now trails those of all other states. Nevada taxpayers spend more on education than do taxpayers of neighboring states, yet student test scores are among the region's worst. The state's two flagship universities graduate only 12 percent of their students within four years.

Medicaid costs are increasing at an unsustainable rate — a problem that will worsen greatly, should ObamaCare's mandates take effect. Nevada's Public Employees' Retirement System is dramatically underfunded, and the contributions required to even attempt restoring its solvency are already damaging local governments' ability to provide basic services. The quality of state services, too, has fallen — even as Nevadans' tax burden has increased.

In short, the state of our beloved state is a mess.

Finding a way through such a thicket of interrelated problems is not an easy task. That's why it's with such pride that I present *Solutions 2013* — a compilation of the best research and policy recommendations on these and many other issues. My colleague and NPRI's deputy policy director, Geoffrey Lawrence, has worked tirelessly on these questions for months, devouring position papers and journal articles and consulting the best policy minds in the nation.

The result is a sourcebook of solutions that, if followed, will ensure a return to prosperity in Nevada.

I hope that you will recognize this document for what it is: a resource for any policymaker or legislative candidate who is serious about solving the Silver State's many problems. Shortcomings in current policy design are highlighted and ways to overcome them are spelled out. Many of the entries cite draft legislation already created. All can be submitted directly by reform-minded policymakers as bill draft requests for the new legislative session.

This collection dispels many popular misconceptions about Nevada, while highlighting new approaches to policymaking. My hope is that, regardless of where your political sympathies may lie, you will consider these ideas on their merits.

Our state still has an exceedingly bright future. It just requires some intelligent solutions.



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