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TESTIMONY

BILL: S.B. 197 Repeals, reenacts, reorganizes and revises certain provisions relating to juvenile justice. (BDR 5-633)

DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

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Good morning, Chairman Amodei and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Willie B. Smith, Deputy Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services, Youth Correctional Services. I am here to support S.B. 197, which would repeal, reenact, reorganize, and revise certain provisions of NRS Chapters 62, 210, 213.220-213.290 inclusive, and 214 relating to juvenile justice.

In April 2002, the Nevada Juvenile Justice Commission and Work Study Group submitted a recommendation to the Governor's Fundamental Review Study Committee for revision and reorganization of NRS Chapter 62 to create a more reader friendly document. As a result of that recommendation, the Governor directed the Department of Human Resources (DHR), Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), to submit a Bill Draft Request (BDR 5-513) to accomplish this purpose. The DHR BDR 5-513 was later withdrawn to avoid duplication of effort and to support BDR 5-633 proposed by State Senator Valerie Wiener. With the assistance of Senator Wiener and Brad Wilkinson, Legislative Counsel Bureau, and the leadership of Judge Dianne Steel, members of the Work Study Group and other juvenile justice professionals collaborated to develop S.B. 197.

S.B. 197 accomplishes the following primary goals:

1. It repeals the existing provisions of NRS Chapters 62, 210, 213.220-213.290 inclusive, and 214 and codifies these chapters in Title 5 of the NRS.

2. Numerous sections of the existing provisions were reenacted, reorganized and rewritten to reduce redundancy, omit archaic language and provisions, improve consistency of language, grammar and structure; however, the substance of the provisions is retained.

The advantages to the statutory changes proposed in S.B. 197 are:

1. The Bill will clarify and minimize confusion in the juvenile delinquency statutes, which will result in more efficient collaboration between the counties and the state, more consistent compliance with statutory requirements, and more efficient statewide juvenile justice system operations.
2. The improved organizational structure and format resulting from the passage of S.B. 197 will help to identify substantive changes to the statutes that may need to be made during the 2005 legislative session, or in other proposed legislation.
3. There is no fiscal effect on local government or the State.

Passage of S.B. 197 constitutes good public policy because it eliminates duplication in the statutes and minimizes confusion by organizing various sections into a more logical format. Additionally, having all juvenile delinquency statutes in the same Title, rather than two separate Titles, allows for easier access for juvenile justice professionals and creates a more reader friendly document. This Bill represents an important milestone for Nevada juvenile justice professionals in their efforts to improve our juvenile justice system.

I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.