

**James G. "Sailor" Ryan**  
**January 12, 1915**  
**Elected 1962, 1966, 1970**

James "Sailor" Ryan served in the Nevada Assembly for eight terms and on the Clark County Commission for one term. His political career was cut short when he was convicted of accepting bribes from a Los Angeles architect.

Ryan came to Nevada from Pennsylvania in 1931 with the Civilian Conservation Corps. He served in the Merchant Marines, where he earned the nickname of Sailor. In 1940, Ryan took a job as a business agent for the American Federation of Labor (AFL). He rose the ranks at the AFL and became president of the local chapter in 1954.

In 1943, Ryan began serving in the Nevada Assembly. Voters reelected him in 1945, 1947, 1949, 1953, 1957, and 1959. He was named Majority Leader in the Assembly three times during his tenure. He ran for Lieutenant Governor against Rex Bell in 1954, but lost by a wide margin. He returned to the Assembly and continued to focus on issues related to public schools, child welfare, organized labor, and increased representation for Clark County. Ryan joined the Las Vegas Valley Water District Board in 1958 to replace Harry Miller. Ryan had introduced the legislation that created the Water District in 1947 in the Assembly.

Ryan won a seat on the Clark County Commission in 1962. Soon after his swearing-in, Ryan generated controversy when he called for the firing of the entire county planning board due to incompetency. He continued to head the AFL while on the Commission. He was reelected in 1966 and 1970. During his time on the Commission, Ryan worked to protect organized labor, increase the number of parks, and on social issues. Police arrested Ryan in 1972 on charges that he took a bribe from a Los Angeles architect in exchange for changing zoning laws. In March of 1974, a judge convicted him. Ryan resigned his seat in May 1974. Despite his conviction and resignation, Ryan ran again in the 1974 County Commission race, but fared extremely poorly in the polls.

Following his political career, Ryan remained active in organized labor. As of 2009 he continued to reside in North Las Vegas.

