

ASSEMBLYMEN'S OUTLOOK 97

Williams sets sights on new and old bills

By Nancy Watson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

While Nevada lawmakers think and talk infrastructure, welfare reform and education, Assemblyman Wendell Williams, D-District 6, has those things on his mind plus a few others as he heads back to Carson City.

Williams who sponsored the drive-by shooting bill that was passed into law in 1991 is wondering why the law was not enforced in the Dec. 28 shooting death of Daniel Mendoza and he's wondering how to make the law enforceable. He said he plans to hold a hearing on the matter.

The law, NRS 202.287, discharging a firearm out of a motor vehicle is supposed to result in the vehicle being seized and all occupants being arrested.

But when Daniel Mendoza died last month from a fatal gunshot wound fired from a vehicle and Metro police officer Ronald Mortenson was arrested and charged with murder in connection with the death, the driver of the vehicle, Metro officer Chris Brady, was not charged.

A police related bill on William's agenda this session would establish a community police review board. "It's time the state released its hold on the communities. If there's a problem in Las Vegas, let the people of Las Vegas decide how to handle it," he said.

The bill is important to Williams because minority groups including the local chapter of NAACP and the Coalition of Concerned Citizens maintain that Metro police are



ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAMS

responsible for many abuses of power which include other deaths.

The bill which was previously sponsored by Williams in 1991, didn't receive much of a hearing and there wasn't much interest in it, he said.

However, with the tension created by the Mendoza death, Williams expects that even the police will support it this time, although they did not support it in 1991.

"It's the diplomatic way to do it. Let local governments decide the problems within a community," he said.

Williams is a member of the legislature's government affairs committee.

While the last session of the legislature was known as the crime session, this session has

been dubbed the education session by Governor Bob Miller.

Williams, an educator and the son of a teacher, is chairman of the legislature's education committee and he is disturbed by the lack of equity between schools.

In particular, he is concerned that the Clark County Public Education Foundation receives money and land for schools from developers who then build \$300,000 homes around the schools, built and equipped with the donated money.

Williams wants a more equitable distribution of the money throughout the school district. Although the computer lab at Madison Elementary was funded by the foundation, it's too little too late.

"Some projects get millions and millions of dollars, but it's nowhere near what they can do for the West Las Vegas community based on that community's needs. And it's nowhere near what they've done in other communities," he said.

In the past, he has tried in vain to bring the foundation to a legislative hearing to address the equity or disparity issue. He will try again this session.

In another education related issue, Williams expressed his opposition to the voucher system because, he said, it supports private education with public money and there's not enough private schools to take all of the students.

He said his goal is to, "Make every school a good school by

addressing the disparity issue and giving the resources to the community and the parents."

Williams was author of a tutorial program which has 23 sites in area community centers including the Paiute Indian Reservation and was judged best in the nation in 1995 by the Clinton administration.

Welfare reform signed into law by President Clinton last year has resulted in a \$76 million block grant for child care. Williams wants to see some of the money used to expand, upgrade and generally enhance small existing child care centers.

He is also eyeing some of the state's \$250 million surplus to create child care centers for women in the transition between
(See Outlook, Page 5)

L.A.P.D. coming to Southern Nevada looking for candidates

As part of its effort to hire more than 1,200 officers this year, the Los Angeles Police Department will be recruiting in Southern Nevada. On Saturday, January 25, 1997, LAPD officers will hold an informational seminar and offer interested candidates the opportunity to begin the selection process by taking the LAPD written exam.

Seminar and testing will take place at the High Desert Conference and Training Center of the Community College of Southern Nevada. The career seminar featuring current LAPD officers will take place at 11:30 a.m.

The police officer written test

will be given at 8:00 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. This is the first time ever that the LAPD has come to Nevada to recruit new police officer candidates.

"We have jobs, and lots of them! We expect to hire 90 new officers every twenty-eight days through 1997," commented Sgt. Tom Smart of the LAPD Recruitment Unit. "The Los Angeles Police Department offers careers that are high-paying, secure, interesting, exciting, and have opportunity for advancement. We want everyone to hear about careers with the LAPD. This is an excellent chance for the men and women of the Southern

Nevada area to learn more about the LAPD, and to speak with LAPD officers one-on-one. We are especially interested in talking to women: there has never been a better time to begin a career with the Los Angeles Police Department," concluded Sgt. Smart.

The City of Los Angeles is working to increase the representation of women in the LAPD ranks from approximately 16% to more than 43%. The LAPD is committed to mirroring the diverse ethnic makeup of its community on the Police Department. Persons of diverse ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to apply, and bilingual skills are at a premium.

"We've never recruited in the Southern Nevada area before, but we expect great things from the people here," stated Pat Patterson, Chief of the Police & Fire Selection Division of the City's Personnel Department.

Starting salaries for LAPD officers are in the \$36,900 to \$49,500 range depending on education level and prior law enforcement experience. Minimum requirements include: minimum age 20-1/2 years; U.S. high school diploma or GED equivalent; U.S. citizenship or application for citizenship in process; proportional height and weight; excellent health; and no felony convictions.

The Community College of Southern Nevada is located at 3200 East Cheyenne Avenue in North Las Vegas. Potential candidates wishing more information on LAPD careers, and the Southern Nevada recruitment in particular, should call (800) 421-9555.

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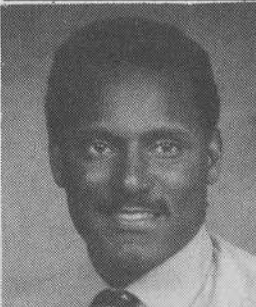
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