

# Legislature must prioritize keeping Nevada gaming gold standard

By Richard N. Velotta Las Vegas Review-Journal  
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Nevadans should hope that the state senators and Assembly members were paying attention last week to current events in the gaming industry along with their political races.

Voters in six states approved varying forms of expansion. That means new competition in the form of new sports betting in Maryland, Louisiana and South Dakota, new casinos in Virginia and Nebraska and higher betting limits in Colorado.

For Nevada to maintain its presence as the gold standard of the gaming industry, the state's lawmakers are going to have to pay close attention to the industry, work with regulators and constituents and develop pathways to making gaming even better than it is.

It seems the best pathway to making the industry better is to address issues that have been spurred by the coronavirus pandemic and eliminate some of the fears keeping casino patrons away. One way to do that: Step up efforts to encourage more touch-free options on the gaming floor and establish a more cashless environment.

A lot of grimy cash is passed from one patron to another in our traditional casino setting.

One of the Las Vegas-based analysts who has been doing considerable research on the issue is Brenden Bussmann, director of government affairs for Global Market Advisors.

“Nevada has a good framework in place to take advantage of the cashless opportunity, but it must understand the industry more if it wants to be a leader,” Bussmann said. “Other states are offering more robust regulations and opportunities for the industry. This was apparent in June when Pennsylvania and Nevada both approved additional regulations on cashless. Nevada must up its game if it wants to stay as the leader.”

One aspect of taking the next step forward is for the state to do far more than it has in responsible gaming.

“Two important keys on cashless is to make sure you have solid foundations in AML/KYC (Anti-Money Laundering and Know Your Customer) and responsible gaming,” Bussmann said. “Patrons that use cashless must always feel their funds are safe. By focusing on these two portions, it provides great benefits to patrons, operators and regulators that will keep Nevada as a leader to follow.”

The Nevada Gaming Control Board has been supportive of developing new and improved cashless regulations. One of former Chairwoman Sandra Morgan’s regrets as she resigned last week was not seeing the cashless opportunities

through. Morgan had been a staunch supporter of finding cashless solutions in casinos.

“I’ve been pretty public saying that I’m open to looking at new ways that technology can help attract new customers and be beneficial for not only the industry but even for responsible gaming measures as well,” Morgan told me in [May](#).

She acknowledged that several manufacturing companies are introducing new products and some are in field tests.

“Adoption will be the key, but those that move into this area first with the right solutions will likely have an advantage as the industry recovers,” Bussmann said.

So where are we now?

The Legislature doesn’t convene until February. It isn’t too early for our new lawmakers to put in some homework on this most critical issue to the state.

“As we head into the next session of the Nevada Legislature, there needs to be a comprehensive package that looks to modernize gaming in several areas, including cashless, to keep Nevada as the gaming capital of the world,” Bussmann said. “We can no longer assume that we will always be the best as other states are advancing. We have to be forward thinking to push the industry forward.”

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