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TESTIMONY – AB 323 (1R)

SENATE HUMAN RESOURCES AND FACILITIES – May 12, 2003

GOOD AFTERNOON MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. FOR THE RECORD MY NAME IS LARRY SPITLER AND I AM THE ASSOCIATE STATE DIRECTOR FOR ADVOCACY AT AARP NEVADA. WE ARE HERE TODAY TO SUPPORT AB 323.

AARP IS A NONPROFIT, NONPARTISAN MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR PEOPLE 50 AND OVER. WE PROVIDE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES; ENGAGE IN LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND LEGAL ADVOCACY; ASSIST MEMBERS IN SERVING THEIR COMMUNITIES; AND OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF UNIQUE BENEFITS, SPECIAL PRODUCTS, AND SERVICES FOR OUR MEMBERS. IN NEVADA, AARP HAS OVER 258,000 MEMBERS.

IN GENERAL, NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN MEDICINE, TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND GREATER KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES PROMISE CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS IN LONGEVITY FOR AMERICANS. LONGER LIFESPANS ALSO MEAN INCREASED SURVIVAL OF THOSE WITH SERIOUS, PERSISTENT ILLNESSES.

COMMON CHRONIC CONDITIONS LIMITING DAILY ACTIVITIES AMONG OLDER AMERICANS INCLUDE CIRCULATORY DISORDERS, SUCH AS HYPERTENSION AND

HEART DISEASE, ARTHRITIS AND DIABETES; AMONG THOSE 70 AND OVER, VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS AND OSTEOPOROSIS ALSO BECOME INCREASINGLY PREVALENT. DEMENTIA, WHICH IS MOST COMMONLY DUE TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, INCREASES FROM 10 PERCENT AMONG PEOPLE AGE 65 AND OLDER TO MORE THAN 47 PERCENT AMONG THOSE AGE 85 AND OLDER.

WHILE AARP STRONGLY SUPPORTS GREATER INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH ON THE AGING PROCESS, PARTICULARLY ON DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH AGING SUCH AS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND PARKINSON'S DISEASE, WE ALSO RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT THE NEED FOR A TRAINED WORKFORCE CARING FOR PATIENTS WITH THESE ILLNESSES.

AARP BELIEVES THAT STATES SHOULD ENSURE THAT ALL LONG-TERM CARE TRAINING PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY NURSE AIDE TRAINING PROGRAMS, INCLUDE CONTENT REGARDING THE CARE OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL DISORDERS SUCH AS SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS, MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND OTHER DEMENTIAS, AND ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURIES.

WE ARE PLEASED TO SUPPORT AB 323 AS WE FEEL IT MOVES IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TO PROVIDE CARE WITH DIGNITY FOR PATIENT'S SUFFERING FROM ALZHEIMER'S AND OTHER FORMS OF DEMENTIA.

**THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US TO PRESENT OUR
THOUGHTS ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE.**