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Testimony AB 218 Committee on Education

Chairman Williams and members of the committee I am Lonnie Shields and represent the Washoe Education Administrator's Association. Let me begin by saying I do not doubt the testimony that you have been presented in regard to problems that have surfaced due to the law requiring the removal of students from the classroom. I do however question, whether there is a statewide on-going problem that has to be addressed with the severity this law demands.

There are 84 schools, 3,745 teachers and 267 administrators in Washoe County. The number of problems presented here today do not reflect a wide disregard for the law. While I sympathize with the individual problems that have been expressed here today, these can be, should be, and are being handled at the local level.

I have approached the Area Superintendents in Washoe County and asked them if they were aware of any problems having been brought to them in regard to these requirements. Their answer was none. I asked if any complaints had been filed through the Washoe Education Association over this matter and the answer was none. I, as the Advocate for the Administrators in Washoe County have not been contacted by any of my Principals for help in responding to any complaints from teachers or the Association on this matter. Believe me, if they have a major problem they call me. If this was a major problem that needed to be addressed with the severity of this bill, I believe that at least one of the above would have taken place.

It is my understanding that most of the problems expressed arose due to special education students. Mr. Steven Augsburg of the Clark County Administrator's Association will address or has already addressed where part or all of that problem may have arisen.

I am concerned also with having staff vote on whether to discipline their Principal. You can agree or disagree on whether this is an adequate approach to bring about a desired change, but I think we would all agree on the polarization this could cause to a staff. The proper avenue to continue to handle these problems is at the local level, with the help of the local Associations. I have offered to the Washoe Education Association my assistance in helping to alleviate these problems as they occur.

Finally, if in my opinion, the worst case scenario happens, and this bill becomes law, I would offer the amendment to change the date required for submission of the plan to Dec. 1 from Oct. 1. The beginning of the school year is a hectic time, especially for new administrators and teachers. The time required for setting up a new committee and getting to the desired result is too short under this proposal, especially for a new principal and staff. Thank you for your attention and I would be happy to answer any questions.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION

DATE: 3/7/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT G

SUBMITTED BY: LONNIE SHIELDS

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