**Lesson 1**

As the text chapters demonstrate, the settlement of Nevada and its ultimate acceptance as a state was often linked to external events. Outline how the Mexican-American War, the movement of the Mormons into the West, and the search for mineral wealth first brought settlers into what is now Nevada.

**1.** While there had been travel through and exploration of the territory of Nevada in the previous decades, a confluence of events in the 1840s led to a large influx of permanent settlers into the territory.

One of these events was the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war, ceded the territory that would become Nevada to the United States. This treaty disambiguated the legal status of the land, which had seen various American incursions (especially from fur trappers and travelers to California), together with small skirmishes with the Mexican authorities, in the previous decades. With the land securely defined as United States territory, settlers could establish themselves on the land without fear of international incident.

Another event was the movement of Mormons into the West, fleeing a period of persecution in the eastern United States that had culminated in the death of their founder, Joseph Smith, in 1844. Mormons had numerous reasons to initially settle in the territory that would become Nevada, including access to mineral wealth, to proselytize the Mormon faith, to take advantage of the movement of gold seekers and emigrants through Nevada into California, and to justify the large territorial claims of the prospective Mormon State of Deseret and later the Utah territory.

California’s gold rush began near Sacramento in 1849. The rush of seekers after fortune towards California meant more traffic through Nevada. This increased the economic feasibility of settling in Nevada and serving the needs of such travelers by offering resupply and succor from the difficult journey. Additionally, upon initial settlement mineral wealth began to be found in Nevada itself, drawing settlers seeking after that wealth, including the Mormons.

All of these factors contributed to drawing permanent settlers to the land that would become Nevada.

What factors contributed to Nevada becoming one of the first western territories to gain statehood? (Pay particular attention to the efforts of national politicians such as Senator Doolittle.)

**2.** Following a long period of strife between settlers in what would become Nevada and their nominal government in Utah, which led to general disorder and lawlessness, the United States Congress finally acted to carve a separate Nevada Territory out of western Utah in 1861. The election of Abraham Lincoln and the secession of the pro-slavery states from the Union removed a legislative logjam over slavery that had long inhibited such action.

Having become a territory, Nevada then entered into the process of becoming a state, which was initiated in 1862 and completed in 1864. Some factors contributing to this speedy process were local to Nevada, and some could be attributed to national politics in the United States in that period.

Various issues of strategy in national politics in the Civil War-era Union led to a national government that was anxious for Nevada to become a state as quickly as possible. As mentioned, the southern states had seceded at the onset of the Civil War, leading to a Republican-dominated Congress in the remaining Union which was eager to further secure that dominance. The admittance of Nevada as a solidly Republican state would firm up Republican control of Congress and Abraham Lincoln’s chances of reelection to his second term. To these ends, Republican Senator James Doolittle of Wisconsin introduced the 1864 act which prompted a U.S. sanctioned constitutional convention for Nevada and several other western territories in the hopes of moving them speedily towards statehood.

There were also local factors. 1863 had seen the defeat of a first attempt at drafting a state constitution for Nevada, and the 1864 effort which ultimately succeeded addressed many of the problems that had led to the defeat of the first effort. Namely changes were made concerning the taxation of mines and the mining industry, as well as separating the approval of state officials and the ratification of the constitution into distinct votes- the 1863 effort had divisively tied the approval of the constitution and the slate of first officers for the state into a single yes or no vote. These changes contributed to a decisive victory for the 1864 constitution, which led to speedy statehood.

3. In order for Nevada to be admitted to the Union, the state constitution specifies three conditions. First, there must be no practice of slavery in the state. Second, freedom of religious worship and religious tolerance must be guaranteed. Third, the people of the state must recognize that public lands in Nevada belong to the United States, that owners of land in Nevada who do not reside in Nevada should not pay a higher rate of taxation than residents, and that Nevada cannot tax land in the state belonging to the U.S. government unless otherwise specified by the U.S. congress.

Lesson 2

1. In 1833 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the federal constitution of the United States only protected the rights and liberties of citizens when dealing with the federal government. Therefore it was necessary for state constitutions to contain guarantees of the same rights and liberties if citizens of that state were to be similarly protected in their dealings with state governments. To that end, the Nevada constitution explicitly provides for many of the same rights and liberties that the federal one specifies in its Bill of Rights. These are contained in Article 1 of the Nevada constitution. While the Bill of Rights was incorporated to apply to the states regardless of the text of the state constitution throughout the 20th century, these protections were never removed from the Nevada constitution and so survive in duplicate.

In general the rights and liberties in the Nevada constitution directly correspond to those in the Bill of Rights, with two exceptions. One concerns jury trials in civil cases at the state level, which only require a three-fourths vote in Nevada where they require unanimous decision in federal cases. This owes to Nevada’s checkered early history with mistrial owing to bribery in mining cases. The other distinction concerns eminent domain- in Nevada, payment for the seizure of a property via eminent domain must come before the seizure is made, where this restriction does not exist on the federal level.

While these rights and liberties are guaranteed to all in theory, in practice many groups in Nevada have been denied exercise of their rights and liberties over the course of the state’s history. To name one example, consider Native Americans, who saw their aforementioned rights pertaining to eminent domain routinely ignored in the 19th century by the taking of tribal lands via violation of land treaties such as 1863’s Treaty of Ruby Valley. To name a group that has seen an improvement in full exercise of their rights and liberties in Nevada, consider women. Originally denied the right to vote in the state’s original 1864 constitution, Nevada was on the vanguard of extending suffrage to women among the U.S. states, doing so in 1914, six years earlier than when the standard was applied nationally in 1920.

2. Despite rapid demographic growth, the text claims that Latinos in Nevada have had less success in the political arena in Nevada than other, smaller groups.

One reason the author suggests is that divisions exist amongst Latinos that do not exist within other groups, preventing Latinos from acting as an effective block in the manner of other minority groups. For example, he observes that Cubans entering Nevada had very different class backgrounds, attitudes, economic niches, and historical experiences than did Mexicans or Chicanos, leading to a lack of unity among Latinos as a whole.

Also, something must be said of a history of discrimination against non-whites including Latinos in the economic and political arenas that was only addressed with civil rights laws passed in the 1960s. The long recovery from this disadvantage has slowed minority groups, Latinos among them, in bringing their full political power to bear.

Other political disadvantages include low rates of voter registration among Latinos, and the general youth of the Latino demographic, many of whom have not yet come of voting age. The text notes that many Latinos speak little English; this can hinder their ability to participate in an overwhelmingly English-dominated political process. The rate of growth for Hispanic business ownership has been slow, perhaps representing a lack of powerful leading figures who can bring the Latino community together and direct it towards political goals.

It should be said, though, that these areas reflect untapped potential that may yet be realized. If these areas of weakness are addressed, Latinos may come into political power that meets or even exceeds that of the 26.5 percent of the population of Nevada that they represented in 2010- a proportion poised to grow in the intervening years.

3. The Nevada constitution specifies that “the Paramount Allegiance of every citizen is due to the Federal Government” in Article 1, Section 2. This section also specifies that if Nevada resists the execution of federal laws, the federal government may employ armed force to compel obedience.

Lesson 3

1. Democrats and Republicans have seen their success in Nevada elections vary greatly over time.

After Nevada became a state in 1864, the next 25 years saw Republican domination of state politics. This can be attributed to the circumstances of Nevada’s entry into the Union during the Civil War as a free state with the assistance of the national Republican party.

From 1892 to 1906 the state turned to a third party, the Silver Party, which then affiliated with the Democrats in 1896. The Silver-Democrats, propelled by the issue of silver coinage, which was of great relevance to the mining industry in the state, saw more electoral success in this period.

1908 to 1930 saw a competitive period where Democrats and Republicans were both viable in the state, with Democrats winning more positions but Republicans winning more powerful positions, such as in congress, the governorship, and in electoral votes for the presidency.

1930 to the mid-1980s saw a period of Democratic domination beginning with the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Democrats were especially dominant in state politics, overwhelmingly controlling the state legislature in particular.

The 1980s to the present have seen a resurrection of Republican fortunes in the state, leading to an equilibrium where both parties are competitive. Factors contributing to the re-emergence of the Republicans might include increased voter registration efforts by the Republicans, the widespread popularity of Ronald Reagan as a figure who won over Democrats, and a pattern of migration of Republican-leaning voters such as upper-class retirees into the state throughout this period.

Describe the three aspects of direct democracy found in Nevada. Be sure to discuss the petition process linked to each provision and give an example of how one of these provisions has been used in Nevada political history.

**2.** Direct democracy in Nevada encompasses three special types of elections: initiative, referendum, and recall, which were introduced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Initiatives, introduced in 1912, allow citizens of Nevada to propose amendments to the state constitution as well as new laws without action from the state legislature. An initiative begins with a petition, which must be signed by 10% of the number of voters in the previous general election. Throughout the history of the initiative process, various rules have been made (and thrown out) concerning the geographical diversity which the signatures must have, such as which proportion must come from the various counties in the state. In the modern day, signatures must come from 10% of voters who participated in the previous election in each of the state’s congressional districts. An initiative can send a statute to the legislature, which can then either approve the new law or send it to the ballot for voters to decide. An initiative can also propose an amendment to the state constitution, which is then approved or denied on the ballot by the state’s voters.

Referendums, introduced in 1904, allow voters to approve or disapprove laws that the state legislature has passed. The legislature can refer a law directly to voters, or voters can demand a referendum via petition. The petition simply requires signatures from 10% of the number of voters in the previous general election. In either case, the law is then voted on. If the law receives a simple majority’s support then it is affirmed and remains in force, and if the law fails to receive a simple majority then it is revoked. A law approved by a voter-initiated referendum cannot be repealed or amended by the legislature- it can only be changed by another direct vote.

This quality of referendums was used by pro-choice activists in Nevada in 1990. They initiated and won a referendum for a statute affirming abortion rights along the lines of the Roe v. Wade decision, which generated a protection for abortion rights in the state that will last even if Roe v. Wade were to be overturned, until and unless another referendum overturning the statute could be created and passed.

The first provisions for recall of elected officials in Nevada were introduced in 1912. Voters can choose to remove a state or local official from office earlier than their term would normally expire. A recall is initiated by a petition, which requires the signature of 25% of the number of voters who voted in the office holder’s election. Therefore a statewide official requires 25% of the number of participants in the statewide election to sign the petition, but a mayor would only require 25% of the participants in his city’s election. When the signatures have been collected, the official can resign or submit to a recall election, where candidates run against the recalled official and the winner of the most votes serves out the remainder of the term. If no one runs against the recalled candidate, there is simply a recall/no recall vote, and the office remains vacant until the next election if the recall succeeds. In general the hurdle to recall an official in Nevada is very high and the process has succeeded rarely at the local level and never at the statewide level.

3. Miscellaneous Provisions are found in Article 15 of the Nevada Constitution. One provision specifies the seat of state government as Carson City. Another specifies the oath of office that members of the state legislature, executive branch, and judiciary must take upon entering their offices. A third specifies the qualifications necessary to hold public office, including a general term limit of 12 years for a given office.

Lesson 4

1. Lobbyists are able to influence the legislative process in Nevada in a variety of ways. They can contribute financially to the campaigns of candidates they support. They can testify for or against bills before the legislature. They can encourage write-in or call-in campaigns to legislators from constituents on a given law or issue. They can organize protest movements against laws. They can also endorse candidates to the legislature. A survey of Nevada lawmakers taken in 1971 suggested that lobbyists in the legislature were most effective when presenting arguments or research in favor of their cause, testifying at hearings, connecting constituents with lawmakers, and in giving or withholding campaign funds.

Lobbyists engage in many such activities during sessions of the state legislature, where they are particularly active in persuasion of lawmakers. Since the Nevada State Legislature is a part-time body which meets only once every two years, lobbyists have a powerful and important role in explaining and advocating for or against laws to legislators. These legislators are part-timers who have their own separate careers and areas of expertise, who also have a limited legislative session in which to take action. This can make them reliant on lobbyists, who provide expertise in their areas, propose priorities for action, and explain potential consequences of legislative action which the legislators may lack the experience to realize otherwise.

2. The text asserts that the gaming industry is by far the most successful interest group in Nevada at lobbying for its interests. It offers several reasons to explain this dominance.

One reason is economic: as the largest industry in the state, it is in the interest of legislators who are concerned with the economic well-being of their constituents to encourage the growth and continued health of the gaming industry. After all, many of those constituents depend on the gaming industry for their livelihoods. Additionally, the text argues that after abandoning organized crime associations circa the 1960s, gaming could boast a clean reputation and legitimacy that gives it still more influence in the state.

Another reason relates to campaign contributions. Gaming lobbyists are a significant contributor to election campaigns in the state, giving in a volume that dwarfs that of dominant industries in several other states. Gaming has also proven able to contribute strategically so that more is donated to winning candidates, increasing the effectiveness of the money spent. Gaming has also proven capable of freezing out non-preferred candidates of funds, preventing them from mounting effective campaigns.

A third reason relates to personnel. The text lists several powerful, influential, well-liked and well-connected gaming lobbyists of the last several decades who were able to boast direct access to important personnel in the state government. For example, gaming lobbyists Pete Ernaut and Greg Ferraro were key advisors in Brian Sandoval’s campaign for governor, and immediately returned to their roles as lobbyists for gaming after his successful election, boasting powerful access to the new governor.

However, gaming is not the only group with a track record for successful lobbying. So successful was the mining industry in the early days of the state that they secured protection in the state constitution on taxation; the industry continues to be powerful in continued wrangling over taxation to this day. Population growth has also given significant power to the Nevada State Education Association, whose schoolteachers provide a potent reservoir of potential volunteers for political action. Other successful groups include organized labor, the State of Nevada Employees Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Nevada Taxpayers Association.

3. Article 11 of the state constitution concerns education. A requirement of providing for a “uniform system of common schools” is that a school must be established and maintained in each school district for at least six months of every year.

Lesson 5

1. The Nevada legislature has a number of characteristics in terms of organization and rules that differ from those of the US Congress. For one thing, it has a much smaller membership, consisting of 42 members in the lower house and 21 in the upper house. Like in the House of Representatives, members of the lower house of the state legislature serve two year terms; however, members of the upper house serve four year terms whereas US Senators serve six year terms.

One very important difference is that the Nevada state legislature meets every other year, whereas the US Congress meets throughout each year. The length of these sessions, and the capacity to invoke special sessions to deal with emergency issues, are problems facing the state legislature which have developed over time and have no analogue on the federal level. The manner in which legislators receive compensation and bill expenses for their service is also different from the federal level, owing to limits specified in the state constitution.

The presiding officer of the state senate is the lieutenant governor, whereas the vice president of the US presides over the US Senate. Whereas the US Constitution gives latitude in the lawmaking process to the lawmakers, the Nevada constitution specifically lays out the process for a bill to become a law. The limited legislative session gives relatively more power to committees within the state legislature than they possess on the federal level, and committee recommendations are more likely to be affirmed by the whole body in the Nevada legislature than they are at the federal level.

The US constitution specifies that all bills concerning taxation must originate in the house; the state legislature has no such restriction. The Nevada legislature also restricts the ability to amend proposed bills to only topics germane to the original bill; on the federal level there is no such restriction of relevance. The US Congress allows bills to become law with a majority of those present and voting; the state legislature always requires a majority of those elected. In Nevada bills governing taxation require a two-third supermajority to pass as of a 1996 amendment; the US Congress does not have this.

Finally, the process whereby the governor can veto a bill differs from the US president vetoing a bill coming out of the US Congress. The governor lacks a pocket veto, while the US president has that power. A subsequent veto override of the governor by the state legislature requires a two-third vote of all those elected, rather than all those present as in the US Congress.

**2.** Reapportionment is the redistribution of representation within a legislature. This could consist, for example, of redefining the geographical boundaries in which voters will decide on their particular representative to the legislature.

Reapportionment has had an important role in shifting the balance of power in Nevada’s legislature. For a long period districts were apportioned such that rural voters were greatly overrepresented in the legislature and urban voters were underrepresented. This especially limited the power of populous, urban Clark County.

In 1964 the US Supreme Court mandated that Nevada undergo reapportionment such that the seats in the both houses of the state legislature should be based on population. Eventually this process led to a more equal apportionment of seats in the state, giving more power to urban areas and especially Clark County at the cost of rural regions. A new reapportionment every ten years is required to continually update the distribution of seats to correspond to changes in the population.

3. The size of the Nevada legislature is discussed in Article 15 of the constitution. This article limits the total number of legislators to a maximum of 75. Another limit on size is specified in Article 4. This article limits the size of the state Senate to between one-third and one-half the size of the state Assembly.

**Lesson 6**

1. The executive branch of Nevada contains six elected officers. I will describe the basic duties of each.

The governor is responsible for seeing that the laws of the state are faithfully executed. To do so he can unilaterally appoint officials to a number of departments, boards, commissions, and committees in addition to serving on some of them himself. Unlike on the federal level, the governor cannot issue pardons, though he does serve on a committee that can issue pardons by majority vote. Other powers of the governor include the ability to appoint some officials in cases of vacancy and temporarily suspend a fine. He must sign all state grants and commissions. The governor serves a variety of ceremonial roles as head of state.

The governor also has important roles owing to his relationship with the legislature. The governor can propose bills to the legislature through mandatory State of the State addresses. The governor also proposes the state budget to the legislature, which is usually adopted with few changes. The governor has some powers related to convening and adjourning the legislature in special sessions. Finally, the governor also exercises the ability to veto bills, though that veto can then be overridden by a supermajority in the legislature.

The governor also is the commander-of-chief of the Nevada National Guard, and customarily is the leader of his party within the state.

The lieutenant governor assumes the responsibilities of the governor when the post is vacant, or when the governor is absent (where the definition of absence has been in question over time). The lieutenant governor also serves as the presiding officer in the state Senate and can cast a tiebreaking vote. The lieutenant governor also heads the Commission on Tourism.

The attorney general serves on the Board of State Prison Commissioners, the Board of Examiners, and the Board of Pardons Commissioners. Other duties include obligations to provide legal advice to state agencies, to defend the state in the US Supreme Court and prosecute cases in the Nevada Supreme Court, to oversee the district attorneys in each of Nevada’s counties, and to submit a biennial report to the governor about the state of law enforcement in Nevada.

The secretary of state must sign all grants and commissions of the state. He serves on the Board of State Prison Commissioners and the Board of Examiners. He is required to maintain a record of official acts of government departments and journals of the legislature. He also issues certificates to Nevada businesses, regulates securities issued by these businesses, and commissions notaries public in the state. He also prepares the official state ballot, publishes the election results, and issues a certificate to the winners.

The treasurer receives and distributes money paid to the state upon approval of the controller. He deposits all state funds and assures their safety and earnings at the highest interest rate possible.

The controller issues warrants to distribute money to the treasurer, and keeps the state’s books by making an annual report of state expenditures. He also audits state funds. This role also involves advising the legislature on the appropriation of funds to pay claims against the state.

2. The duties of the attorney general, secretary of state, controller, treasurer, and superintendent of public funds are mentioned in Article 5, section 22.

Lesson 7

**1.** Nevada’s court system has three major parts: the supreme court, the district courts, and the municipal and justice courts.

The primary duty of the Supreme Court is to handle appeals from lower courts, though it can also issue various writs without hearing an appeal. When hearing an appeal, the Supreme Court can only hear questions of law, not questions of fact, and it cannot give advisory opinions.

The district courts have original jurisdiction in all cases where the legislature has not given power to other courts. In general, the district courts hear cases about serious criminal offenses, civil cases over $10,000, hear appeals from state agencies, and can issue the same writs as the supreme court. In appellate jurisdiction, the district courts hear appeals from the municipal and justice courts. Family courts also exist within the district court system.

The municipal and justice courts are the most limited. The justice courts have original jurisdiction over minor criminal and civil matters, and can hold hearings over felonies and misdemeanor cases to decide if the case should go on to the district court. The municipal courts hear traffic cases and cases involving violations of city ordinances.

In terms of workload, the courts interact through a system of appeals that pushes cases up the hierarchy of courts. Justice courts can remand cases to the district courts, the district courts can take justice court cases on appeal, and the supreme court can hear appeals from the district courts. In general the supreme court’s workload has grown greatly over the last 75 years, leading to changes to the court’s size intended to help reduce the workload. The district courts also saw heavy workloads that led to statutory changes intended to streamline the judicial process.

2. Before 1976, vacancies on the supreme and district courts were filled by the governor. In 1976 voters created the Nevada Commission on Judicial Selection, which refers three names to the governor for possible appointment to the vacancy, of whom the governor chooses one. This only lasts until the following general election, when the appointee must run for either the next term, or the remainder of the term for that office. In general, being appointed to a judgeship is likely to last into subsequent terms due to high incumbency rates for judges.

For a supreme court vacancy, a permanent commission recommends the names to the governor. For a district court vacancy, a temporary commission containing the permanent commission plus two additional members chooses the names.

Justice court vacancies are filled by a county commission of the county over which the court has jurisdiction. Municipal court vacancies are filled according to rules laid out in that city’s charter, usually by the city council.

3. The judicial districts of Nevada are defined in Article 6, section 5. Though this article specifies nine districts, as of the modern day there are eleven judicial districts in Nevada.

Lesson 8

1. Counties in Nevada are governed by a Board of County Commissioners.The county commissioners are elected by voters in the counties for terms of four years, with vacancies filled by the governor. The boards perform duties delegated by the state legislature and state constitution, including law enforcement and administering state statutes.

These boards have limited power. They can perform only duties delegated by the state legislature and state constitution, which can give or rescind power arbitrarily. Individuals on the boards find their power limited by dependency on the voters for their office. Often county officers such as the county clerk, district attorney, and sheriff are similarly accountable and similarly limited in power by what voters will tolerate.

2. When a city is established by general charter, the legislature has voted that a standard municipal government is to be created for that city. When a city is established by special charter, the city drafts its own particular terms for municipal government that are then given approval by the legislature. Ely is an example of a general charter city, and Reno is an example of a special charter city.

3. Municipal Corporations are outlined in Article 8.

Lesson 9

**1.** The primary sources of revenue for the state of Nevada in the modern day are gaming taxes, sales taxes, business taxes, and excise taxes. Income taxes are prohibited in the state constitution. Gaming taxes include taxes drawn from slot machines, table games, and live entertainment at casinos, though lotteries are not allowed in Nevada. Sales taxes are exacted at the point of sale and are earmarked for various uses such as school support, county or city-specific relief, and general use. Together these account for more than 50% of the state’s revenue. A business tax that exacts a certain amount from employers based on the number of employees accounts for about 10% of the revenue, and excise taxes on specific items like cigarettes and insurance account for approximately 10% as well.

The state’s revenue generating system has advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages include low rates of property tax and no income tax for residents of the state. Much of the state revenue comes from tourists to Nevada who pay gaming and sales taxes, lowering the tax burden on residents.

Some disadvantages include instability of revenue over time, owing to the sensitivity of the revenue generation structure to economic downturn: if tourism falters, so does state revenue, often to a dramatic and unpredictable extent. Additionally, the low tax burden can translate to low availability and quality of state services, for example those designed to assist the state’s poor and disabled.

2. The primary areas of state spending are education and human services, accounting for 84% of the state’s operating budget for 2011-2013. The remainder was spent on prisons, highways, public safety, and other miscellaneous services and appropriations.

This distribution of spending can be attributed to several factors. In general, the desires of citizens of the state and their representatives can account for the spread of spending. The rapid growth of enrollment in the state education system requires continuous maintenance of the education system in the budget (in fact, the proportion of education in the budget has even shrunk even as enrollment has increased).

The author attributes the high rate of spending in the human services area to the fallout of the economic downturn that began in 2008, which increased the needs of individuals for such services.

Additionally, the distribution of state funds can be attributed in some part to the “pork barrel” actions of legislators, who might try to secure appropriations out of the budget for pet projects.

3. Article 9 Section 2 contains a requirement that the legislature must provide “for an annual tax sufficient to defray the estimated expenses of the state for each fiscal year”.

Lesson 10

1. The author claims that the two primary factors shaping Nevada since 1980 are two-party competition and rapid population growth.

Two party-competition has shaped Nevada politics by breaking the period of Democratic dominance that began in the 1930s. Republicans and Democrats have competitively vied for, and had mixed records, in holding many of the state’s offices; entrenched incumbents of one party have been ousted by insurgent candidates of the other party.

Rapid population growth has had huge effects on state policy. Population growth led to boom times for construction and housing prices in the period before the Great Recession, exacerbating the rebound that took place during the downturn.

That this population growth was largely centered around Clark County has led to numerous political battles over the distribution of state revenue. Likewise, the demographic distribution of these new residents of the state has skewed towards retirees, who are more likely to require medical care and social services. Population pressures have also exacerbated battles over water rights for the state’s populous cities, which push against the claims of ranchers and farmers in rural areas.

2. Nevada’s rate of growth influences the delivery of public services in Nevada by creating pressures and demands on state services; as the author notes, new residents in Nevada often require immediate use of state resources like roads and schools, but the tax revenue they pay into the system takes many years to accrue.

Likewise, the demands of citizens (especially an increasing proportion of retirees) present a conflict between required social services and education against a general inclination against being taxed in order to provide those services. The ability of citizens to use direct democracy initiatives like referendums and amendments to manipulate the state government increases the volatility and force with which these two competing drives of the citizenry interact.

The public revenue structure of Nevada is heavily biased towards revenues coming from gaming and tourism. While this lowers the tax burden on residents, it also introduces volatility into the state budget and leads to Nevada’s fortunes, and the quality of its public services, being dependent on the welfare of a single industry. This can be dangerous, as the Great Recession demonstrated.

Constitutional requirements influence the form of public services in Nevada in several ways. The requirement for a balanced budget has limited the state’s ability to borrow so as to invest in future growth; the state’s ability to issue bonds has changed over time in order to help reduce this limitation. Likewise, direct democracy initiatives in Nevada have been used to wrangle over taxation and revenue in statutes and constitutional amendments, with the outcome usually leaning more towards low taxation but poor services. Constitutional amendments making taxes require a higher margin of votes in the legislature to pass are but one example of this.

I agree with the author that there is some hypocrisy involved in these debates. Those bemoaning poor services in the state should probably not bemoan the taxes they are required to pay. In my opinion, the poor condition of state services in the wake of the Great Recession was powerful evidence of a system where residents of Nevada cannot have it both ways; they must accept poor services as a condition of low taxes, or accept that taxation will have to increase in order for services to improve.

3. The procedure for legislators to amend the state constitution is described in Article 16. It is also possible for voters to amend the constitution via ballot initiative, a process described in Article 19.