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TESTIMONY OF MARTHA B. GOULD ON AB407
APRIL 2, 2003
Assembly Committee on Education

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, for the record my name is Martha B. Gould. I reside at 1690 West 6th Street, Reno NV 89503. I am here today as the retired Director of the Washoe County Library and also as the Chair of the US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

When I was Director of the Washoe County Library System, I was actively involved in the creation of school/public library partnerships, and this bill specifically refers to the Washoe County Library/Washoe County School District partnership libraries. If I understand this bill correctly, it is enabling legislation for school districts and public libraries to develop public libraries within school libraries.

My question to this Committee is simple, why the need for this legislation? There is already legal provision for such agreements for services. The current site-specific contracts between Washoe County Library and the Washoe County School District were created as interlocal government agreements.

I must also caution you that not all school libraries or public libraries are good candidates for these types of partnerships. It is not one size fits all. Certainly in my testimony on AB345 I have pointed out the many operational and fiscal issues involved in the creation of school/public library partnerships.

In conversation with Dr. Hardy I also pointed out that there are no savings from not building additional public libraries. School libraries are funded from the School Distributive Fund, and public library capital projects are funded from either voter passed bond issues, dedicated tax revenues from library districts, or general funds from local governments. The benefits of school/public libraries are more efficient use of and access to library resources, but only if such libraries are adequately funded with qualified staff.

What is necessary in supporting both school and public libraries is for this Legislature to provide State dedicated support for both public libraries and school libraries. There is already authorizing language in the NRS for such appropriations. However, such appropriations are woefully lacking in the budget now under consideration. I also suggest that this Legislature leave the creation of school/public libraries to local governments to decide when, where, or if such are feasible.

Are there any questions from the Committee?

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ASSEMBLY EDUCATION
DATE: 4/2/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT E
SUBMITTED BY: MARTHA GOULD