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Testimony before the Assembly Ways and Means Committee and the Assembly
Education Committee regarding SB 191, First Reprint
May 27, 2003

Anne Loring, President
Nevada Association of School Boards

The Nevada Association of School Boards strongly supports SB 191 in the amended form that is before you today. For the past three months, our association and the superintendents of the 17 school districts have been working diligently with the Senate Finance Committee and LCB staff to craft a bill that brings Nevada into compliance with No Child Left Behind. We believe that this amended version of SB 191 builds on Nevada's standards-based system, while incorporating the requirements of the new Federal law.

Our association fully supports the three key structures of this bill:

ACCOUNTABILITY

SB 191 continues the accountability measures of the Nevada Education Reform Act, including designations of schools, published accountability reports for all schools, teams of experts to provide guidance to schools in need of improvement, and provision of remediation funds to assist those schools in improving the performance of their students.

The bill adds the distinctive requirements of the Federal law, including requiring that all schools make "Adequate Yearly Progress," disaggregation of data to show the progress of various groups of students, and specific consequences for repeated failure to make Adequate Yearly Progress that are required of Title I schools and that may be asked of all schools under certain circumstances.

Finally the bill amends our present system by changing the type of test used for accountability, keeping attendance as an accountability measure for elementary and middle schools, and adding graduation rates as a measure for high schools.

ASSESSMENTS

Our association strongly supports the assessment system which was begun under the Nevada Education Reform Act and which has been expanded as required by Federal law in this bill. Accountability will be based upon Criterion Referenced Tests given in the spring to all students in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school. These tests will be aligned to Nevada's standards.

In addition, Nevada will continue to monitor the performance of its students compared to other students nationwide through annual administration in the spring of Normed Reference Tests in grades 4, 7, and 10. This will be a valuable method of quality control.

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We believe that this system will provide information that teachers can use to improve achievement of each student and of all students in Nevada without an undue burden of too much testing.

HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL

Research clearly shows that a high quality teacher is the single most important element that a school can provide to improve a student's achievement. No Child Left Behind expands that concept to include paraprofessionals who assist with instruction in the classroom. Our association supports these provisions of the amended bill.

Passage of SB 191 is a critical step, not just in implementing No Child Left Behind but in truly Leaving No Nevada Child Behind. The Nevada Association of School Boards urges you to pass SB 191.

Thank you for your time.

Anne Loring, President
Nevada Association of School Boards