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**REMARKS TO INTRODUCE SENATE BILL 341
BY
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BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
APRIL 10, 2003**

Introduction

Senate Bill 341 establishes a dual or concurrent enrollment program that will benefit high school students by encouraging them to explore careers in teaching or nursing.

- Senate Bill 341 proposes to require that the Board of Regents pays the fees and expenses for certain courses taken by high school students.
- To be eligible to receive the financial assistance, the student:
 - Must be enrolled in a high school in this state, including charter schools; and
 - Must be taking a course at an institution of the University and Community College System of Nevada that would satisfy the requirements for an undergraduate degree in teaching or nursing.

Like most other states, Nevada has two public policy issues that can be addressed with the passage of S.B. 341:

- Encouraging more of our high school graduates to go on to college; and
- Focusing on the shortage of professionals entering either teaching or nursing.

Nevada Revised Statutes 389.160: Dual Enrollment

Nevada Revised Statutes 389.160 allows a high school student to be enrolled concurrently in a college level course that applies both to high school graduation requirements and to earned college degree credit. The local board of trustees may prescribe courses for dual credit with the approval of the State Board of Education.

The student pays for the course, however. This may exclude low-income students when no tuition assistance is available.

According to the Education Commission of the States, as of July 2001, the following state policies applied to paying for the costs of postsecondary classes:

- In four states, the state pays the tuition;
- In five states, the school district pays the tuition;

- In 21 states, the funding comes from multiple sources; and
- In 20 states, the student pays the tuition.

Senate Bill 341 would provide some financial assistance directed toward a certain goal. Within the amounts appropriated for this purpose, the Board of Regents will pay for the costs that are associated with courses leading to undergraduate degrees in teaching or nursing.

Shortages in Nursing and Teaching

- Nursing—According to the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation, by 2010, Nevada will need 30,236 registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants. Over this decade, that is a 37 percent increase.
- Assembly Bill 378 from the 2001 Legislative Session set as a goal the doubling of the enrollment in nursing programs by the year 2006-2007. To achieve that goal, Nevada must enroll more than 1200 nursing students per year. In the 2002-2003 academic year, the institutions of the UCCSN enrolled 686 students.
- Teaching—According to the *Nevada Occupational Employment and Projections 2000-2010*, Nevada will need about 35 percent more elementary and secondary teachers by the end of the decade.
- By 2005-2006, the Federal No Child Left Behind Act will require that all middle school and high school teachers must have a major in the subject they teach. This will effectively eliminate out-of-field teaching but it will also impact the looming teacher shortage.

Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 387.345

Members of the committee may not be aware that some years ago the State Board of Education changed the way school districts may count students for student aid.

- *Nevada Administrative Code 387.345* was amended by the State Board of Education to require that a pupil be enrolled in a minimum number of courses per year in order to be counted as a full-time pupil for the purposes of receiving state aid through the State Distributive School Account. This requirement is being phased in over time, beginning with the cohort of pupils who entered ninth grade in 2000-2001.
- With the class entering ninth grade in fall 2000, pupils must take six courses. In fall 2001, the tenth graders must take six courses. This group, as eleventh graders

in fall 2002, must also take six courses. As twelfth graders in fall 2003, they must enroll in five courses.

- *Nevada Administrative Code 387.345* is not a requirement on the student as such. Rather, it is a requirement that the school district require such course registration from a student if it is to count that student for state aid. If a student is registered for less than the defined number of courses required to qualify as full-time, the district will not get paid for that student.
- The Nevada Department of Education has advised that the provisions of NAC 387.345 would include any authorized course. These would include dual credit enrollment in college courses, work study programs, and independent study, for example.
- So, if our high school students, especially twelfth graders, must be enrolled in at least five courses, starting with this fall's senior class, they may as well be working toward college credit, if they have all of their other requirements met.

Conclusion

- Senate Bill 341 provides a means to help high school students to begin their college careers.
- Within the amounts appropriated, the Board of Regents can assist high school students to take courses that lead to degrees in teaching or nursing, two areas facing shortages in professionals.
- Senate Bill 341 is an investment in our students for a return that will address future needs as Nevada's population continues to grow.
- I urge your support for S.B. 341.

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