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Testimony of Laura Mijanovich on behalf of ACLU of Nevada in
support of SB 312, submitted to the Assembly Government Affairs
Committee on April 30th, 2003

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada, and on my own behalf, as a member of the Latino immigrant community, I wish to express my support for SB 312, which requires state and local governmental entities to accept consular identification cards for purposes of identifying persons under certain circumstances.

The proposed bill confronts the reality of illegal immigrant labor force in the United States. There is an estimated illegal immigrant population of five to seven million people in our country and its enormous contribution to the national economy is today unquestionable. Widespread reliance on illegal immigrant labor force by businesses across the nation is undeniable, as it is the need to identify undocumented workers, for a many valid reasons, including the need to simplify business and enhance security within our state.

We must emphasize that SB 312 is not an attempt to legalize the status of illegal immigrants and the drafted language of the bill so provides. Consular identification cards simply represent a form of official and reliable proof of an immigrant's origin. Mexican consulates have been issuing these cards since 1871 and approximately 1,000,000 of them were issued last year, nationwide.

These cards are tamper-proof and reliable, and are presently being used and accepted in a multitude of business transactions, including banking, savings and checking accounts, mortgages, phone bills, cable TV, etc. Many law enforcement agencies have accepted this type of identification as official ID for the otherwise undocumented immigrant. The consular identification card has allowed and simplified access to the increasingly greater immigrant market in the United States.

For the reasons stated above, I urge you to support SB 312.

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SUBMITTED BY: Laura Mijanovich