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Testimony of David Schumann to the Senate Finance Committee in support of S.B. 376 on April 10, 2003

My name is David Schumann. I urge you to support SB 376 for the good of all Nevadans. This bill will result in a better education for all future students by bringing competition into the business of educating our children. In addition, it will save the taxpayers of Nevada millions of dollars.

Attached to my testimony is Chart 1:12 from the U.S. Department of Education's annual report, *The Condition of Education*, for 1986. It shows that graduates of non-government high schools are much more likely to get into college than the graduates of government high schools. I wish I could provide you with a more current chart but for some strange reason, after the 1980s the Department of Education stopped publishing this chart. I believe the facts are unchanged, they just aren't published by the Federal government.

Also attached to my testimony is "Diagram 17" from The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development *Economic Survey of the United States 1993-94*. You will note that both Nevada and the United States spend more per pupil than Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Japan. Nonetheless high-school graduates of those countries outperform American high school children in math and science as documented in the Third International Math and Science Study. The U.S. Department of Education summarized those results in its 1998 publication *Pursuing Excellence* as follows:

Performance of U.S. physics and advance mathematics students was among lowest of the 16 countries that administered the physics and advanced mathematics assessments.

In all five content areas of physics and in all three content areas of advanced mathematics, U.S. physics and advanced mathematics students' performances were among the lowest of the TIMMS nations.

These are the results for the NATION, not just Nevada. Those who claim Nevada students are getting a poor education because per pupil spending in government schools are simply not accurate. As the book *A Nation at Risk* published by the Dept. of Education notes "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" The crisis in education is a *national* problem not just a Nevada problem.

The problem is strictly a K-12 problem. At the college and university level where competition exists America does much better. Young people come from around the globe to attend American institutions of higher education. State schools have to compete

with private schools for students. That means they have to produce results comparable to those of private colleges and universities or they will have very few students. Sen. Washington's bill will, for the first time, introduce competition into K-12 schools. The result will be better education for all children because government schools will have to get their act together or they will lose students to non-government voucher schools.

The teachers' union likes to spread the disinformation that vouchers will take money away from government schools. The reverse is true. Section 16.3 a & b specify that the voucher payment will be equal to the per pupil expenditure or the tuition charged by the voucher school, whichever is less. As the average tuition at Nevada private schools is roughly \$2,500, each child who takes a voucher and leaves for non-government school saves the taxpayers more than \$2,500 because the state average is over \$5,000.

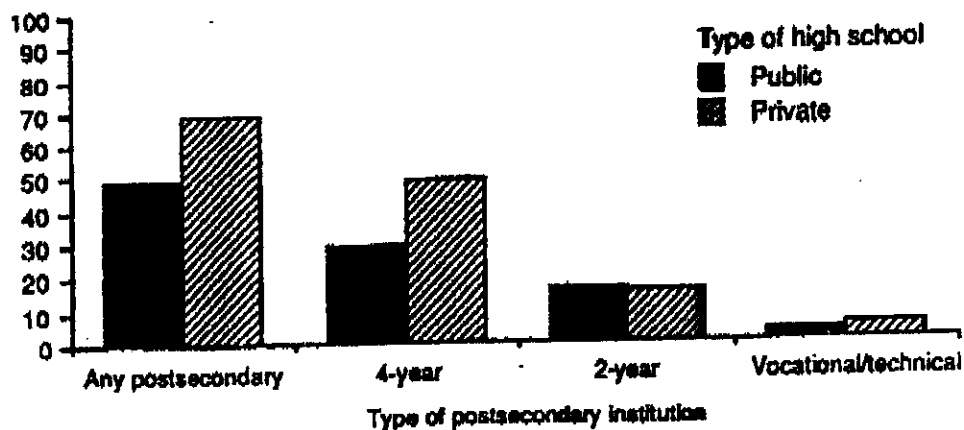
This is absolutely a win-win situation. Those who leave for a voucher school will get a better education and so will the public school children. In a very few years, public schools will order textbooks with some real content in them and insist that children perform at standards close to or equal those of the private schools.

I am sorry I could not be here in person, but I am recovering from surgery for a torn right rotator cuff which makes it impossible for me to drive. Please, for the good of the next generation, pass this bill.

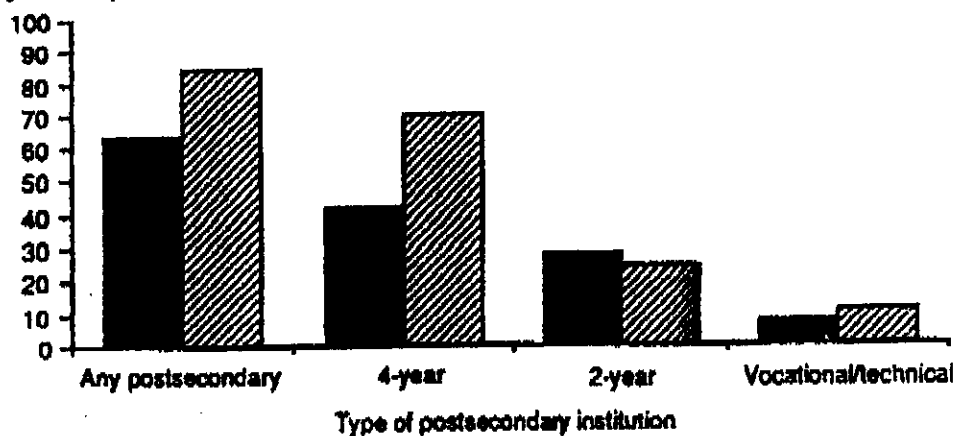
Thank you for your time.

CHART 1:12 -- Postsecondary enrollment rates for 1980 high school graduates

Percentage enrolled
in October 1980



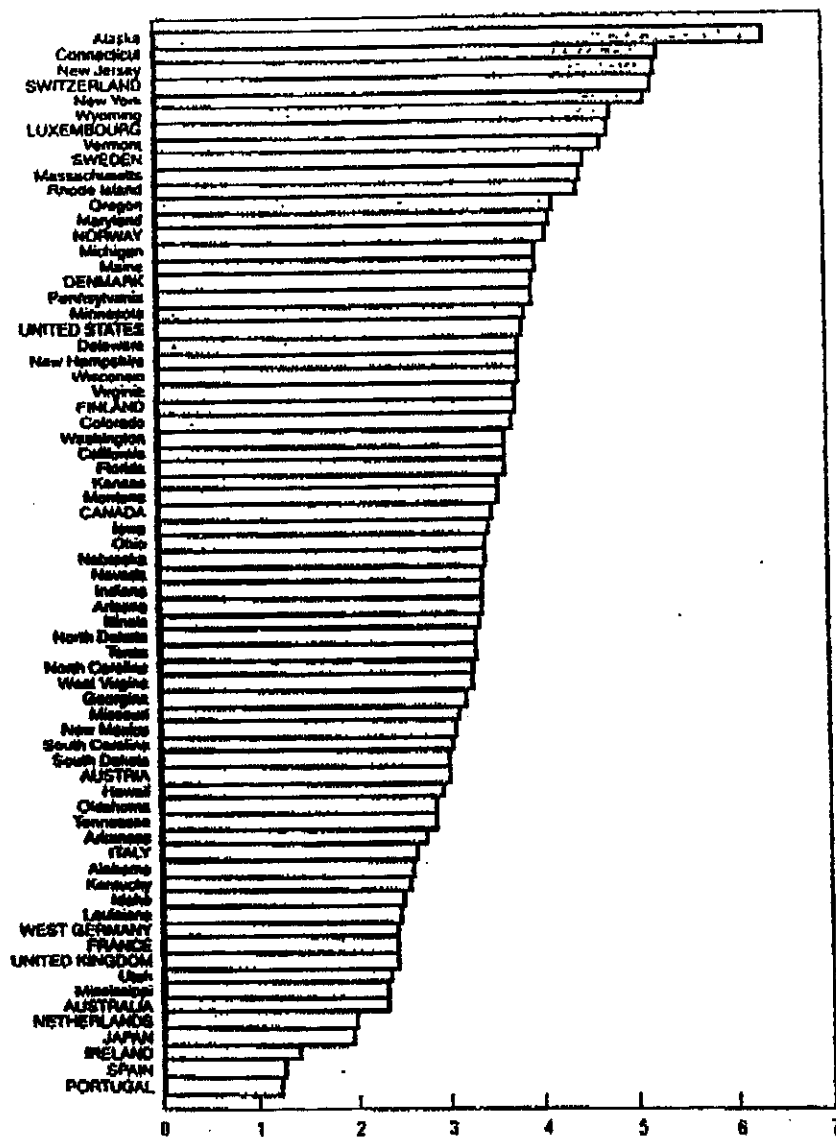
Percentage enrolled
by February 1984



SOURCE: Center for Statistics, High School and Beyond.

- Graduates of private high schools are more likely to begin postsecondary education immediately after high school, and are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education in the 3 1/2 years following high school, than graduates of public high schools.
- Graduates of private high schools are much more likely to enroll in a 4-year college than graduates of public high schools.

Diagram 17. CURRENT PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT ON PREPRIMARY
THROUGH SECONDARY EDUCATION, 1988
1988 US Dollars, thousands



Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Education in States and Nations*, 1988.

All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to obtain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself.

A Nation At Risk

Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in science, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undercuts American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments.

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems which helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament.

Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the