

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 14—SENATORS PORTER, AMODEI, CARE, CARLTON, COFFIN, JACOBSEN, JAMES, MATHEWS, MCGINNESS, NEAL, O’CONNELL, O’DONNELL, RAGGIO, RAWSON, RHOADS, SCHNEIDER, SHAFFER, TITUS, TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON AND WIENER

FEBRUARY 28, 2001

JOINT SPONSORS: ASSEMBLYMEN BROWN, ANDERSON, ANGLE, ARBERRY, BACHE, BEERS, BERMAN, BROWER, BUCKLEY, CARPENTER, CEGAVSKE, CHOWNING, CLABORN, COLLINS, DE BRAGA, DINI, FREEMAN, GIBBONS, GIUNCHIGLIANI, GOLDWATER, GUSTAVSON, HETTRICK, HUMKE, KOIVISTO, LEE, LESLIE, MANENDO, MARVEL, MCCLAIN, MORTENSON, NEIGHBORS, NOLAN, OCEGUERA, OHRENSCHALL, PARKS, PARNELL, PERKINS, PRICE, SMITH, TIFFANY, VON TOBEL AND WILLIAMS

Read and Adopted

SUMMARY—Commends Michele and John Laws for their work as advocates for abused and neglected children. (BDR R-1050)

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

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Commending Michele and John Laws for their work as advocates for abused and neglected children.

1 WHEREAS, The tragedy of child abuse and neglect is a worldwide  
2 problem of monumental proportions, with statistics showing that there are  
3 nearly 1 million reported incidents every year in our country alone; and

4 WHEREAS, Because an abused or neglected child was too often a voice  
5 unheard and a face unseen in our over-burdened court system, Congress  
6 passed the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act in 1974, mandating  
7 the appointment of a guardian ad litem to serve as an advocate for victims  
8 in cases of child abuse and neglect; and

9 WHEREAS, In his search for such advocates to assist him in making  
10 more informed decisions, Judge David W. Soukup of Seattle, Washington,  
11 started a program in 1977 to recruit volunteers from the community to  
12 serve in the role of advocate; and



1 WHEREAS, Judge Soukup's program developed into a nationwide  
2 association known as the National Court Appointed Special Advocate  
3 Association, commonly called CASA; and

4 WHEREAS, Michele and John Laws, a husband-and-wife team, are two  
5 loving, caring people who have dedicated themselves to rescuing abused  
6 and neglected children in Clark County through their support of the CASA  
7 program and the nurturing of foster children; and

8 WHEREAS, Michele, who became a CASA volunteer more than 10 years  
9 ago, after qualifying through background checks and participation in the 40  
10 hours of required training, soon had both herself and her willing  
11 accomplice John enrolled in the classes requisite for becoming foster  
12 parents; and

13 WHEREAS, In her role as a CASA volunteer, Michele is assigned to one  
14 or two cases involving child abuse or neglect at a time and commits herself  
15 to serve a minimum of 2 years on each case; and

16 WHEREAS, As the advocate for a child, Michele's responsibilities  
17 include conducting thorough research on the case, spending time with the  
18 child regularly, writing assessments, and appearing in court to speak on  
19 behalf of the child and his best interests; and

20 WHEREAS, Although Michele and John graciously give of their time,  
21 their lifework can extract an emotional toll that is overwhelming when they  
22 are involved with children who have broken bones or retarded development  
23 and with children who horde food fearing that it might be taken from them  
24 or who sleep under their beds to feel safe; and

25 WHEREAS, The strain is intensified by knowing that "wonderful,  
26 flowery endings aren't going to happen," and Michele says that fact is  
27 probably the hardest thing she and John have to deal with; and

28 WHEREAS, Michele's CASA Volunteer Coordinator, Betsey Sheldon,  
29 describes Michele as a person of vision and empathy who is "the most  
30 committed foster parent I know" and who "does not believe children are  
31 disposable, and does not throw them away"; and

32 WHEREAS, Betsey emphasizes that John is also an excellent foster  
33 parent and provides support for his family with good judgment and  
34 integrity as a "a full partner in this venture"; and

35 WHEREAS, Michele and John Laws were awarded the 1997 Judges  
36 Award for Foster Parents of the Year in Clark County because they have  
37 devoted themselves to cherishing children and sustaining those who,  
38 through no fault of their own, must overcome the scars of abuse and  
39 neglect; and

40 WHEREAS, Our society as a whole, and we as individuals, owe a debt of  
41 gratitude that can never be fully paid to Michele and John for the unselfish  
42 pledge they have made to keep children safe and to support them with the  
43 love and protection they need for the hope of a better tomorrow; and

44 WHEREAS, The dedication of this team is an inspiration to every child  
45 who comes into contact with them because their actions send the message  
46 "We will always be there for you"; now, therefore, be it

47 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE ASSEMBLY  
48 CONCURRING, That the members of the 71st session of the Nevada  
49 Legislature commend Michele and John Laws for their loving care and



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1 heartfelt commitment to children who need someone to be there for them;  
2 and be it further  
3 RESOLVED, That this Legislature recognizes the hope for a brighter  
4 tomorrow that is embodied in this couple; and be it further  
5 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy  
6 of this resolution to Michele and John Laws.

