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## **Testimony of Elizabeth Perring Before The Joint Sub-Committee on General Government**

**My name is Elizabeth Perring. I would like to share with you some of my experiences and concerns about the Business Enterprises of Nevada program. As I attempt to write this testimony, I realize that it is too much to put on paper.**

**It started on June 9, 2001 when the Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation came into our blind vendors' committee meeting and said that they were putting policies in place that we, as Vendors, had no say in. This was the beginning of the many grievances that followed. Prior to this time very few grievances had ever been filed as we were able to work most of our problems out.**

**During the year of 2001 we hired a court reporter to take minutes of our committee meetings. (These transcripts can be made available to anyone who might be interested.) We recognized that everyone needed to be held accountable for what was being said during the meetings.**

**If you were to ask the question, "Is DETR and the Bureau interested in our program"? My answer would be that they are only interested in the money and control. At my onsite review last November I was told by the reviewer that she could not give me a rating higher than a 3. This was because they wanted to list only negatives, or at best, satisfactory. The reviewer wanted to give me higher ratings but said she was instructed not to. I found this very upsetting. When I got home from work I called the Carson City office and spoke to the bureau and stated my disbelief. I always want to do excellent work for my customers and my organization; I feel that it is my responsibility to do so. At my next review, in February of this year, the reviewer stated that she had been instructed to be truthful and I received the highest ratings.**

**In January I sent a request for a very important item to be put on the agenda for the next committee meeting. My request was well within the 20 day time frame prior to meeting. I was told that the Chief had nothing to do with the agenda. I have been in the program nine years; if a Vendor wanted something put on the agenda they needed only to make a request within the time frame of 7 days before the meeting and it was done. The agenda item requested was never put on the agenda for the meeting.**

**There are now 2 committees of Blind Vendors. The first elected committee suggested that both committees resign and hold a new election. A petition, signed by a majority of the vendors, was given to the Bureau Chief requesting a new election. She said she had no procedures to conduct a new election.**

**This is a perfect example of the bureau unwillingness to work with the blind vendors. We want a fair and new election. Does the Bureau ever say, "Let's find a way?" No!! Will the second committee resign? All but the Chair is willing. It should be done if it is the will of the Vendors.**

**These situations just go on and on. My understanding is that this is to be a partnership between the Vendors and the Bureau. There is no partnership. There has only been discourse and hurt.**

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Many of you may not know that we are the only Blind enterprise program in the country that does not use tax dollars. We create and pay for everything. This is not the norm these days. It is our desire to have full and active participation with the Bureau in creating policy and budgets as they impact our daily lives. It is obvious that we can create money, we have a surplus. Given the fact that many of us are successful in business it would be logical that we could create budgets and policy that govern our program.

After many of those who work for the Bureau and DETR move on in their careers, most of us will still be here. This is our work. This is our family. This is our responsibility.

At the July 28 committee meetings in 2001, the idea came up to create a nominee agency. The director of DETR, Myla Florence, said that it was a good idea. Let's do this! We as Vendors have many good ideas. What we want is a true voice in how things are determined and ran. We can do a better job than the Bureau because we are here to stay. We are here for the long haul. We are here because we are legally blind.

People have been fired, pressured to retire early, and blind vendors have left the program. We have come to a standstill because the Bureau will not let us participate fully and actively. All requests and all ideas are met with discord.

I submit this testimony because we have a voice that needs to be heard. The Bureau and DETR are not interested in our voice, our ideas, or our future. This is the general feeling amongst all the blind vendors of Nevada. I've included what I believe may be some of the solutions.

Respectfully,

  
Elizabeth Perring, Blind Vendor of Nevada  
March 26, 2003

#### Some ideas for Solutions:

- Create a budget for NVCB Inc.
- Create a Nominee Agency
- Full and Active participation of Vendors
- Re-instate the sub-committees
- Create a position for an executive director