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Mr., Chairman, honorable members of the committee. My name is Cinda Dillahun. I am an eighteen-year resident of the Las Vegas valley, 14 years of which have been in Green Valley, Henderson, Nevada and I am here in support of SCR 21.

I am presently a substitute teacher in the Clark County School District (CCSD). My assignments have included classes at Cortney Middle School in Las Vegas, The Las Vegas Academy for the Performing Arts and a long-term assignment at Bob Miller Middle School in the upscale Green Valley Ranch area of Henderson. With the exception of the Las Vegas Academy (one of the top ten magnet schools in the nation in 2001), where the environment is built on learning and education my other assignments have strongly reinforced my belief that the Clark County School District has lost sight of its original mission: - the education of our children.

I terminated my long-term assignment because of the chaos and lack of disciplinary support provided the teachers by the administration at Bob Miller Middle School. The primary concern expressed was NOT how can we control the classroom behavior and disruptions that were caused by a few students resulting in the inability of a teacher to assist those students who did want to learn. It is important to understand Mr. Chairman that there are a high percentage of students in Clark County who really are trying to get a quality education. However, when 10% of the students misbehave, it costs the whole class anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes of the precious 50 minute class time to reestablish order. The primary concern at Bob Miller was not to make any waves that would result in the teacher, Principal or Administrators getting calls from parents. Their policy is to give EVERY student at least three (3) warnings in each and every class before the teacher could have the disruptive student disciplined or we might get calls from parents who think we are belittling their child or that the teacher "doesn't like their child." I had an average of 33 students per class and the actions of a few ruined the opportunity for all. Also, any class size consisting of over 25 students makes it almost impossible to give the attention required to allow for a quality education of those students.

There are many studies and articles concerning the problems resulting from the growth of super large school systems. I am sure that you Mr. Chairman and the members of this committee are aware of and have read many more of these studies and reviews than I have. I have found two that provide very telling arguments for the reconfiguration of our present school districts in Nevada.

The Sutherland Institute; an independent, non -profit, nonpartisan research and educational organization devoted to analyzing Utah's public issues stated in its January 2002 analysis of school district size ... "Yet several decades of super-size districts have called into question the notion that bigger districts deliver cost-effective, high quality education...." Their study, published in January 2002, determined that as school districts get larger, the percentage of the

education budget that gets spent on teachers, books and teaching materials decreases. The larger the district gets the more of its limited resources go to secondary and even non-essential activities.

Mike Antonucci, director of the Education Intelligence Agency, an education research firm based in California, concurs with the findings of the Southerland Institute in his research presented in his Alexis de Tocqueville Institution brief #176 from 1999.

I have experienced these shortfalls in materials and resources first hand.

CCSD specifically has become an "institutionalized" education system. Students cannot take books home for studying in Clark County because the district cannot buy enough books so that every student can receive one. Students are taught vocabulary by taking home a packet of words and usage to complete at home and return to school the next day. The packets are graded in class by exchanging papers and the teacher just reads the correct answers – there is little discussion of word usage due to time constraints and disruption. Reading is taught by filling out forms saying the student read for a 20-minute period each day and turning in the paper at the end of each week for grading. Their reading can be Sports Illustrated, Car and Driver ads, or any material the student finds on-line. These papers are not checked for grammar or spelling – they are scanned for completion only and graded on completion not content. This is not educating, this is state funded day care with activities.

Living and working under the fear of the parent reprisal factor based on CCSD paranoia has got to end - The students can't learn and the teachers can't teach the way it is – Students are self-teaching and many of them are unable to do so. Special Education needs to be geared toward working around disabilities then mainstreaming - not mainstreaming and changing the curriculum for Special Education students. Also, the issue of adjusting student behavior with drugs has got to stop. First change diet, lower sugar ingestion and even teach parents how to parent first before drugging students.

There are over 250,000 students in Clark County - that's 1/10 of our state's population and there aren't enough books, materials, teachers or disciplinarians to handle that kind of volume. According to one school police officer I spoke with students know the district is overloaded and also know their misbehavior will most often go unpunished so they misbehave all the more. Basically, it all boils down to budget constraints. The larger school districts in the nation (1 through 5) spend up to \$10,000 per student per year where Clark County, the 6th largest district in the nation barely spends \$5,000.

Mr. Chairman, look at the Hierarchy of the Department of Education in Nevada it is incredibly top-heavy. I am sure that should this committee decide to go forward with this study it will show that our population is too small to sustain layer upon layer of bureaucracy instead of redistributing the system at the grass roots

level where administrators can be on top of all the education issues. Anymore top layers in the current educational system in Nevada will bring education in our State to a screeching halt. In fact, Nevada is currently in the bottom 25% in the nation in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) test scores along with Mississippi, Alabama and other more populated states.

This is not Los Angeles, Chicago or New York City - we don't have that kind of infrastructure to have one of the largest school districts in the country and if we do - then let's spend the \$10k per student per year like New York. Let's set up a regents program like New York where students are required to have 4 years of English, 4 years of Math and Science and at least 2 years of a foreign language and require the students to pass State tests in order to graduate as well as the NCLB tests. Our children are our future Mr. Chairman and with the Baby boomers retiring in the next 20 years there are not going to be enough educated people to fill those jobs. Let's make the children of Nevada the best educated the country has. Why should we be at the bottom if we have the wherewithal to be at the top? The only way to accomplish any of these lofty ideas is to deconsolidate our school districts.

Please Mr. Chairman and members of the committee vote to pass SCR21 for the good of Nevada, for the good of our citizens, our teachers and most importantly the good of our children.