

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 426—ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANGLE

MARCH 19, 2001

Referred to Concurrent Committees on Education  
and Ways and Means

SUMMARY—Requires Division of Child and Family Services of Department of Human Resources to establish pilot program to study literacy of juvenile offenders. (BDR S-1270)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.  
Effect on the State: Contains Appropriation included in Executive Budget.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to juvenile offenders; requiring the Division of Child and Family Services of the Department of Human Resources to establish a pilot program to study the literacy of juvenile offenders; making an appropriation to carry out the pilot program; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

- 1 WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of Education,
- 2 recent estimates indicate that approximately 85 percent of juvenile
- 3 offenders have difficulty with reading and comprehending reading
- 4 material; and
- 5 WHEREAS, A national study conducted by Project READ, found that
- 6 more than one-third of the juveniles who were incarcerated at the median
- 7 age of 15.5 years read below the fourth grade reading level; and
- 8 WHEREAS, Ninety percent of the teachers who provide reading
- 9 instruction in juvenile correctional facilities reported that they had
- 10 “students who [could not] read material composed of words from their own
- 11 oral vocabularies”; and
- 12 WHEREAS, While illiteracy and poor academic performance are not
- 13 direct causes of delinquency, empirical studies consistently demonstrate a
- 14 strong link between inadequate literacy skills and the likelihood of
- 15 involvement in the juvenile justice system; and
- 16 WHEREAS, According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
- 17 Prevention of the United States Department of Justice, education is critical
- 18 to rehabilitation for troubled youth; and
- 19 WHEREAS, The Federal Bureau of Prisons reports that the more
- 20 education received, the less likely a person is to be rearrested or
- 21 reimprisoned; and
- 22 WHEREAS, A report issued by the Congressional Subcommittee to
- 23 Investigate Juvenile Delinquency estimated that the national rate of



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1 recidivism for juvenile offenders is between 60 percent and 84 percent but,  
2 for juveniles involved in programs of quality instruction in reading, the rate  
3 of recidivism could be reduced by 20 percent or more; and

4 WHEREAS, Since a juvenile's involvement in the criminal justice system  
5 can be a critical intervention point to prevent future criminal activity, it is  
6 essential that appropriate programs emphasizing literacy be established for  
7 and available to juvenile offenders; now, therefore,

8  
9 THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN  
10 SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:  
11

12 **Section 1.** 1. The Division of Child and Family Services of the  
13 Department of Human Resources shall establish a pilot program to study  
14 the literacy of juvenile offenders in the State of Nevada. The program must  
15 provide instruction in reading to juvenile offenders by using the "Action  
16 Reading" curriculum, an approach also used for the same purpose in  
17 Arizona with successful results.

18 2. Juvenile offenders who are eligible to participate in the pilot  
19 program include:

20 (a) Juvenile offenders placed on probation in Washoe County or Carson  
21 City; and

22 (b) Juvenile offenders detained at the China Spring Youth Camp in  
23 Douglas County or the Western Nevada Regional Youth Facility in Lyon  
24 County.

25 3. Juvenile offenders eligible to participate in the pilot program  
26 pursuant to subsection 2 must be tested within 2 days after intake to  
27 determine their proficiency in reading. Only juvenile offenders whose test  
28 scores indicate that they are reading below their grade level may be  
29 selected to participate in the pilot program.

30 4. Juvenile offenders selected to participate in the pilot program must  
31 be instructed by paid or volunteer staff members of the China Spring Youth  
32 Camp or the Western Nevada Regional Youth Facility who:

33 (a) Have earned a high school diploma or a general equivalency  
34 diploma;

35 (b) Have the ability to pass any reading test that will be administered as  
36 part of the "Action Reading" curriculum; and

37 (c) Successfully complete the training required to qualify as a tutor for  
38 the "Action Reading" curriculum.

39 5. A parent or legal guardian of a juvenile offender selected to  
40 participate in the pilot program may also participate in the pilot program if  
41 the parent or legal guardian:

42 (a) Is found to have difficulty with reading and comprehending reading  
43 material; or

44 (b) Is willing to provide assistance as a parent or legal guardian in a  
45 paratutorial capacity.

46 A parent or legal guardian who participates in the pilot program pursuant to  
47 this subsection must pay a fee of \$20.

48 **Sec. 2.** 1. There is hereby appropriated from the state general fund  
49 to the Division of Child and Family Services of the Department of Human



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- 1 Resources for the establishment of the pilot program pursuant to section 1  
2 of this act:
- 3 For the fiscal year 2001-2002..... \$125,000  
4 For the fiscal year 2002-2003..... \$125,000
- 5 2. The money appropriated by subsection 1 must cover the following  
6 costs:
- 7 (a) A 2-day training session for each staff member from the China  
8 Spring Youth Camp and the Western Nevada Regional Youth Facility who  
9 will serve as a tutor to instruct the juvenile offenders selected to participate  
10 in the pilot program.
- 11 (b) Per diem allowances and travel expenses associated with  
12 participation in the 2-day training session for each tutor.
- 13 (c) The salary for a master tutor who is trained to present the "Action  
14 Reading" curriculum.
- 15 (d) Travel expenses for the master tutor to carry out his duties,  
16 including, without limitation, making weekly visits to the China Spring  
17 Youth Camp and the Western Nevada Regional Youth Facility to discuss  
18 with the tutors the progress of the juvenile offenders who are participating  
19 in the pilot program and identify any additional training that the tutors may  
20 require.
- 21 (e) The salary for a research assistant to carry out such duties as  
22 gathering and compiling data which will be used to monitor the progress of  
23 the pilot program.
- 24 (f) Other miscellaneous costs, including, without limitation, the  
25 purchase of supplemental or updated information applicable to the "Action  
26 Reading" curriculum, and travel expenses and honorarium for one or more  
27 developers of the "Action Reading" curriculum to train the master tutor  
28 and the other tutors who are providing instruction to the juvenile offenders  
29 participating in the pilot program on new innovations or additions to the  
30 curriculum.
- 31 3. The sums appropriated by subsection 1 are available for either fiscal  
32 year. Any balance of those sums must not be committed for expenditure  
33 after June 30, 2003, and reverts to the state general fund as soon as all  
34 payments of money committed have been made.
- 35 **Sec. 3.** The Division of Child and Family Services of the Department  
36 of Human Resources shall:
- 37 1. Prepare a written evaluation of the pilot program, including, without  
38 limitation, a comparison of the reading levels of those juvenile offenders  
39 who participated in the pilot program with the reading levels of pupils at  
40 the same grade levels who are enrolled in public and private schools in the  
41 State of Nevada; and
- 42 2. On or before February 1, 2003, submit the written evaluation to the  
43 Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmission to the 72nd  
44 session of the Nevada Legislature.
- 45 **Sec. 4.** This act is effective upon passage and approval.

