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Committee on Judiciary: SB 128 revision of 118A.390

Please accept my sincere apologies for not being at this hearing in person. Unfortunately, a previous commitment makes my presence here impossible.

My name is Marshall Schultz. I am founder and president of Residents Information Center, Inc. (RIC), a tax exempt organization.

We are known throughout the state as Nevada Renters Hotline. Ours is the only office in Nevada that residential tenants, landlords, and agents may call for reliable information about the rental statutes, and how to deal with the other party in the transaction.

Many state and local government offices refer callers to us, including the Governor's office and the AG's office. Ours is the only office in Nevada collecting and collating information on rental problems from all around the state.

We do not give legal advice, only practical guidance. We get no money from government or from funding organizations. Our revenue comes entirely from people who call or email the Hotline for information. Fewer than 5% donate small amounts of money, of which 20% are landlords. Our revenues average about \$1,000 per year. That's enough to let us render a unique service to Nevadans, which we have been doing since 1995.

We are proud of our service, and proud that the Hotline was created in the best tradition of American entrepreneurial self-help and self-reliance. We think the most devout conservative has to respect that.

Please see arguments in favor of SB 128 attached.

EXHIBIT I Senate Committee on Judiciary
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Senate Committee on Judiciary:

Testimony in support of SB 128 revising NRS 118A.390 Adding subsections 4, 5 and 6

The fact that SB 128 is proposed on behalf of the Nevada Judges Association should persuade this committee and all legislators to favor it. The judges who hear eviction and lockout cases are the most knowledgeable people in the state regarding the injustices done under the present law.

Over a period of some seven years many Hotline callers have asked about the very problem this bill addresses: What to do about an unlawful eviction, lockout, or interruption of essential services. There is no easy answer to these questions. Landlord actions of this kind are often retaliatory, but retaliation is next to impossible to prove.

The major problem in virtually all Hotline calls is simply that most people, including the vast majority of tenants and landlords, don't know the law exists. Many landlords believe that they are absolute masters of their domains and can do whatever they please. Tenants, on the other hand, are terrified of being evicted, locked out, or otherwise abused. This is especially true of low income families, the elderly, and Hispanics.

Hotline advice is always the same: Get a copy of the law (NRS 118A) and study it. And hereafter put everything in writing, keeping a diary of events. Unfortunately, many tenants cannot write a declarative sentence, let alone a detailed letter or keep a journal, so whenever practical we refer callers to agencies that may be able to help.

In some counties the elderly and low income families may get help from agencies such as Nevada Legal Services, Washoe Legal Services, Clark County Legal Services, Washoe County Senior Law Project, or social services. Nevada Hispanic Services also refers their clients to the legal services, most having Spanish speaking paralegals. But all too often the legal services are too busy to accept a new client timely enough to file for expedited relief within the required two weeks.

Nevada Renters Hotline is not licensed to give legal advice, so we cannot do much beyond what I have described.

I speak for all Hotline members (20% of whom are landlords) when I say that SB 128 should be passed, hopefully with our proposed amendments.

At the very least, it will level the playing field a bit more.

Thank you.

Marshall L. Schultz