



AN IMPRESSIVE YOUNG LEADER IN THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE: SENATE MAJORITY LEADER STEVEN HORSFORD

BY STEPHANIE ALLEN, YOUNG LAWYERS CHAIR

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The theme of *Nevada Lawyer* this month is the Nevada State Legislature. In the Young Lawyer's column, it is only fitting that we recognize one of the youngest, most impressive legislative leaders in Nevada, Senate Majority Leader Steven Horsford.

Horsford, who is 35 years old, is a native Nevadan, born and raised in Las Vegas. He attended Clark High School and went on to college at the University of Nevada, Reno where he received his bachelor's degree in political science. He is currently the president of Nevada Partners, Inc. and the CEO of the Culinary Training Academy, a nonprofit employment and career preparatory organization. Horsford began his professional life in government affairs in 1993, as a legislative intern. Since 1993, he has been involved in every subsequent Nevada legislative session in various capacities. In 2004, Horsford was elected to the Nevada State Senate. He was only 31 years old at the time and was quickly recognized as a Nevada leader.

Horsford will assume the position of senate majority leader in this year's legislative session. He is the youngest senate majority leader in the state's history. He is also the first African-American senate majority leader in the state's history. Most importantly, he is a young leader who is making a difference in Nevada.

I was recently privileged to talk with Horsford about some of his past experiences in the Legislature and his plans for this year's legislative session. Over his last few years in office, Horsford has voted on some extremely important pieces of legislation. A few of the bills Horsford is most proud of have involved funding for full-day kindergarten and reform to the child welfare system.

For this legislative session, Horsford plans to tackle the current budget crisis and looks forward to putting

together a long-term financial plan that will benefit Nevadans. To address the current budget crisis, Horsford plans to propose some accountability measures in our state government. This is important to him, considering there are limited resources available. His priorities, with respect to the available resources, will be to ensure that we have appropriate funding for health care, education (K-20) and public safety. Horsford predicts there will be bi-partisan support in the Senate this year on some lingering issues such as reforming the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) for new employees. I have no doubt that under Horsford's leadership, there will be much accomplished this legislative session.

When I asked Horsford what he enjoyed most about the legislative process, he explained that he enjoyed working every day with people who want to improve Nevada. I asked him how we, as attorneys, can help. He responded that our knowledge and expertise as lawyers makes us invaluable to the legislative process and that we

should get involved in shaping the law. Horsford has organized a number of policy councils designed to evaluate and discuss topics important to Nevada. If you are interested in getting involved with a policy council, you can find out more volunteer information on his website at www.stevenhorsford.com. I asked Horsford whether he had any advice for the young lawyers in the state of Nevada. He suggested that we take advantage of the opportunities that are available in Nevada and contribute our knowledge and expertise to help make Nevada a better place.

On behalf of the Young Lawyer's Section, we thank Senator Horsford for his outstanding public service, leadership and commitment to Nevada. **NL**

