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Testimony for SB 191
March 20, 2003
Mary Ella Holloway

My name is Mary Ella Holloway. I am a middle school reading teacher who is currently serving as the president of the Clark County Education Association. I am here today to speak about some of the amendments to SB 191 that NSEA is proposing.

I have a K-12 reading specialist license and a 7-12 social studies license. As a middle school teacher with many college classes in my fields, I have always questioned the validity of having teachers with a elementary license being able to teach any content area subject in the middle school, regardless of the number of credits they have in their subject matter. For example, as I understand, a teacher has to have 24 credits to be certified in math at the 7-12 level. At the present time, a K-8 teacher does not need to meet those standards. Merely having the K-8 license is sufficient.

I don't object to the concept of having highly qualified teachers in middle schools. What I question is the deadline that is being used in SB 191. HR1, the Leave No Child Behind Act, allows teachers with elementary licenses who teach at the middle school level to have until the end of the 2005-2006 school year to take the necessary steps to become highly qualified in their subject matter. SB 191 gives them until July 2003. This is an unreasonable expectation.

There are approximately 700 teachers in Nevada who are K-8 licensed and teaching core academic subjects in 7th and 8th grades. They need to be notified as to whether they meet the criteria for being highly qualified quickly and they need sufficient time to take the courses they need. It is now March, you have three months for this bill to become law, notify the teachers that they are not highly qualified, and have the teachers complete the necessary course work to become highly qualified.

I urge you to accept NSEA's proposed amendments. The timelines must conform to HR1. It is important that SB 191 include the HOUSSE option for demonstrating subject matter competency. It is equally important that the guidelines to implement ~~the~~ HOUSSE be developed by the Department of Education and not the Commission on Professional Standards.

EXHIBIT I Committee on Finance

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