

WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT 1

This document analyzes the race for Washoe County Board of Commissioners in District 1. As of April 2024, the race included four candidates: incumbent Democrat Alexis Hill, and Republicans Marsha Lee Berkgigler, Melissa Fitch, and Eugene E. Hoover. Hill defeated then-incumbent Berkgigler by approximately ten percentage points in 2020. Hill currently serves as [chairwoman of the Board of County Commissioners](#). With the commission often voting 3-2 on hot button topics, the 2024 rematch between Hill and Berkgigler may go a long way toward deciding the future direction of Washoe County. In 2022, [the commission voted 4-1 to reject a resolution](#) proposing sweeping changes to the county's election system, including moving to almost all-paper ballots and requiring counting be done by hand.

Primary Election Day occurs on June 11, with early voting running from May 25 to June 7.

Key findings:

With the commission often voting 3-2 on contentious issues, the 2024 race for Washoe County Commissioner from District 1 will likely determine which party controls the board. Incumbent Alexis Hill is a Democrat, who defeated Republican Lee Berkgigler by approximately ten percentage points in 2020. Berkgigler, who ended the 2020 election cycle with just over \$3,000, served two terms on the commission before her defeat, has aligned herself with some of the wealthiest developers and influencers in the county. As of the end of 2023, Hill had over \$123,000 cash on hand.

In recent years, the county has seen a sharp increase in conspiracy theories around elections and voter fraud. In 2022, the commission, with Hill's support, voted 4-1 against a radical proposal to upend the local voting process in response to false claims of voter fraud. "This would limit access to voting and create chaos," Hill said. In 2023, Hill said the commission had faced "paid and organized" disruptors at public meetings. That same year, businessman Robert Beadles, a wealthy conspiracy theorist who has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to Republican candidates in Nevada in recent years, filed a lawsuit seeking the removal of several public officials, including Hill, claiming they have not responded to his election grievances and stonewalled his concerns. While the county DA has called Beadles' statements the "inaccurate rantings of a conspiracy lunatic and a Reno judge dismissed the suit in November 2023, Beadles' work attempting to influence elections continues. Robert Beadles' blog included links to videos on Gab, in which Berkgigler made salacious and unsubstantiated allegations about former Commissioner Robert Lucey, a moderate Republican who lost a June 2022 primary to then County Assessor Mike Clark who candidacy was boosted by Beadles.

During her two terms on the commission, Berkgigler took several controversial and fringe positions. In 2020, Berkgigler said she "absolutely oppose(d) any concept of police defunding..." In 2015, Berkgigler led negotiations to get the owner of a ballpark to pay late property taxes. As part of the deal, the county forgave \$804,000 in penalties and back taxes. In 2018, she opposed a slight increase in property taxes to pay for new flood infrastructure. In 2013, a proposal to raise money for Washoe County school repairs was defeated after a majority of commissioners—including Berkgigler—said they couldn't support it. The measure sought to increase the county sales tax rate by one-quarter of 1 percent and property taxes by 5 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. School district officials and supporters said it would have provided \$20 million a year for needed repairs at aging schools; Alexis Hill raised the school funding issue during her 2020 campaign against Berkgigler. Berkgigler has been a supporter of Donald Trump, and helped the county back out of a legal fight against then-Governor Steve Sisolak's partial ban on a pair of controversial anti-malarial drugs Trump often speciously touted as a coronavirus treatment.

CANDIDATES

Alexis Hill – Democratic Party
Marsha Lee Berkbigler - Republican Party
Melissa Fitch - Republican Party
Eugene Hoover - Republican Party

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Candidate	Total Raised	Total Expenditures	Cash on Hand
Alexis Hill	\$151,851.15	\$30,933.46	\$123,178.90
Marsha Lee Berkbigler*	-	-	-
Melissa Fitch	-	-	-
Eugene Hoover	-	-	-

[Nevada Secretary of State Databases, accessed 4/7/24]

*Berkbigler has not filed a campaign finance report since January 2021. At that time, she reported \$3,100.45 cash on hand.

MARSHA LEE BERKBIGLER

Background & Philosophy

2012: Berkbigler, a Republican and government affairs consultant with Reno-based Forte LLP, announced plans to run for District 1 seat on County Commission. [Reno Gazette-Journal, 1/18/12]

Berkbigler: “I’m very concerned about the fact our governments can’t get along.” “Marsha Berkbigler, a County Commission District 1 candidate, said she believes her experience and training as a mediator makes her well suited for the job. A member of the Nevada Dispute Coalition, Berkbigler said the coalition sent a letter offering its services, even for free, to Reno and Washoe elected officials over the fire issue. Not one responded, she said. ‘I’m very concerned about the fact our governments can’t get along,’ she said. ‘Having governments functioning well is extremely important to growing business. We’re a small enough community that our governments need to be on the same page for most issues.’” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 5/9/12]

Berkbigler “a longtime political consultant and lobbyist...” “Berkbigler also is a longtime political consultant and lobbyist who initially contemplated a Reno City Council bid earlier this year.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 11/7/12]

2012: Narrowly won election over Democrat Andre Diss with 53 percent of the vote. [Reno Gazette-Journal, 11/7/12 11/13/12]

2013: Berkbigler represented ten statewide business associations and several non-profit and educational groups after opening and managing government relation consulting business. “‘My approach is I always need to know why,’ Berkbigler said. ‘I am a business person and I have been involved in many businesses, I run my own business. I have worked for major corporations and I always need to know why we’re doing the things we’re doing. That will be a question I will ask often. I think from that perspective there are going to be some differences.’ Berkbigler opened and managed a

government relation consulting business, representing 10 statewide business associations and several non-profit and educational groups, according to Washoe County.” [Sparks Tribune, 1/7/13]

2013: Claimed mediating was a part of her business work. “Whatever happens, Hartung said, the county's relationship with the city of Reno must improve before anything can change - a relationship Berkbigler said she hopes to help mend after the divisive fire department breakup in the summer of 2012. ‘I'd like to see a better working relationship between the city of Reno and the county,’ said Berkbigler, a Republican who will now sit in the District 1 seat in place of former Commissioner John Breternitz. ‘As a mediator, that's one of the things I do in my private business, so I'm sort of looking forward to seeing if I can help in that area.’” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 1/8/13]

2013: Berkbigler: “I didn’t get elected just to get re-elected...” “‘I've been quoted as saying that no matter what we do on this issue, there is going to be at least 50 percent of my district that will be unhappy with me,’ Commissioner Marsha Berkbigler said. ‘That's OK. I didn't get elected just to get re-elected, and I don't think any of the rest of us did either. So we will make the tough decisions,’ Berkbigler said. ‘But this is an issue that is going to require a lot of extra time for us.’” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 7/28/13]

2014: Announced candidacy for Reno Mayor. “Washoe County Commissioner Marsha Berkbigler became the first politician to jump off the fence in the Reno mayor's race, following the Feb. 20 Nevada Supreme Court decision that barred term-limited council members from running. Berkbigler said today she is in the race and will formally file for office on Monday, the first day of the two-week filing period. ‘I am humbled by the amount of positive encouragement I've received to run for Reno mayor,’ Berkbigler said in a written release. ‘I had hoped the Nevada Supreme Court would have made a different ruling, but at this time Reno cannot afford a mayor who needs on-the-job training, and I feel I have the experience in both the private sector and government to provide the leadership Reno needs.’ Berkbigler, a Republican, is in the middle of her first term representing District 1 on the county commission.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 3/1/14]

2014: In campaign for Reno mayor, Berkbigler positioned herself as pro-growth, pro-economic development, pro-business, and anti-tax. “That said, Berkbigler is working assiduously to line up that support, positioning herself as the pro-growth, pro-economic development, pro-business, anti-taxes candidate. And she's already an elected official, which gives her an edge. One problem: Many in the business community would like to see her stay on the commission and are actively trying to convince her to do that.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 3/23/14]

- **Lost in primary with 5 percent of the vote.** [Washoe County Government [Web Archive](#)]

2015: Berkbigler: “It is our responsibility to make sure that we grow the business of this county.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 8/9/15]

2015: Berkbigler: “I’m running one more time and then not running again...I’m not doing this for a career...” “‘I'm running one more time and then not running again,’ Berkbigler said. ‘I'm not doing this for a career. I want to try and resolve some outstanding issues and I think I've been successful in resolving several of them.’” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 9/17/15]

2015: Served as chairwoman of County Commission. [Reno Gazette-Journal, 9/27/15]

Berkbigler a mother of seven and grandmother of 14. “Republican Marsha Berkbigler is seeking a second term, which she says would be her last. The retired lobbyist and communications professional, who is also mother of seven and grandmother of 14, doesn't want to serve longer than eight years.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 10/19/16]

2016: Berkbigler won reelection. [Reno Gazette-Journal, 11/9/16]

2020: Berkbigler: “I’m running for a final four-year term…” “I am an incumbent. And I say that proudly. If I weren't an incumbent, I would not have had the honor and opportunity to serve the people of Washoe County for the past eight years as Washoe County Commissioner, District 1. I'm running for a final four-year term, and as campaign season closes, I'd like to pontificate on a few issues.” [Reno-Gazette-Journal, 10/11/20]

- **Said she needed to run after husband died.** “Four years ago, Berkbigler said she wouldn't seek a third term in office. But then her husband died. ‘We were going to travel,’ she said. ‘Unfortunately, he passed away. Truthfully, what am I going to do with myself if I don't run? I like what I do.’” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 10/16/20]

Robert Beadles’ blog linked to Gab video where Berkbigler made unsubstantiated claims that moderate GOP commissioner Bob Lucey made “booty calls” to county employ among other accusations. “Within the blog, Beadles featured quotes from Herman and Lucey's Republican opponent Mike Clark, disparaging Lucey's character. The blog post linked to videos on Gab, in which Herman and former Commissioner Marsha Berkbigler, a Republican, made unsubstantiated allegations that Lucey made ‘booty calls’ to a county employee, among other accusations.” [Nevada Independent, 10/17/22]

- **Beadles’ PAC financed numerous attacks against Lucey.** “Beadles' political action committee, The Franklin Project, also financed numerous mailers to voters featuring images of Lucey reminiscent of police mug shots. They included unfounded accusations of racism; funneling lucrative government contracts to his wife while also cheating on her; shutting down ‘election integrity’ and being a bully. One flier called him ‘Bob 'Lucifer' Lucey’ in all capital letters with a horned devil sporting Lucey's face on the back. thorough fact-check of the claims by the Reno Gazette Journal found that the allegations were ‘all smoke, no fire.’ Lucey, a moderate Republican and local business owner, said smear campaigns are nothing new in the political world.” [Nevada Independent, 10/17/22]
- **Beadles blamed Trump’s defeat on international Jewish conspiracy.** “In the days after the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, Robert Beadles logged onto a video-streaming platform and blamed former President Donald Trump's electoral defeat on an international Jewish conspiracy. The chaotic events of the day, he said, were choreographed by outside forces, not Trump supporters. Beadles pointed to the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion’ a long-debunked anti-Semitic pamphlet claiming that Jews are conspiring to take over the world. ‘Just like the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion,' when you infiltrate every single layer of civilization of a society, they put their people in these prominent positions to keep the information from leaking out or to keep their narrative in place,’ Beadles said. ‘And we're seeing that.’” [Nevada Independent, 10/17/22]
- **Beadles has claimed 2020 election was stolen, railed against Covid restrictions and vaccines, and perpetrated outlandish narratives about Black communities.** “During more than 175 hours of recorded livestream footage reviewed by The Nevada Independent, KUNR Public Radio and American Public Media, Beadles went far beyond repeatedly citing the

‘Protocols.’ He also claimed the 2020 election was stolen, railed against COVID restrictions and vaccines, and perpetuated outlandish narratives about Black communities. ‘The undeniable truth is that neither slavery, nor Jim Crow, nor the harshest racism, has decimated the Black family the way the welfare state has,’ Beadles said during a 2021 livestream.” [Nevada Independent, 10/17/22]

- **Nevada Independent: “What makes Beadles different is that he is using his money to sow doubts about the election system in Nevada’s most significant battleground county.”** “Plenty of far-right activists spout anti-Semitic comments, share conspiracy theories and complain about rigged elections from behind a keyboard. What makes Beadles different is that he is using his money to sow doubts about the election system in Nevada's most significant battleground county. He has tried to remove people from power who disagree with his worldview and boost hand-selected extremist candidates who have openly questioned the 2020 election results. Beadles also invests in and promotes platforms such as Pilled.net and Gab, which have become online gathering spaces for anti-Semites, political extremists and conspiracy theorists. Beadles' conspiracy theories center around an almost omnipresent ‘they’ broad enough to include any number of targets but referring at times to a cabal, globalists, elites, members of the Chinese Communist Party, and prominent Jewish families, among others. And while he often tells his audience to take their country back peacefully, Beadles has also supported executing public health officials responding to the COVID pandemic.” [Nevada Independent, 10/17/22]
- **Beadles made a name for himself as an election denier, far-right provocateur, and prominent GOP donor.** “Born and raised in California, Beadles moved to Nevada in 2020. His debut on the state's political scene came in October 2021, when he threatened members of the Washoe County school board during a public meeting: ‘God has blessed me, and I have a shit-ton of money, and I’m going to do everything I fucking can...to remove you.’ Robert Beadles speaking to the Washoe County school board in Oct. 2021. Since then, he has made a name for himself as an election denier, far-right provocateur and prominent GOP donor who has given more than \$1 million over the past two years to Republican candidates up and down the ballot. He charged into Nevada Republican Party politics, using his power and influence to win a seat on the Washoe GOP executive committee and push the party's agenda to more extreme positions.” [Nevada Independent, 10/17/22]

June 2022: Beadles tried to block certification of Washoe and Clark county 2022 primary results.

“An attempt to block certification of Washoe and Clark county 2022 primary results was launched Wednesday with letters to the Nevada attorney general’s office claiming election violations related largely to observation of voting and vote counting. The letters include summaries of ‘election integrity violation reports’ submitted to the Secretary of State’s office by Republican political influencer Robert Beadles, who is spearheading the effort, and his team of election-process observers. Among the claims sent by Beadles’ legal team are that the county ‘failed to maintain chain of custody of physical ballots, mail-in ballots, and thumb/USB drives. Additionally, my Clients received confirmation that election offices were staffed primarily with single-party employees, including out of state individuals, and often temporary employees.’” [Reno Gazette-Journal, [6/23/22](#)]

On The Issues

Criminal Justice

2020: Berkbigler “absolutely oppose(d) any concept of police defunding...” “What is your approach to recent calls for police reform? Should money be spent differently, reduced? Do we need more transparency on police use of force? ‘I absolutely oppose any concept of police defunding,’ she said. ‘Then we’ll just have a bunch of people who want to behave badly who have guns and there will be no one out there to protect us.’ Berkbigler said she would support additional training for officers ‘on how to handle spoiled rotten brats who think the rules don’t apply to them,’ but added there is no excuse for violence against people of color. ‘If we have those kind of problems, we need to correct those kinds of problems,’ she said. ‘But I am colorblind. I personally don’t see color. I supported bringing a Black man in as Washoe County manager.’ In a follow up email she said she believes all ‘U.S. citizens have a right to be protected and served in the same way regardless of their color, religion, sexual orientation or any other distinction.’” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 10/16/20]

Development & Taxes

2014: Controversial developer hosted Berkbigler fundraiser. “Washoe County Commissioner Marsha Berkbigler’s first major fundraiser for her Reno mayoral campaign will be hosted by a local developer who is seeking to build a controversial apartment complex in Spanish Springs. The March 27 fundraiser will be at the Juniper Ridge home of Developer Jim House, who is working to get approval from the county to build a 360-unit apartment complex. House’s lobbyist Garrett Gordon, as well as local lobbyists Alfredo Alonso and John Sande, are also on the invitation, which solicits \$250 individual contributions, \$500 corporate contributions and \$1,000 contributions from the host committee. The fundraiser is an example of the prevalence of political campaign contributions in local races from individuals who have important projects before the Reno City Council and County Commission. Both Berkbigler and House said the fundraiser has nothing to do with trying to buy sway for the project’s approval. ‘He was a supporter of mine before and he understands that my vote is not buyable,’ Berkbigler said. ‘I don’t think voters should draw anything at all negative from this. That’s the way these things are run. People in the community support me. He just happens to be hosting it at his house, but a number of different people are involved in it.’” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 3/14/14]

- **Project had drawn significant opposition; Berkbigler had voted in favor.** “House and his partners have been working for 15 months to gain the necessary approvals for the Village at the Peak apartment complex. The project would be in the unincorporated county near the intersection of Calle de la Plata and Pyramid Highway. The project would require a master plan amendment - a difficult process that requires approval from local and regional planning commissions - because of its density and because multi-family units are prohibited in the area. It has drawn significant opposition from residents in the area. The project was initially rejected by the Washoe County Planning Commission in a 3-3 vote last year. House and his partners appealed to the Washoe County Commission. The commission approved the master plan amendment during a contentious meeting, during which someone yelled ‘Shame on you!’ at commissioners. Commissioner Vaughn Hartung was the lone nay vote. But in January, the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Commission rejected the project. Instead of appealing that decision, House and his partners have decided to change their initial application and go through the process a second time. Nothing is currently pending before the Washoe County Commission on the project. But the new application would likely make its way to the Commission for eventual approval. Berkbigler voted in favor of the project, saying she thinks it’s important for economic development in the area. The site is close to a business park, which will eventually employ hundreds of people. ‘Affordable housing is a very important issue,’ Berkbigler said. ‘It seems illogical to me that we would tell businesses, come on out here, but not have multifamily

housing near for your people who are working for you. To me it's purely about economic development.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 3/14/14]

Berkbigler led negotiations to get Aces Ballpark owners to pay property taxes that forgave \$804,000. “The only person definitely running for District 1 so far, is Berkbigler, whose lead role in the negotiations to get the Aces Ballpark owners to pay their property taxes rubbed some the wrong way...Berkbigler was a lead negotiator in the deal that convinced retail billionaire Herb Simon and his partners Stuart and Jerry Katzoff to pay their property taxes on the ballpark. As part of the deal, the county forgave \$804,000 in penalties and interest owed on the back taxes. ‘We had two choices,’ Berkbigler said. ‘We could litigate or we could cut a deal. ‘I negotiated the deal I thought was best for taxpayers...’ The deal also included a requirement the county pay up to \$100,000 into the newly formed stadium authority. The money may be used to upgrade the lighting at the ballpark, an expense the park's developers would have borne had the deal not been struck.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 9/17/15]

2016: Berkbigler discussed five issues she considered when assessing growth projects. “What is your philosophy when it comes to managing growth: Berkbigler said local governments need to come up with a better framework for working together as a region that includes Fernley and Storey County. The county commission has been frustrated with the way the Regional Planning Governing Board has approached growth because it keeps certain projects out of the unincorporated area of the county. Berkbigler says she tries assess five issues when considering any growth project: Waste water, water, schools, traffic and fire service.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 10/19/16]

2016: Berkbigler expressed preference for cap on tax bill increases set at 3 percent for residential properties rather than alternate calculation that kept tax bills flat despite rising value. “Do property taxes need to be adjusted: Berkbigler said the Legislature needs to look at the way it calculates the cap on residential and commercial properties. She would like to see that cap on tax bill increases be 3 percent on residential properties rather than allowing an alternate calculation that has kept property tax bills flat despite rising property values. She also would favor resetting a house's depreciated value when it changes ownership.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 10/19/16]

2016: Berkbigler indicated support for Question 1, sales tax increase for school construction. “Do you support Question 1, the sales tax increase for school construction: Yes, but she is concerned about whether the school board will be responsible with the money.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 10/19/16]

2018: Berkbigler wrote op-ed in support of Washoe County Lands Bill. “It's no surprise that our region is growing, and with growth comes growing pains. We need affordable housing, infrastructure, expanded services and the ability to respond proactively, collaboratively and strategically to these needs. However, we are running out of space. Enter the Washoe County Lands Bill. The proposal was crafted with the intent to respond with long-term vision and forethought to the changes around us. With smart growth, we improve the quality of life for the entire region. The beauty of the proposal is that it pays for itself and gives benefits to our region. It allows federal dollars to stay in our community to support growth while simultaneously allowing for conservation. From the sale of federal lands within the disposal boundary, 85 percent stays here for parks, trails and open-space opportunities. The development from these sales provides for property tax to come to the local governments to pay for infrastructure, public safety and other services as opposed to the pennies to the dollar that we would receive from PILT (that is, payment in lieu of taxes from the federal government).” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 9/30/18]

2018: Opposed slight increase in property taxes to pay for new flood infrastructure. “The chamber also endorsed a measure specific to Washoe County that asks voters to approve a slight increase in

property taxes to pay for new flood infrastructure along the Truckee River. An additional tax of 2.48 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation would potentially pay for levees, floodwalls and widening the river. Proponents believe the additional funds would also help unlock \$182 million in federal funding. The chamber said it supports the slight property tax increase because flooding is a direct threat to economic activity in the region. ‘Flooding has a direct impact on our residents and their paychecks,’ the chamber said in its press release. ‘The Reno-Tahoe International Airport is an economic engine of this community and flooding would halt plane arrivals with tourists and the commodities delivered daily to our stores, pharmacies, restaurants, and other retail businesses.’ But several local elected officials, including Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve and Washoe County Commission Chairwoman Marsha Berkbigler, have come out against the measure. They argue that any new funding should benefit the entire county and not be specifically earmarked for the Truckee River, which runs through downtown Reno and Sparks.” [Elko Daily Free Press, 10/4/18]

Elections

2002: Washoe County Commission named six people—including Berkbigler—to serve on a committee to examine buying new election equipment. “The Washoe County Commission on Tuesday named six people to serve on a committee to look at buying new election equipment. Registrar of Voters Dan Burk said the committee will be considering electronic "touch screen" machines to replace the scanning machines that count votes marked on paper ballots. Committee members include Estella Levario Gutierrez, a Republican and former school board candidate; Scott Youngs, a Democrat and project coordinator for Americans with Disabilities Act in Nevada; Marsha Berkbigler, a Republican with Charter Communications; Jean Stoess, a Democrat and former county commissioner; Rick Bareuther, a Democrat and Sparks information technology director; and Lois Avery, of the Natural Law party.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 3/13/02]

Education Funding

2013: Proposal to raise money for Washoe County school repairs defeated after majority of commissioners said they couldn’t support it. “A proposal to raise money for Washoe County school repairs went down in defeat without a vote after a majority of county commissioners said they couldn’t support it. After months of hearings and debate, AB46 had been passed by the 2013 Legislature but died Tuesday night before the Washoe County Commission, where four out of five votes were needed for passage. A motion by Commissioner Kitty Jung to approve the tax package failed to get a second and died. A revised motion to approve just the sales tax portion met the same fate...The measure sought to increase the county sales tax rate by one-quarter of 1 percent and property taxes by 5 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. School district officials and supporters said it would have provided \$20 million a year for needed repairs at aging schools. More than a third of the district's 93 schools are at least a half-century old, including Reno, Sparks and Wooster high schools. Washoe County School Superintendent Pedro Martinez said failure to address the pressing maintenance needs now will be more costly down the road. ‘The need is not going to go away,’ he said Wednesday on KOH-AM radio. The legislation authorized the county commission to approve by Jan. 1 the one-time tax increases, an authority typically reserved for state lawmakers. But legislators in the 2013 session could not muster the two-thirds majority needed to pass taxes and override a veto by the governor. So the bill was amended ‘enabling’ the county commission to do it. Some commissioners said the proposal should go to a public vote and resented the Legislature punting the tax-raising task to them. ‘I’ve been on the fence on this issue because I see both sides,’ Commissioner Marsha Berkbigler said during the Tuesday night meeting. ‘I believe the school district has done an excellent job of answering our questions.’ But she added there was still public concern that the district is not as transparent as they should be.” [AP, 11/13/13]

Second Amendment

2016: Commission decreased legal shooting area in wilderness near Reno. “Local officials have decreased the legal shooting area in the wilderness near Reno. The Reno Gazette-Journal reports that the Washoe County Commission voted Tuesday to decrease the area where shooting is allowed on Peavine Mountain. It will also make the zone's boundaries clearer. Nearly everything to the east and south of Peavine Peak Road is now off limits to shooting. Shooting is still legal in most of the area north and west of the road. Commissioner Marsha Berkbigler says having a clear line will help authorities enforce the law.” [AP, 7/13/16]

Trump

2016: Berkbigler supported Trump’s presidential candidacy: “I didn’t say I supported him happily, but he is my party’s nominee.” “Do you support your party's presidential nominee, Donald Trump: Yes. ‘I didn't say I supported him happily, but he is my party's nominee. I don't have concerns big enough about him to vote for (Hillary Clinton).’” [AP, 7/13/16]

May 2020: Berkbigler backed away from legal fight from ban on controversial anti-malarial drugs touted as coronavirus treatment by Trump. “Washoe County has backed away from the legal fight against Gov. Steve Sisolak's partial ban on a pair of controversial anti-malarial drugs often touted as a coronavirus treatment by President Donald Trump. The county Board of Commissioners on Thursday near-unanimously decided to withdraw its support for a lawsuit challenging Sisolak's restrictions on the use of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19 patients, citing ‘new developments’ in other medications to treat the deadly disease. Trump, a self-described ‘big fan’ of the once-obscure treatments for malaria, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, has referred to the drugs as a potential game changer in the battle to contain the coronavirus - statements that are thought to have contributed to confirmed shortages of the drugs.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 5/10/20]

- **Berkbigler shifted positions: “I think it’s probably a good idea to pull this legal brief.** "Days after the president trumpeted the treatments, Sisolak issued an executive order prohibiting them from being prescribed outside of a hospital setting. The move, meant to prevent hoarding, immediately drew the ire of top Republicans and confused some residents who had heard Trump's praise for the medications. Sisolak's partial ban also came under fire from the Nevada Osteopathic Medical Association, or NOMA, which filed a lawsuit arguing the order needlessly limits many doctors' ability to treat patients who might need the drugs. At first, members of the GOP-dominated county commission enthusiastically endorsed that argument, only to change their mind after the emergence of an even newer experimental treatment called Remdesivir. County leaders - who last month insisted that chloroquine prescribing decisions should be left up to doctors and their patients - now feel that the use of Remdesivir is adequate to address Washoe's "broader interests" in preserving public health during the coronavirus outbreak... Vice Chair Marsha Berkbigler, who previously couldn't see ‘any reason why we shouldn't support’ the legal fight, offered a slightly different explanation for distancing county leaders from the issue. ‘I've since learned some things that are going on with NOMA and their attorney that have made me more than a little unhappy,’ Berkbigler said. ‘So I still think doctors should be able to prescribe legal drugs to patients. I haven't changed that position...but I think it's probably a good idea to pull this legal brief.’” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 5/10/20]

- **Column described policy shift as “ludicrous.”** According to a column by Sheila Leslie, “But Nevada's Republican politicians seem very willing to go along with all sorts of nonsense to avoid contradicting their base voters, no matter how ridiculous and ignorant they appear. Witness the initial decision of four Republicans on the Washoe County Commission to file an amicus brief against Governor Sisolak's restrictions on the use of several anti-malarial drugs, which Trump touted as a ‘game changer’ in treatment of the coronavirus. Commissioners Bob Lucey and Marsha Berkgigler later provided ludicrous excuses about ‘new developments’ that changed their minds as they voted to rescind their prior action, but voters won't likely forget their willingness to put party politics ahead of our health.” [Reno Gazette-Journal, 5/24/20]