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Senate Commerce and Labor Committee

April 2, 2003

Testimony by Debra Scott, MS, RN, Executive Director Nevada State Board of Nursing

Chairman Townsend and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding Senate Bill 310. Our comments relate to changes in the Nurse Practice Act, specifically Sections 33, 34, and 35.

Section 33 (d) replaces a registered nurse board member with a member who *represents the interests of persons or agencies that regularly provide health care to patients who are indigent, uninsured or unable to afford health care*. Nurses, by the nature of the profession, often have experience with this population of clients and patients. Currently two of our registered nurse members, our licensed practical nurse member, and our CNA member meet this definition. Their expertise in this area has been extremely valuable. In addition, recruitment for non-nursing members of our board has been problematic due to the intense level of time needed to be part of the Nevada State Board of Nursing. Our seven-member board meets at least every other month for three days, alternating between southern and northern Nevada. We have found our nursing members to have the highest level of commitment needed to protect the citizens of Nevada. We respectfully ask that Section 33 (d) be deleted from this bill.

Section 33 (e) provides specific parameters regarding the qualifications of the public member, and we support this change.

The requirements in Section 34 (3) and Section 35 (2) barring anyone who is the spouse, child or parent of a nurse or nursing assistant from serving as the executive director or board staff would cause immediate and future problems for our board. The Nevada State Board of Nursing, to my knowledge, is responsible for the largest licensee population of any regulatory board. We regulate more than 20,000 nurses and more than 5,000 nursing assistants. Given those figures, I would venture to say most Nevadans have a relative in the field. Also, nursing tends to run in families—the respect of the profession is passed from generation to generation. Out of 19 employees, the Board of Nursing currently has one employee whose mother is a nurse and another whose daughter is a nursing assistant. And as is the case in most workplaces, all of our employees know people who are in the field of nursing. Recognizing this fact, the Board has long-standing, written policies governing ethics and conflicts-of-interest, and each employee is expected to “act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.”

Given our unique position of regulating the largest licensee population, and the fact we have strong ethical and conflict-of-interest policies addressing the issue behind this legislative change, we respectfully ask the committee to remove the language in Sections 34 and 35 barring Nursing Board employees from having close relatives in the field of nursing.