

## OUR VOICE

## Hit the Lotto

It's about that time again, folks. The time during every biennial legislative session that "the idea" surfaces. The idea that Nevada, the nation's most gaming-dependent state, should enact a lottery. Dating back to 1970, state lawmakers have scuttled more than two dozen bills that would've created a state lottery. The arguments against instituting one have changed little over the last 39 years. Casino companies oppose a lottery because, they say, it will increase competition. They've even go so far as to call a lottery a regressive tax on the poor, arguing that the disadvantaged spend a larger portion of their already-limited income on lottery tickets, hoping to strike it rich. Though Nevadans, in 1990, approved lotteries as a way for charitable and religious groups to fundraise, every other effort to create a statewide lottery has met resounding defeat.

Well folks, desperate times call for desperate measures. With Nevada facing a \$2.36 billion budget deficit over the next two years, and Gov. Jim Gibbons refusing to even entertain tax increases as a partial stop-gap measure, every idea should be on the table.

Yes, every idea. Yes, that means taxing brothels—which lawmakers have declined to do for fear of legitimizing prostitution. Yes, that means trying to wring even more coin out of our golden goose (gaming). Yes, that means nicely asking the multibillion-dollar mining industry, the multimillion banking industry and other fields that generously benefit from Nevada's low-taxation climate to suck it up and pony up. Yes, that means engaging the unions to see if they can renegotiate contracts to keep people working. And it most certainly means exploring the creation of a lottery. (To turn the current bill into law, lawmakers would have to approve legislation in 2009 and 2011 and voters would have to greenlight it during the 2012 elections).

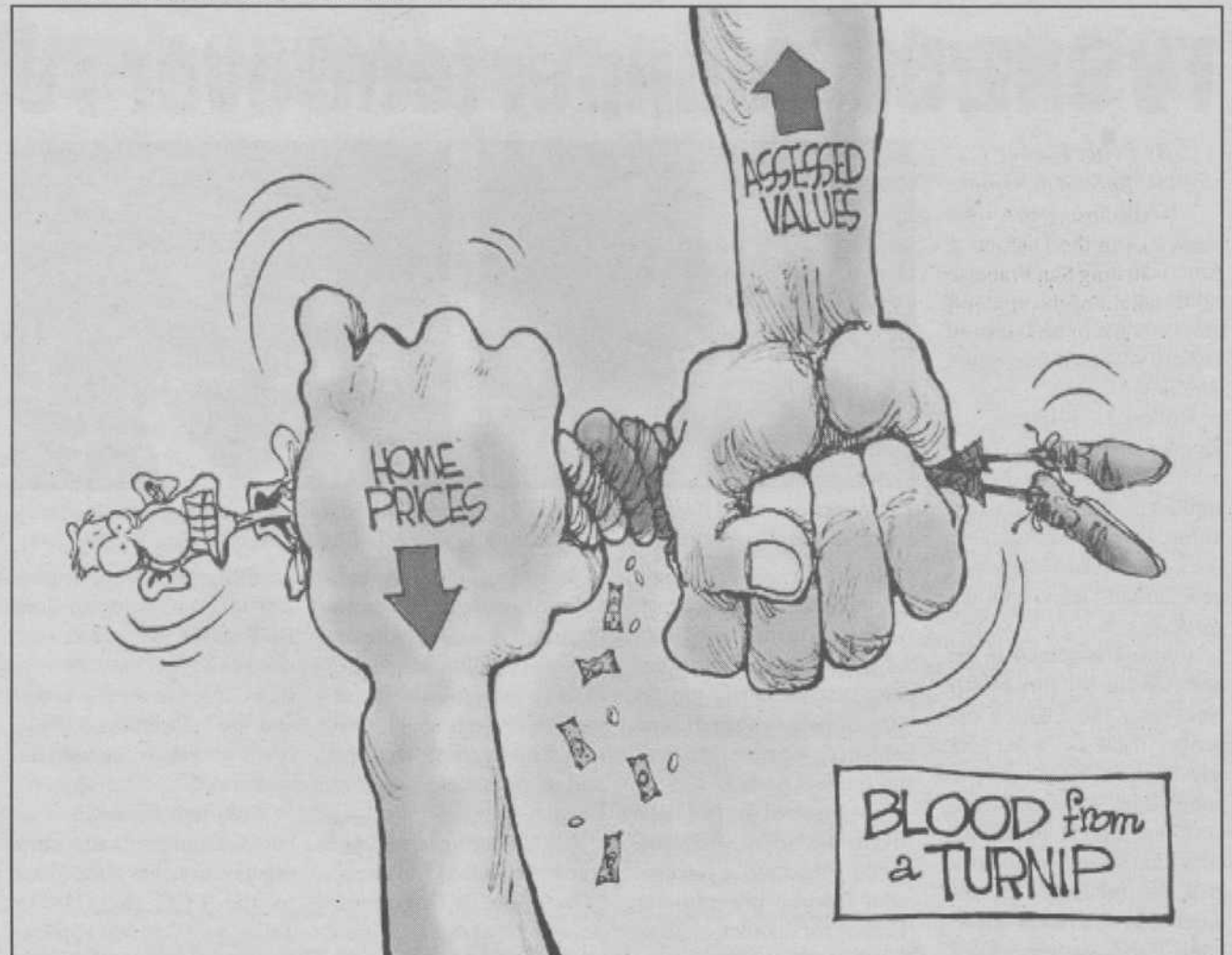
Nevada is one of eight states that doesn't operate a lottery. According to estimates, Americans spent nearly \$60 billion on lottery tickets in each of the past three years. Opponents like to cite the paltry amount of money (2 percent) that generally winds up in state coffers. Casino companies claim a state lottery would siphon jobs. During 2007, gaming industry officials said the estimated \$200 million generated by a lottery would be offset by a \$51 million drop in profits to the state; the profit decline would directly impact jobs, they argued.

But let's consider our governor's very words as a counterargument.

Many of our fellow citizens are losing their homes, losing their retirement savings, and losing their ability to continue to work and prosper in our state. For years, Nevada led the nation in population growth, led the nation in small business growth, and led the nation in job creation. Economic expansion brought prosperity to every sector of the economy, and our state was the envy of many. We have been that 'beacon on the hill' of hope for those who wanted to work hard and prosper. While right now our beacon may not be as easy to see, it is our responsibility to ensure that we can help bring back the bright light of success to shine across the state."

Gibbons said this during his State of the State Address earlier this year: "Nevada has actually fared worse in this national and worldwide economic crisis than many other states. The combination of tight credit markets, sharp declines in discretionary spending and record-low consumer confidence has caused our two major industries, construction and tourism, to suffer drastic reductions."

For these very reasons, it's high time for Gov. No New Taxes (he wants us to conveniently forget that he allowed a 3 percentage point increase on the hotel room tax), for Big Gaming and for spineless lawmakers to truly consider creating a state lottery. As was the case with the 2007 bill, the 2009 legislation can be specifically geared to meet a specific challenge, like underfunding in the K-12 education system. The fact is that this term we have a tremendous opportunity to redefine our state and truly diversify our economy. But until then, we need help in the nearer term. Help that a state lottery can provide.



## Procurement law makes return

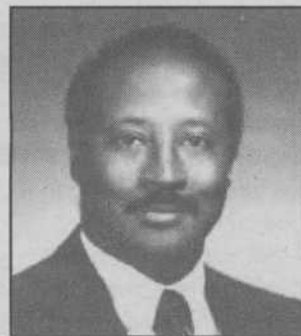
By Harry C. Alford  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

At last, the "drought" is over. Procurement laws, as it relates to affirmative action and diversity in the business operations of the federal government, were abandoned during the second Clinton administration and with silence by the Congressional Black Caucus.

During the Bush years there was no hope to enforce what Adam Clayton Powell, Arthur Fletcher and Parren J. Mitchell wrote on behalf of African-Americans and America as a whole. Adam, Art and Parren's accomplishments came back in the day, and no other has stepped forward to provide anything significant or comparable.

It seemed that it didn't matter, Democrat or Republican, political correctness was against minority business. We languished and progress was not only stopped but put in reverse. But now there is a "new sheriff in town" and the seriousness of business diversity and its applications to the general society are again taken seriously.

As we are gearing up to ensure our fair share of the Stimulus Bill, it was so pleasant to read the following memorandum from the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget: "The Executive Branch shall distribute Recovery Act funds in accor-



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dance with: All anti-discrimination and equal opportunity statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders that apply to the expenditure of funds under federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, loans, and other forms of federal assistance. Grant-making agencies shall ensure that their recipients comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and any program-specific statutes with anti-discrimination requirements. Generally applicable civil rights laws also continue to apply, including (but not limited to) the Fair Housing Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Americans With Disabilities Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Uniform Relocation Act."

This is simply beautiful. It clears the way for small and

minority, particularly Black-owned businesses and potential employees to apply, compete and get their fair share of all this Stimulus Bill has to offer. That is going to amount to billions of dollars and many thousands of jobs. If we do this right it is going to change our culture and communities for the better. Let me put strong emphasis on "we."

President Obama has provided us the roadmap. It is up to us to get on the road and work this marvelous deal. There won't be deals made in smoke-filled rooms and out of our view. The memorandum also states:

"Of particular note, the guidance addresses federal agency requirements to provide spending and performance data to the Recovery.gov website. To deliver a website that allows citizens to hold the government accountable for every dollar spent, the law and guidance require federal agencies to implement mechanisms to accurately track, monitor, and report on taxpayer funds."

In essence, there will be no games and we can view all the activity and provide input as it happens. The National Black Chamber of Commerce is ready to make this our "signature activity."

We understand that we cannot wait and see what happens but must get involved from Jump Street and

make sure this wonderful action is implemented in our communities and for the benefit of all of us.

We understand that we may be alone in this, as others don't recognize the immense opportunity. They will stand back and state that others are accountable and let's see what they do. No, no it is us, all of us, who is responsible and "God blesses the child who has his own."

Let's go get our own!

The president is so serious about a level playing field that even California, the racist armpit of America, is all shook up. California's transportation department, CALTRANS, is in panic mode.

I have received two internal memos written by officials in this gigantic department that state they are worried about discriminatory activity that they have been doing over the past four years and may get hit with sanctions regarding the Stimulus Bill.

In their devious and sinister way, they suggest increasing the DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise) goal for Blacks, Asian Pacific Islanders, Native American and White women while kicking out Hispanics and South Continent Asians (Pakistanis, Indians, etc) from the program. Hispanics are 40 percent of this state

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