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Parole Board Prepared Remarks 1/29/03

GOOD AFTERNOON, MY NAME IS DORLA SALLING AND I AM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF PAROLE COMMISSIONERS.

THE PAROLE BOARD OPERATES UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF NRS 213 AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EVALUATING ELIGIBLE INMATES TO DETERMINE THEIR SUITABILITY FOR PAROLE AND TO GRANT PAROLE TO THOSE INMATES WHO SHOW PROMISE OF BECOMING CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE EFFECT OF THE DECISIONS MADE BY THE BOARD TRANSLATES TO A SAVINGS OF APPROXIMATELY 25 MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE TO BE USED TO INCARCERATE INMATES IF NO SYSTEM OF PAROLE WAS IN PLACE.

THE PAROLE BOARD IS COMPRISED OF 6 MEMBERS AND ONE CHAIRMAN. DURING FY2002, THE BOARD MADE 7,295 DECISIONS. SINCE EACH DECISION REQUIRES A MAJORITY OF THE BOARD, THESE HEARINGS EQUATED TO OVER 29,000 VOTES CAST TO GRANT OR DENY PAROLE.

THIS ALSO BREAKS DOWN TO AN AVERAGE OF EACH COMMISSIONER REVIEWING AND CONSIDERING OVER 4,000 CASES DURING FY2002. I WOULD LIKE TO NOTE THAT ALTHOUGH THE BOARD CAN HIRE CASE HEARING REPRESENTATIVES TO ASSIST THE BOARD IN ITS CASELOAD, HEARING REPRESENTATIVES CAN ONLY MAKE A RECOMMENDATION. THE BOARD MUST STILL VOTE ON EACH INDIVIDUAL CASE.

IN FY2002 THE BOARD'S CASELOAD WAS THE LARGEST IN THE HISTORY OF THE BOARD. ALTHOUGH THE BOARD CONDUCTED MORE HEARINGS THAN EVER, ALL HEARINGS WERE CONDUCTED AND COMPLETED WITHIN THE TIME FRAMES AND DEADLINES AS SPECIFIED IN NEVADA STATUTES. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT THIS WORK WAS DONE WITHOUT ADDITIONAL CLERICAL STAFFING OR COMMISSIONERS. THE LAST TIME THE BOARD WAS EXPANDED WAS DURING THE 1995 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WHEN A 7TH MEMBER WAS ADDED.

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THE BOARD HAS RESPONDED TO THE CURRENT REVENUE CRISIS BY IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES TO REDUCE COSTS INCLUDING DELAYING THE REAPPOINTMENT OF VACANT POSITIONS AND REDUCING TRAVEL COSTS AND CONTRACT SERVICES THROUGH USE OF VIDEO CONFERENCING. THE BOARD ALSO RETURNED A VEHICLE TO THE MOTOR POOL.

AREAS OR SERVICES THAT HAVE SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF THE BUDGET CUTBACKS AND EXTENDED VACANCIES INCLUDE REDUCED SUPPORT TO THE PARDON'S BOARD AND CLERICAL SUPPORT TO THE PAROLE BOARD .

THE BOARD HAS WORKED EXTENSIVELY WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CORRECTIONS AND HAS RECEIVED SPECIAL PAROLE BOARD TRAINING FOR FIVE OF THE SEVEN PAROLE BOARD MEMBERS, WITH THE FINAL TWO MEMBERS SCHEDULED FOR TRAINING THIS JUNE. THIS TRAINING IS FUNDED COMPLETELY BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WITH ONLY SLIGHT COSTS COMING FROM OUR BUDGET.

WE HAVE REQUESTED AND RECEIVED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CORRECTIONS AT NO COST TO THE STATE OF NEVADA FOR:

- ◆ ANNUAL TRAINING
- ◆ TO ASSIST THE BOARD WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN
- ◆ FOR AN INITIAL REVIEW OF THE PAROLE GUIDELINES REQUIRED BY STATUTE
- ◆ WE RECEIVED A BYRNE GRANT TO ENABLE SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN THE DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS SYSTEM TO CAPTURE PAROLE DATA FOR THE BOARD
- ◆ WE RECEIVED A TECHNICAL GRANT TO FULLY VALIDATE THE GUIDELINES USED TO CONSIDER INMATES FOR RELEASE ON PAROLE.

WE EXPECT THE PROGRAMMING PROJECT AND THE VALIDATION STUDY TO BE COMPLETED BY OCTOBER OF THIS YEAR. ALL OF THIS ASSISTANCE WAS OR IS BEING PROVIDED AT NO COST TO THE STATE OF NEVADA.

THE BOARD HAS WORKED EXTENSIVELY WITH ADMINISTRATORS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND THE DIVISION OF PAROLE AND PROBATION TO ESTABLISH PROCEDURES THAT ENHANCE OUR CORRECTIONAL SYSTEMS. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PAROLE BOARD HISTORY, PAROLE VIOLATION HEARINGS ARE CONDUCTED WEEKLY AND BI-WEEKLY INSTEAD OF ONCE PER MONTH. THIS EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE BOARD HAS REDUCED THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF CLOSE CUSTODY CONFINEMENT DAYS FROM AN AVERAGE OF 45 TO 21 DAYS. THIS HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ABILITY OF THE CORRECTIONS STAFF TO CLASSIFY AND RELOCATE INMATES INTO LOWER COST BEDS, AND ALSO REDUCES THE NUMBER OF DAYS IN PRISON THAT A REINSTATED PAROLEE MUST WAIT BEFORE RELEASE.

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ITEMS I HAVE TO TELL YOU ABOUT TODAY IS INCLUDED IN THE REPORT WE PROVIDED TO YOU AT THE REQUEST OF THE FISCAL ANALYSIS DIVISION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU.

DURING THE LAST BIENNIUM, THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE INSTALLED VIDEO CONFERENCING EQUIPMENT INTO SEVERAL OF THE CORRECTIONS INSTITUTIONS TO ALLOW INS JUDGES TO CONDUCT HEARINGS WITHOUT HAVING TO TRAVEL ALL OVER THE STATE. THIS NETWORK WAS ESTABLISHED WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN NEVADA.

WE DECIDED WE WOULD TRY IT OUT, AND SEE IF CONDUCTING PAROLE HEARINGS IN THIS MANNER WOULD HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR OPERATION. WE RECEIVED PERMISSION FROM COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS TO USE THEIR EQUIPMENT ON A SPACE AVAILABLE BASIS.

AFTER A FEW MONTHS OF EXPERIMENTING WITH THIS IN NORTHERN NEVADA, WE IMPLEMENTED THE PROJECT STATEWIDE. DURING THE PARTIAL PERIOD OF FY 2002 THAT WE UTILIZED VIDEO CONFERENCING, WE SAVED \$13,943.00 IN IN-STATE TRAVEL, WE SAVED \$9,722.00 IN HEARING REPRESENTATIVE SERVICES, WE DROVE 14,000 LESS MILES AND SAVED AN ESTIMATED 618 COMMISSIONER-HOURS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REDUCTION OF TRAVEL TIME. WE ALSO RECEIVED POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM VICTIMS AND VICTIM ADVOCATE GROUPS REGARDING THE USE OF VIDEO CONFERENCING TO CONDUCT PAROLE HEARINGS.

INSTEAD OF COMING HERE TODAY AND ASKING TO EXPAND OUR BOARD TO ENABLE US TO CONTINUE TO CONTROL OUR INCREASING CASELOAD, WE ARE PROUD TO TELL YOU THAT OUR EFFORTS TO CONTROL COSTS AND MANAGE OUR RESOURCES TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE WILL RESULT IN A SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS TO WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE BOARD'S BUDGET DURING THE NEXT BIENNIUM.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ENHANCEMENT IN THE PAROLE BOARD'S BUDGET IS THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF VIDEO CONFERENCING EQUIPMENT AND OTHER RELATED DATA LINES IN THE PAROLE BOARD OFFICES. THE TOTAL COST OF THIS ENHANCEMENT OVER THE NEXT BIENNIUM IS \$55,000. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS REQUEST REPLACES MONIES THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN REQUESTED FOR TRAVEL AND HEARING REPRESENTATIVES.

ONE REASON FOR THIS REQUEST IS DUE TO THE INCREASING DIFFICULTY IN BORROWING VIDEO CONFERENCING EQUIPMENT FOR HEARINGS. WITH THAT IN MIND, OUR CONCERNS ARE THAT WE WILL HAVE TO REVERT TO TRAVELING THROUGHOUT THE STATE AT A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON THE BUDGET, AND ULTIMATELY, DUE TO THE INCREASING CASELOAD WE WOULD BE UNABLE TO ENSURE THAT WE COULD CONTINUE TO MANAGE OUR CASELOAD WITHOUT AN ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER POSITION. THE BOTTOM LINE ON THIS ISSUE IS THAT MORE TIME SPENT TRAVELING RESULTS IN LESS TIME TO CONDUCT PAROLE HEARINGS.

THE ADDITIONAL ENHANCEMENTS INCLUDED IN THE PAROLE BOARD'S BUDGET REQUEST INCLUDE REPLACEMENT OF THE CARSON CITY PAROLE BOARD TELEPHONE SYSTEM AND COMPUTER RELATED HARDWARE TOTALING \$19,000.

I WOULD BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE AT THIS TIME.