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TESTIMONY – AB 349
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Monday, March 24, 2003

GOOD AFTERNOON, MADAM CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. FOR THE RECORD, MY NAME IS LARRY SPITLER AND I'M THE ASSOCIATE STATE DIRECTOR FOR ADVOCACY AT AARP NEVADA.

AARP IS A NONPROFIT, NONPARTISAN MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR PEOPLE 50 AND OVER. WE PROVIDE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES; ENGAGE IN LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND LEGAL ADVOCACY; ASSIST MEMBERS IN SERVING THEIR COMMUNITIES; AND OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF UNIQUE BENEFITS, SPECIAL PRODUCTS, AND SERVICES FOR OUR MEMBERS. IN NEVADA WE HAS OVER 258,000 MEMBERS.

WE'RE HERE TODAY TO LEND OUR SUPPORT TO AB 349. AMERICA FACES A MAJOR HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE CHALLENGE AS THE US POPULATION AGES AND PEOPLE LIVE LONGER LIVES. THE COUNTRY LACKS A COMPREHENSIVE LTC SYSTEM THAT SERVES THE NEEDS OF MILLIONS OF OLDER PEOPLE. INSTEAD, LONG TERM CARE TODAY CONSISTS LARGELY OF UNCOORDINATED, FRAGMENTED AND COSTLY CARE PAID FOR BY CONSUMERS AND FAMILIES AND, IN LIMITED CIRCUMSTANCES, WITH PUBLIC DOLLARS. RECENTLY, BECAUSE OF THE RELATIVELY LOW RATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT, IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO RECRUIT SUFFICIENT STAFF MEMBERS TO PROVIDE EITHER NURSING HOME OR HOME CARE SERVICES AT SALARIES THEY WILL ACCEPT. THUS, CARE WORKERS CARRY CASELOADS WELL BEYOND THE SAFE LIMITS RECOMMENDED IN PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.

AARP ACKNOWLEDGES THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE DELIVERY OF QUALITY LONG-TERM

ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DATE: 03/24 ROOM: 3138 EXHIBIT D1-2
SUBMITTED BY: Larry Spitler

CARE. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS FOR NURSING HOMES AND HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES SHOULD BE SWIFTLY AND VIGOROUSLY ENFORCED. IN ADDITION, NEW METHODS OF ENSURING THE QUALITY OF LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES MUST BE FOUND.

AB 349 PROVIDES A GOOD BEGINNING TO ENSURE PROPER CARE OF ELDERLY NEVADANS WHO MUST TRUST THE SKILLS OF THEIR CARE-GIVERS. IT ONLY SEEMS LOGICAL THAT KNOWLEDGE OF AGING, DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE, BEHAVIORIAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF THE AGING PROCESS AND, THE IMPORTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE AND DIGNITY FOR OLDER PERSONS ENCOMPASS A SOUND FOUNDATION FOR THIS TRAINING – ALL COMPONENTS OF THIS BILL.

WE THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE OUR THOUGHTS WITH YOU ON THIS MEASURE AND URGE YOUR SUPPORT.