

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Seventy-Third Session  
March 2, 2005**

The Committee on Education was called to order at 3:22 p.m., on Wednesday, March 2, 2005. Chairwoman Bonnie Parnell presided in Room 1214 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada, and, via simultaneous videoconference, in Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file at the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ms. Bonnie Parnell, Chairwoman  
Mrs. Debbie Smith, Vice Chairwoman  
Mrs. Sharron Angle  
Mr. Kelvin Atkinson  
Mr. Joe Hardy  
Mr. Brooks Holcomb  
Mr. William Horne  
Mr. Garn Mabey  
Mr. Mark Manendo  
Mr. Bob McCleary  
Mr. Harvey J. Munford

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Richard Perkins, Assembly District No. 23, Clark County  
Senator Steven Horsford, Clark County Senatorial District No. 4

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Carol Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst  
Rachel Pilliod, Committee Manager  
Paul Partida, Committee Attaché

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Nancy Todd Tyner, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Danny Thompson, State Chief, American Federation of Labor and  
Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), Las Vegas, Nevada  
Garrett Coyne, Student, Frank Lamping Elementary School, Henderson,  
Nevada  
Samantha Peña, Student, Howard E. Heckethorn Elementary School,  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
Patti Moseley, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Anna Gomez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Terry L. Hickman, President, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA),  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
Sherrie Jackson, Teacher, C.C. Meneley Elementary School, Douglas  
County School District, Gardnerville, Nevada  
Roger Maillard, Legislative Advocate, representing American Federation of  
State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Retirees,  
Carson City, Nevada  
Rena Meyers, Organizer, State of Nevada Employees Association (SNEA),  
American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees  
(AFSCME), Local 4041, Carson City, Nevada  
Barbara Clark, Member-at-Large, Nevada Parent Teacher Association  
(PTA), Carson City, Nevada

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

[Called meeting to order and roll called.] We are starting early today; it looks like everybody got the message. The Assembly will be hearing from Chief Justice [Nancy] Becker at 5:00 p.m., so we will need to end the testimony today at about 4:45 p.m. If you are testifying, I would appreciate it if you kept that in mind. Our first order of business this afternoon, I will open the hearing on A.J.R. 2.

**Assembly Joint Resolution 2: Proposes to amend Nevada Constitution to authorize Legislature to provide for statewide lottery to provide money for textbooks, classroom supplies and class-size reduction. (BDR C-1181)**

This was introduced by Speaker Perkins.

**Assemblyman Richard Perkins, Assembly District No. 23, Clark County:**

I am here to present A.J.R. 2. As the Chair of the Interim Committee on Education, I traveled to classrooms throughout our state, over the last year and a half, and found a crisis in our schools. Simply put, our students do not have

the tools necessary. Nevada's schools and students rank near the bottom of the list in virtually every category.

[Assemblyman Perkins, continued.] We have a prop here to demonstrate that:

- We are forty-ninth in high school graduation.
- We are forty-eighth in eighth grade reading.
- We are forty-seventh in fourth grade reading.
- We are forty-fifth in our student to teacher ratio.

I, for one, am tired of seeing Nevada at the bottom of the education list. As a state, we are failing our students by not providing basic tools for their success. One of the most fundamental tools for a student's education is his or her textbook. We all had textbooks when we were in school. I always had textbooks—whether I was at Gordon McCaw Elementary, Burkholder Middle School, or Basic High School in Henderson, Nevada—during my K-12 days. But today, Nevada students are learning from old, torn, and tattered textbooks like these [held up a torn, old textbook]. This is a textbook that is currently being used at a school here in Carson City.

As you can see, it is in very poor repair. It is also a history book—*Battle Born Nevada: People, History, Stories*—but it is so old that it doesn't have the last eight or so years worth of Nevada's history in it. I'm not sure how much we want our students to learn, but I think that our history includes everything and shouldn't exclude our most recent history.

In spite of the books that are in this shape, many of our students, at best, are learning to from hard-to-read Xerox copies from textbooks like these. In many cases they are not even Xeroxed copies. Students are learning from just a few worksheets. We expect teachers to teach, and we want to hold them accountable. How can we hold our teachers accountable if we are not giving them the tools that they need to educate our children? It is time we stood up and realized that accountability is a two-way street, and we must hold up our end of the bargain if we can ever expect teachers and their students to succeed. It is not right and we are going to fix it now. That is why I bring to you A.J.R. 2, to create a Nevada State Lottery, which will provide funds to pay for textbooks.

Our schools need help, our children need textbooks, and our elected officials need to step up and be leaders. Nevadans already play the lottery. They play the lottery in California and in Arizona. In fact, a recent survey showed that 32 percent of Clark County citizens, almost one in three, play the lottery. The money that could be staying in our state is instead helping education in Los Angeles and in Phoenix. The funds generated from a lottery would not be

gains to the State Treasury, but an automatic investment. This voluntary lottery is an investment in our classrooms, in our children, and in our economy. When we put more money into our schools, we are building a stronger Nevada for everyone. Seventy-three percent of Nevadans support this measure. I was privileged to see a poll early last year that was taken on the issue, because they know the benefits a state lottery will provide for their children. If we fail to pass this measure this session, we will not only fail to pass this resolution, we will have failed our children. We must work together to make sure this Body does not fail our teachers, students, and families.

[Assemblyman Perkins, continued.] I will walk through this resolution very quickly. It starts on page 2, line 4 and talks about the prohibition in our *Constitution*. Lines 4, 5, and 6 are scratched out. The new language then authorizes the Legislature to put together the constraints and the mechanics of a lottery with few restrictions, the thought being that we need to provide the authorization in the *Constitution*, and that a future legislature will be able to put the mechanics together instead of putting a lot of detail in our *Constitution* and providing that sort of flexibility. The limitations are as such:

- Line 10(a): "Determine the appropriate manner of operation of the lottery, other than the use of video lottery terminals or similar types of machines." The reason for that is so that the Legislature can put together the lottery but, in essence, video lottery terminals in other states are much like the gaming machines that our casinos use in this state. I thought it not appropriate for us to be in direct competition with the number one industry in Nevada.
- Line 13(b): "Provide for the disbursement of all money from the proceeds of the lottery, less expenses, directly related to the operation of the lottery, to the school districts in this state in a fair and equitable manner." In essence, taking the political realities of our budgeting process out of the equation, let's make this a dedicated directed funding source that is not subject to partisan and political whims.
- Line 17(c): Ensures that the money dispersed to the school districts from the proceeds of the lottery is used only to supplement and not replace the money that a school district would otherwise receive from the State for the system of public education. This is in addition to what we already have. I don't think it makes any sense for us to supplant what we are already doing. It will never increase the quality of our textbooks and the number of textbooks to our students.

- Line 22(b): Ensures that each school district that receives money from the proceeds of the lottery uses the money only to supplement and not to replace the money that the school district would otherwise expend for textbooks, classroom supplies and materials, and the reduction of class sizes.

[Assemblyman Perkins, continued.] That, in essence, is the meat of the bill. I can tell you that you will hear from a number of others today that can explain to you the crisis in our classrooms, as it relates to the lack of instructional supplies, textbooks, and the sizes of our classes. When you have a set of textbooks in a classroom, and we have these high standards, and when students can't take books home to work with their parents on their scores, we are setting them up for failure. How can we expect these higher standards and not give them the tools that they need? How can we expect, as I know this Committee will undertake later on increasing parental involvement in their children's education, if they can't take a textbook home and share it with their parents and work on those studies?

That is my introduction, Madam Chair, and I am pleased to be here today. I want to thank you and the Committee for this opportunity, and I am happy to answer any questions if you have them.

**Assemblyman Horne:**

Mr. Speaker, last session when there was talk about a lottery, I was a "no" at the time; I had some concerns. As you hear in other states, the funds do not end up doing what we want them to do; they don't go where we want them to go. I am pleased it is showing that this money is going to the school districts, and constitutionally it states that it is going to supplement and not supplant. I think others had that concern too. Since this money is going here, we don't need to fund it anymore. Then we end up with a net zero gain, which is not the intent of what we are trying to do. I think that everybody here wants to see an improvement in the schools and that it is going to the classroom.

We have heard, over the years, questions of the money getting to the classrooms where we want it to go. I said, on Monday, where I was concerned: over the summer, my niece was taking a summer school class for algebra and couldn't bring a book home, because the school did not want to give up their books. They were afraid that they were going to lose it to a student that didn't go to their school. That is wrong. Like the parents don't have enough trouble helping their kids out sometimes with their school work, and then they don't come home with books. I am pleased that this is narrowly defined to what we want it to be used for. I thank you for bringing this forward.

**Assemblyman Perkins:**

A couple of things come to mind as you mention that. I too have been very skeptical about lotteries in past sessions. Having done some research and become better educated, I think now is the time. Do I expect the largest industry in our state to embrace this and come forward to testify in favor? Certainly not. It is still, in some ways, another gaming product that could be in competition with them.

I think the timing is right now for a couple of reasons. We do have this crisis in our classrooms. All of them have students or employees who have students in our classrooms and want to have a better educational system. I think that helps this cause.

Many of the gaming companies operating in Nevada operate in many of the other states in our country. The proliferation of gaming in the United States has been tremendous over the last decade. Most of the states in which they do business, outside of Nevada, have a lottery. I think they have learned how to market their products and deal with that as well. Is it a perfect system? No. I think that is okay. The narrow definition is there on purpose; it is there to provide the accountability that I think the voters are going to want when they go to the polls and have an opportunity to vote for this. Ultimately, it has to be approved by the voters. That is an important point here.

Another thing that came up in past discussions on a lottery is that it has been said that lotteries start off really high, let revenues come in, and then they tail off because people lose interest. That has not been the case. In fact, I had LCB [Legislative Counsel Bureau], as recently as last year, do an analysis on that and look across the country. The lotteries in other states, although they may not have grown tremendously, are on the upswing in terms of the revenues they provide to their states. I appreciate you bringing that up.

**Assemblywoman Smith:**

Thank you for your parent involvement comment. That is very important to me. You are absolutely right; a lot of people tend to think of parent involvement as raising money and volunteering in the classroom when, in fact, it starts at home. The most important role for that parent is to be able to assist his or her student with what is going on at school, whether it is the textbook or something that is generated out of some software. I am assuming this includes the idea, when it mentions supplies, that it could also go to textbooks that are generated in another fashion. It would enable parents to do a better job at home and have the resources that they need as well.

[Assemblywoman Smith, continued.] I remember during one of the biggest lottery times, one of the big tickets in California, hearing that the outlet at Truckee was one of the biggest outlets for lottery sales in the state, meaning that the people from the Truckee Meadows were going up the hill to buy all those lottery tickets. I think it was the biggest outlet. I wanted to mention that; thank you.

**Assemblyman Perkins:**

It is my recollection—and certainly we have to verify this, because I do not have the data in front of me—the outlet at Truckee was actually number two. The outlet across from Primm, at the state line in southern Nevada, was number one. That is such an isolated spot that those folks had to have come from southern Nevada. They were not California residents. The number one and number two outlets for the California lottery sales were Nevadans, it appears to me.

You are right that the parental involvement pieces are important. We cannot be all things to all people. We know from the interim committee that one of the largest indicators of success for a child is how involved that parent is in their education. A parent can't be involved if they don't have a textbook to help them; they can't be as involved. We also need to look for other creative ways to fund our educational system, in my estimation. I think that we don't need to go back to the taxpayers; these are different ways. Assuming this passes this Legislature and the next Legislature and goes to a vote of the people, we won't have this available to us for several years. This is not something that is going to happen tomorrow. This is planning for our future, and I think it is prudent to do that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

I would like to make a comment about the textbooks, since that is a book from the school that I taught for 10 years, Carson Middle School. We often think that the \$50 appropriation from the State for textbooks to the school district is enough to cover that cost. I was saying the other day that the last year I taught, four years ago, the eighth grade social studies book was close to \$80, and the sixth grade social studies book was about \$59, I believe. You multiply that by all the students in a school district, and the school districts are left having to make that money up from some other category of funding. The same is true with class-size reduction. We do not fully fund a mandated class-size reduction program. I look at this also as a way to help make up that difference so that school districts actually have those covered and do not have to take away from other programs. I think that is important to remember too, especially in the cost of these textbooks and the true cost of our class-size reduction program.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

As a teacher myself, with the textbook situation, I recall we seemed to have enough textbooks in some instances, but the problem was they were not up to date; they were not current. When I was teaching U.S. government—I retired in 2004—the textbook that I had in my class was 1999 and 2000. I remember our department chair and our supervisor stating that we didn't have the funds at that time. It was really a disadvantage especially in teaching government, because it was such an important election in 2000. I couldn't in 2004 bring the kids up to some standard and some understanding of the election of 2000 because it was so controversial. It went on to the Electoral College, and our book had no mention of that at all. It was really something that I felt hurt their progress in their education. I definitely know we need some books.

**Assemblyman Perkins:**

This book [held up the tattered book shown earlier] is currently in use here in Carson City. It is a 1998 version of a history book. It does the same thing that you pointed out. There are some current events that were not mentioned, that these students will never have the opportunity to learn from in this book.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

Are there any additional questions for the Speaker? I don't see any. Thank you so much. I am sure you will be in the room if anyone comes up with a question, so you will be available.

**Senator Steven Horsford, Clark County Senatorial District No. 4:**

I am here in support of A.J.R. 2. I'd like to applaud the Speaker and all of the sponsors in this Committee for bringing this legislation forward in this session. It is a piece of legislation that is important to the success of public education in our state. A.J.R. 2 is a long-term, stable source of funding for two critical needs in our schools, as has been mentioned: the textbooks and school supplies, as well as smaller class sizes. The constitutional amendment would specify that the money could only be used for textbooks, learning materials, and class-size reductions.

Further, the constitutional amendment would also specify that the money raised by the lottery would be used as a supplement and could not supplant any existing funding for education. It is estimated that the lottery in Nevada will raise between \$30 million and \$50 million, and it could raise upwards of \$70 million by the seventh year of operation. On average, it costs \$176 per student in primary grades and \$270 in secondary grades to provide the required textbooks for Nevada's children.



[Senator Horsford, continued.] Assembly Joint Resolution 2 is another step towards our commitment as legislators in providing the necessary funding for textbooks, class size, and classroom supplies. These are tools that are necessary for teachers to teach, parents to parent, and students to learn. As legislators, we have a constitutional requirement to fund public education in our state. As the Speaker has explained, the need for this policy is long overdue, and our children deserve our support. Thank you for your consideration on this very important step forward and addressing some of the long-term needs for public education. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Nancy Todd Tyner, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am a political consultant who has been involved in over 200 campaigns since 1979. My area of expertise the last 15 years has been in gaming, and the last 4 or 5 years we have been involved strictly in being hired by cities, states, and countries to talk about how to bring gaming into their area and how to do it right. In Nevada, the land-based casinos have tapered off and many states have gone into the lotteries. That is what we have been involved with, specifically, during the last 5 years.

What we are generally asked is how to do this right. We have found a few key components. One, clearly, is to do what you are suggesting to do here, which is to dedicate the revenue. We have found it is very crucial that the revenue is dedicated. Education is a hot button in all of the country. It is very important that it is put where it will help the people who need it the most. We have learned that lotteries are not a silver bullet; there are a couple of situations that we have learned from mistakes. I was not involved in the Florida legislation that brought in the lottery, but it is the one state that I've had the most trouble trying to defend when I have gone out to help other states like Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Oklahoma. The key reason for that is that it did not do what Assemblyman Horne mentioned. It did not lock in the revenue; the revenue was back-doored in Florida.

We have learned a few things since then. That has been very helpful. The role model that everyone likes to look to, which is the most helpful, is the HOPE [Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally] Scholarship Lottery in Georgia. It has done a couple of things that all of us in the great state of Nevada hope to do with the lottery funds. The money is dedicated and there is no backdoor out of it—the backdoor means that it is not taken. The lottery money comes in, yet money is taken out of the general fund, which is what happened in Florida and also in Indiana. The Georgia Lottery specifically dedicated all of those funds into education, and their success story has been copied and emulated by every state who has come on since that time. It has been tremendously successful. I am a

big proponent of that, and I would welcome any questions that you might have in order to structure this as a way to bring it in properly.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

Thank you for that, and thank you for volunteering for that. I'm sure that down the road you will be called upon. Are there any questions for Nancy from the Committee?

**Danny Thompson, State Chief, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am here with two young people that are impacted by this issue and would like to address the Committee.

**Garrett Coyne, Student, Frank Lamping Elementary School, Henderson, Nevada:**

When I come home at night to do my homework, I do not have any school books. We use a homework packet instead of school books for all work. I think it would be better if I had school books. My brother's name is Connor. He is in kindergarten now, and I hope that you can make sure there are books for him when he gets into the first grade next year. Please help our schools get books. Thank you.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

Thank you for being here.

**Samantha Peña, Student, Howard E. Heckethorn Elementary School, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

Today I brought a packet of my homework sheets for you to see [held up her packet of homework sheets for the Committee]. I do spelling, math, and reading with these worksheets. I only have a math workbook. I also have a brother whose name is Andrew. He is in the first grade and he does not have any school books, and he also uses a homework packet. Please vote for this legislation so that we can have real school books. Thank you.

**Danny Thompson:**

In talking with these children today about the concept of textbooks, the sad thing is that they do not know what you are talking about, because they have never seen one. I think it is a sad state of affairs for this state to be in. We urge passage of this resolution.

**Assemblyman Atkinson:**

I am happy to hear Mr. Thompson bring up the issue of textbooks. I am sure it was brought up earlier. I am happy to hear the children talk about the importance of textbooks. Textbooks were the number one reason I chose to run

for office a few years ago. My daughter is the same age as the young gentleman there. She came home one day and had a brown bag, and it was her math book. There was a note in there that said that she needed to return the book in three days, because it needed to go to the next student. I remember being really infuriated about that.

[Assemblyman Atkinson, continued.] I called the school, and I remember the principal telling me at the time that her hands were tied, that they didn't have money for textbooks, that if I wanted to do something about it, then I should do something about it. That was when I chose to run for office—to make a change. I think if this bill is going to address this problem and help the kids in Nevada get textbooks in schools, and I know it is slated to do a few other things here, but textbooks, in my opinion, are the number one issue that I like to deal with in the schools. I want to thank Mr. Thompson for bringing the kids to testify today.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

Are there additional questions? I would like to say to Samantha and Garrett, it means a lot on behalf of the Committee, that I want to share how important it is for all of us to hear from the students. Oftentimes we only hear from adults, so to hear what you are actually experiencing with your packets and not your textbooks is very important for us to hear. Thank you for coming up today to tell us that.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

One other thing I wanted to mention from my experiences in the classroom was that no one has ever brought up the idea that when you are issued a textbook, and you lose the textbook—someone did mention earlier that the \$50 that you have to pay and some students are willing to pay and some can't afford to pay it—we might not have enough books to give them a replacement. That is another problem we run into, or we have to go back to some old and outdated book, which is very outdated. I have experienced that even up to this year. You think of this as, maybe, a problem during the early years of the Clark County School District. No, this is still current. I think this should be addressed; it is a very serious problem.

**Patti Moseley, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

My daughter is a junior in high school in the Las Vegas area. We are faced with problems on a daily basis—the things that she is faced with on a normal day in high school. Being a junior, she has to take a U.S. history class in order to graduate from high school. She is not allowed to bring a book home. They have a set amount of books in the classroom, and as they go into the classroom, they are allowed to use the book that day, but at the end of the day they are

not able to bring the books home. Her American literature class is the same program—go into the classroom, have the book for the day, and then not allowed to bring it home. In her psychology class, she has no book at all. Only the teacher has a book. I don't know how we have gotten so far behind that only the teacher has a book and our children don't have any. I grew up with a book for every class.

[Patti Moseley, continued.] I find it hard to understand that my daughter has to sit in a class and take notes—from what a teacher is telling her from the book that she gets—that are from her vision. I am very worried about this and her future. I want her to stay motivated. I want her to graduate from school and go on to college. I feel that the motivation is not there because they do not have access to supplies. A cook couldn't go to work without his knives, his tools. Our children have to have their books and their supplies. If they didn't hear something properly from the teacher in the day and they wanted to go over it with their parents at night, they do not have that ability.

Another problem that my child is faced with is that she has been very sick this year. She has missed a lot of school, so she has to go into school early or stay late to do the make up work, without any books. She can call a friend, and they have no books either. For us, our children cannot do their homework at home. They cannot study at home. Everything must be done at school. I am asking that you consider that this is very serious for our children and for their future. They are our future. We must give them the tools to work with. We do not want our kids quitting school; the ratio of children that are dropping out of school is astronomical. The group of people that are going to college becomes less each year. We have to give them the motivation and the supplies so that they can be educated and have the best education possible, because they are our future. Thank you.

**Anna Gomez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I have a 13-year-old daughter in seventh grade. She is a very good student, and I hope that she has opportunities to go to college. I am worried about the conditions of Jennifer's school. I wonder how that is going to affect her life in the future. Jennifer is not allowed to bring her books home to do her homework for most of her classes. In the only class in which she is allowed to bring the book home, the book is in very bad disrepair. I wonder how our children can get ready for college and learn under these conditions. Thank you for your time. I am a very concerned parent. I hope that you can help us with the problems our children face with their school supplies.

**Patti Moseley:**

I would like to again bring up the seriousness of the situation in the high schools. Our children take proficiency tests before they are allowed to graduate and move on to college. I think that if they looked at the records of the children and how many times they have to take the tests over—two and three times, especially in the area of math—I think we need to be much more aware of this situation. They do not have access to the books. If the children take their math class their freshman year and do not pass it, they take it later on in a following year and don't have access to the books. They have to get a tutor system to help them pass, so they may move on from high school and graduate. This is a very serious problem. The proficiency in English, reading, and math must all be done prior to graduating from high school. Please consider this is where we are going with this issue. It is about the books.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

One thing I believe this Committee will be looking at during the interim will be trying to get information about textbooks—particularly math textbooks, which our high schools have—and highly qualified math teachers, to see how that correlation plays into the success rate in the high school proficiency exam. Thank you for drawing our attention to that as well.

**Terry L. Hickman, President, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), Las Vegas, Nevada:**

[Spoke from prepared testimony, [Exhibit B](#).]

Lack of funding for public education is an ongoing problem in our state. According to NEA [National Education Association] ranking and estimates from fall 2004, Nevada has slipped to 47th in per-pupil funding among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. We are ahead of only Mississippi, Arkansas, Arizona, and Utah in per-pupil funding.

A state lottery in Nevada is a small piece of a large puzzle to solve the education crisis. The NSEA is here today in favor of A.J.R. 2. We support the resolution because the money generated by a lottery will supplement, not supplant, current revenue going to programs that are currently lacking funds.

Our members appreciate the leadership of Speaker Perkins and the other sponsors of A.J.R. 2 to dedicate the funds of a lottery class-size reduction, as well as textbooks and supplies.

With me here today is Sherrie Jackson, a sixth-grade teacher from Douglas County. She has had in her class a range in numbers of students from 29 to 34 students. Mrs. Jackson is a veteran teacher of 17 years, and she is currently a sixth-grade teacher at C.C. Meneley Elementary School in Douglas County.

**Sherrie Jackson, Teacher, C.C. Meneley Elementary School, Douglas County School District, Gardnerville, Nevada:**

[Handed out [Exhibit C](#).] I want to talk today about class-size reduction. I am in a unique position, because for the last two years in my class, it was a dream situation. We had four sixth-grade teachers, and the previous two years we each had 18 students in our classes of sixth graders. Test scores went through the roof. It was wonderful. The parents were happy. The students were happy. The teachers were happy. We implemented a math rotation program, which was the talk of the district, and other schools adopted that program.

This year, in my class, I range between 29 and 34 students at any given time. Due to funding, we lost one of our sixth-grade teachers. In looking at what we need to teach and what we need to get through with our curriculum through the year, we are realizing from the last two years to now, that we are not getting through one-third of what we did. It is only 10 or 11 more students in the classroom. You are thinking: how much that could affect curriculum and how you are teaching? If you look at it, it equates to one more reading group that is added. That is 100 minutes more that is added per week, which you lose every week of teaching time. That is another spelling group that you add. Discipline, in the form of office referrals and class disruptions, has tripled.

You have to remember these are the same fifth graders that were at the school. Now, in sixth grade, you are less one teacher. In the classroom it becomes crowd control and discipline issues, which take precedence over teaching. These are sixth graders who are larger, and a lot of sixth graders are now in junior high. You are talking about a classroom situation where one student has to ask another to back up their chair so they can get out of their own seat. We are down one teacher in our math class rotation. I teach the honors class. I teach seventh grade math to our sixth-grade students. They have to pass a test in order to be in that class.

My numbers did not go up very much. I am teaching only 24 students. However, in the remedial class, she is now up to 34 students. She has one aide to help her. It is crazy; it is not adequate. She cannot be effective. That same teacher collapsed in the hall one week ago. We called paramedics and thought that she had a seizure. She is only 33 years old. According to her doctor, it is stress, and she had to take a few days off of work. These are typical stories.

[Sherrie Jackson, continued.] The other teacher who is teaching the average students in math has no aide at all. She is very worried when the testing comes in, because we can't be effective. We can't be nearly as effective. To be an effective teacher, you have to have frequent parental communication. Now you are talking about ten more calls to make, ten more progress reports to get out, and average of five more hours when you are doing report cards. I'm not including special needs students. I have three special-needs students in my class, and I need to communicate with their parents on a daily basis.

To be an effective teacher, you have to have frequent feedback. You have to grade those papers and get them back to those children. In our writer's workshop, you interview and speak with the child about their writing. They need a lot of attention, which you cannot give when your classroom is overcrowded. Teachers in our hall right now are on a waiting list to get to the primary classes, not because of the students or curriculum—we love the upper grade students and curriculum—but it is because we know with lower class size comes the good chance of being effective. According to a *Time* magazine article last week, which I'm sure many of you saw, new teachers are lasting an average of five years in this profession. I know of two who quit during student-teaching and three others who left the profession to go into the business sector after about three years.

They would tell you that dealing with parents and the overcrowding of the classroom are the two biggest reasons for leaving. The two biggest reasons for the parents' unhappiness, aside from textbooks, is the overcrowding and the fact that we can't give these kids the attention and time that they deserve. Because we have overcrowding, parents, students, and teachers are unhappy, and we cannot be effective. As far as textbooks, we dug up a time capsule a few years back, a 20-year time capsule. Lo and behold, it was a science textbook; it was the exact same one we were still using. We laughed of course, and I think it even made it into the local paper, but it is sad.

I don't think it is any coincidence that our science scores are so low in our county. Our English language learners struggle to understand our complicated science and social studies texts. There are some really good ones out there for them by the same publishers we are now using, but we can't afford those books for them. We can't send our literature books home because they are the cheaper paperbacks, which was all we can afford when we do class sets. We can't risk the wear and tear because we can't replace them. That is not a good teaching practice. What I'm trying to say here today is that we all know what good teaching practices are. We all want to do it. We can't do it effectively when we are as overcrowded as we are. I thank you for your time and consideration today.

**Assemblyman Horne:**

I want to make sure I understood this. You made the comment that there was a remedial class of 34 students, and your class has 24 students. Arguably, I'm not a teacher—the remedial class would need more assistance. She had an aide, but we don't hire aides to teach our children.

**Sherrie Jackson:**

They can't effectively discipline, and that is the problem when you have that many students.

**Assemblyman Horne:**

That doesn't make any sense to me. I understand how that happens.

**Sherrie Jackson:**

We struggled with this issue. The only other option was not to have the AP [Advanced Placement] honors class. Then maybe we could divvy it up more, so it is horrible feeling. We feel horrible that we have to do something that is not a best teaching practice.

**Assemblyman Horne:**

I think that is horrible, and you couple that with the books. I have every book that I purchased in college and in law school, because they have lessons in them that you can reference back to that may help you with the lesson that you are currently receiving. Yet, we are not affording our children to come home and do homework for just one school year. Then you couple it with classroom size like that; it is terrible.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

I have to say, being a teacher like you are, I concur and echo everything you said. It is not only middle school or the level that she is at. It also occurs in high school. I experienced the same thing in class size. My average class size, since I have been in education and teaching, has never been less than 30 students. The average is 35, 36, and upwards to 40 students. To be able to teach in those conditions is almost impossible. She mentioned that there are so many things that can interfere with your ability to be a competent instructor because of class disturbances and class problems. She said about referrals going up and that type of thing. It is a very serious problem. It is something, without question, which has to be addressed. Maybe this can be taken care of or minimized to some degree with this lottery situation. Taking things one at a time, this is one we can get at.



**Assemblyman Mabey:**

This question is directed to Mr. Hickman. I am listening to this, that you dug up your time capsule and it is the same textbook. I have been in one session before this. How did it get to this state? Our State has never run in the red. We've had enough money, in my opinion, to do things that were necessary. I don't understand. I'm not on the Finance Committee and don't understand all the doings of that, but how could this happen, that textbooks wouldn't be provided to the students? Could you explain, in your opinion? Last session in the appropriation you were given money for textbooks.

**Terry Hickman:**

The budget process comes from the Legislature to the districts, then they divide it into the portions. I think the real issue that we have in Nevada is not totally unique, but somewhat unique. It is that so much of our education money goes to pay for growth. We are a state that will have 35,000 new students in classrooms in the next 2 years. That will cost a couple hundred million dollars, just to pay for the staffing and for those students to have lights and other necessities. I guess the question is, what do our students need to be successful? If that is the question, then the answer is clearly been said today. What we are doing is not enough. There needs to be a look at the budget process.

We also need to look at exactly how we are funding the schools. In my statement, I said we are now forty-seventh in per pupil funding. That per pupil funding is literally everything that a student has—textbooks and supplies. When you are at the bottom, you are unfortunately most likely to have a number of deficiencies, as has been enumerated by the students from Las Vegas, as well as the teacher. There currently has not been enough money in the system to make the difference that you and I both think and know is important.

**Assemblyman Mabey:**

In other words, you received the funds, but the textbooks were the item that was deleted. Those were not replaced. Something else was funded, but the textbooks were not.

**Terry Hickman:**

The process by which the districts use the money would best be answered by someone from the school districts. There is a budget process for textbooks, but just like inflation has, the cost of textbooks has been unbelievable. I give you a very brief story I have from when I was a counselor at Centennial High School. It was a new school four years ago in Las Vegas; it was a beautiful school. It was where they made the movie "Pay it Forward." It was a fantastic campus, but when it came to textbooks, the science books were so expensive; they

were nearly \$75 per biology textbook. There were four sections of biology almost every period because it is a very college-prep high school. Because of that, there were textbooks that there were only enough for the students to use in the classroom. Students could not take the textbooks home for fear that if they took them home and did not bring them back, the students in the other periods would not have the textbooks.

**Assemblyman Hardy:**

We all have anecdotal experiences about textbooks. This is an anecdotal experience where I took all five science books that related to spiders from the Boulder City Library to the bond oversight council five years ago. The most recent book was 1965. My favorite was 1949. None of those books had any mention of the word DNA. It is not limited only to the textbooks in the classrooms, but also limited to the libraries, particularly in schools that aren't new. We are, perhaps, further behind in textbooks than what we are talking about. I'm trying to get my feeling from different sources.

We had an article in the *Nevada Appeal* that used different numbers. I did some math and in the state of California, which has a lottery, they extensively use that money for the schools. They have \$15 billion that they say is profit, after expenses, over the last 20 years. If you start looking at the number of children and you quickly figure out that over 20 years, per year, you have \$74 per student that you have gained from the lottery. The state of Idaho does the same thing. Over the last 16 years they have had \$275 million. When you look at per student, you get \$41.90. Even if you do the lottery in California and in Idaho, if you use the numbers that Senator Horsford was suggesting to us—\$176 in elementary and \$270 in secondary grades—you do realize that we have an increased cost in books.

We are never going to catch up. I think that is where some people are recognizing that the book may need to be replaced by a new technology to catch up. We are not going to catch up with a lottery. I do not believe that. It is not going to be enough. Even if we were as successful as California, it wouldn't be enough. So we would be, in essence, putting in a system, in my mind, that would have an increased cost and expense, more than the benefit that we already have in place. I will go on the record that I did vote for education and taxation, and we did try to fund books, and if I look at what I think we did, it is about a \$40 million appropriation for books.

If we do that math, then we have spent \$50 per child in the state of Nevada. If we look at about 400,000 students in the state of Nevada, with \$20 million per year in that allocation, we are behind in our allocation. We are behind if we added what we would expect from the lottery, if we had as much money as

California and/or Idaho put together. The lottery is not going to solve the problem.

[Assemblyman Hardy, continued.] I would be very reluctant to add a new tax. Having done the math, I make a statement about the people who buy lottery tickets. It may not be correct, but I think people who buy lottery tickets are those who can't do math. The reality is that we have a mechanism, we hear testimony, we need to step up and admit that we need to fund education and books. That is what we need to do. The testimony has been very eloquent. I don't think that we need a new vehicle, which has all the attendant problems that lotteries do, to do that. That is where I am coming from. I don't think it is enough.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

I would like to make one note. When you reference the old science book, we all need to be very aware that, beginning the next school year—if not 2005-2006, the following year—science becomes part of the high school proficiency exam. That is a sobering thought as well.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

I think if the lottery helps fund education, it is a step in the right direction. My wife has been teaching for 30 years. The stress is unbelievable. She will be retiring this year and teachers come up to her and tell her they wish they were in her shoes, that they could retire. The things that you've shared with the Committee here, I have heard many times over and over from my wife. Comments that other teachers have made, it's pandemic, and it is right across the state, I'm assuming. I've heard it from you. I've heard it from my wife so many times. Mothers have asked her to stay one more year and she tells them no.

**Roger Maillard, Legislative Advocate, representing American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Retirees, Carson City, Nevada:**

You may ask yourself why a senior would be here speaking to this issue. I want to tell you that my senior group and other senior groups that I belong to, one of our highest priorities are our grandchildren. I have a number of grandkids that live here in Carson City, and I have been witness to some of the conditions of school books and/or the lack of school books. I'd like to bring your attention one thing that hasn't been mentioned in the issue of bringing school books home. A friend of mine's granddaughter brought home a school book 1 1/2 months ago that had some very sexually suggestive things written into it. That was something that I don't want my granddaughter exposed to. If you have

grandchildren, you wouldn't want that same thing exposed to them. I am in favor of this resolution.

[Roger Maillard, continued.] I wanted to touch on the lottery. Mr. Hardy said that people who play the lottery don't know math. I happen to be very good at math and advanced math. I know what the odds are in a lottery. Let me tell you, I play the lottery. I have played the lottery for many years in California, since it began. New Year's weekend I spent 1 hour and 15 minutes driving from Reno to Verdi, because of the weather, to play the lottery, and there were hundreds of people ahead of me that were pulling into the same parking lot. The odds of the lottery are certainly greater than slot machines, roulette tables, or poker games, but we all play that, and we don't think we should curtail that particular kind of activity. I play the lottery so I can fantasize. I know I am not going to win, but I have this fantasy that I am going to win and what I am going to do with that money. I'll spend some on my grandkids, but I am going to spend most of it on me.

This past weekend I went to Verdi to buy a lottery ticket. I knew I was going to be here testifying, so, as I walked through the parking lot of that lottery outlet—cars were coming and going—I saw roughly 40 to 60 cars, and every one of them had a Nevada license plate. There was not a single California license plate in that parking lot. If this does not pass, I will continue to contribute my money to the California school system. If it does pass, then the Nevada school system will certainly appreciate the money I give. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

**Assemblyman Hardy:**

I have an apology. My math was wrong. I was able to get the figures of what we funded in Senate Bill 8 of the 20th Special Session, we funded \$64 million for fiscal year 2004 and \$66 million for fiscal year 2005, which puts us to a yearly average of \$65 million. So we are probably in the \$160 per year, per student, range.

**Rena Meyers, Organizer, State of Nevada Employees Association (SNEA),  
American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees  
(AFSCME), Local 4041, Carson City, Nevada:**

We are here today to also add our support to the resolution.

**Barbara Clark, Member-at-Large, Nevada Parent Teacher Association (PTA),  
Carson City, Nevada:**

This is the first time I have spoken before the Education Committee this session, and I wanted to indicate it is a pleasure sitting before two of my mentors, with whom I have spent hundreds of hours over many years discussing many issues.

PTA [Parent Teacher Association] has no position on the lottery bill, but I do want to indicate that over many years we have come before the Legislature indicating that education needs funding, and it needs more funding. You have heard many testimonies today that indicate that and the wide variety of areas. There is no doubt about it. We don't need to discuss that. Whether it is done in tax measures or a different variety of measures, we leave it up to the Legislature to make that decision, indicating that education needs more funding.

[Barbara Clark, continued.] Three issues that are listed in the bill, as far as where the funding will go, are issues, primary for parents, textbooks, classroom supplies, and class-size reduction. They are issues that PTA has supported over many years. When you talk about classroom supplies, indeed, PTA fundraises. What they fundraise for in bulk is classroom supplies. All that, I see, needs to be done at school sites. It may be small dollars, but we figure that every dollar helps. Indeed, even if the lottery brings in a small amount of dollars, every additional dollar helps in some manner or form—textbooks, as you have heard the many stories of “when my children were in school.” The dittos coming home about dangling participles; I cannot, for the life of me, remember how to help solve a problem of how to define and do dangling participles. Of course there wasn't a textbook at home.

As Speaker Perkins indicated, the very basic of parent involvement is being able to help your child at home with their homework. That is one of the keys. This is an opportunity that every parent can avail themselves of, if they have the time and tools. Without the textbooks, they do not have the tools to provide the very basic help to their children. Class-size reduction, of course, is extremely important. It always amazes me that people want to say that there are no hard and fast facts that support small class sizes and learning. Yet, doctors only schedule a certain amount of people per hour, and car washes are able to clean your car better if they service 8 cars per hour rather than 30 cars per hour. It is logical that 8 cars will be cleaned better than 30 cars.

Every parent knows, even though you can't prove it, anecdotally, their child is getting better education when more time can be spent on their needs, in an individual manner, than less time. We would encourage that this bill go forth to the community to have a vote. Everybody has an opinion on whether a lottery is good or bad, and families can make that decision. If it goes forth to the citizens to make a decision on whether they want to fund education through the lottery system, then it should be up to them, because it is their children we are trying to help here with whatever dollars come out of it.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

With sensitivity to the time, I will close testimony for now. Dr. Mabey has a comment he'd like to make.

**Assemblyman Mabey:**

I will be voting against the bill. I know that is somewhat dangerous to speak against the Speaker's bill. I know that 72 percent, according to his poll, support it. I am part of the 28 percent that oppose it. I certainly support textbooks and, if we need to fund them, then let's fund them and not do it through a lottery. I appreciate it that many of you are going to California, and that would be a reason perhaps to do it.

I will share some research that I found:

- Lower income groups bear a disproportionately high tax burden.
- Players with household incomes under \$10,000 per year bet nearly three times as much as those with incomes over \$50,000 per year.
- Sales of the Georgia lottery tickets are two and one-half times higher in poor neighborhoods than in affluent ones. Lotteries there intentionally saturate impoverished neighborhoods with outlets—know exactly where their most loyal and desperate customers are.
- Those with the least education spend the most on the lottery, although they did not play more often.
- Some retailers noted that there was less spending on their products and more on lottery tickets, which occurred in Tennessee.

There are certain states that advertise. Listen to these slogans:

- In New York: "All that you need is a dollar and a dream."
- In Massachusetts: "Work is nothing but heart attack inducing drudgery."
- In Illinois: "The lottery could be your way out of poverty."
- In Washington: "It's good to play."

Recent research suggests that the earlier a person begins to gamble, the more likely they are to become a pathological gambler. It is relatively easy for children to gamble on a state-sponsored lottery. In Massachusetts, 47 percent of seventh graders have purchased a lotto ticket. Nationwide, more than 4 in 10 adolescents gamble on lotteries. If we need to buy textbooks, let's buy them. I will not support this, although I understand the reason why it is going forward.

**Assemblyman Horne:**

I know it has been said that some don't think that this is enough, but it was stated in testimony that this is a supplement to what we want to do. It is another tool. There are those in this building that always say that they are for

education, that we should fund education, get more books and everything, but whenever a vote comes up for it, it is against. It is always a "no." Then someone comes up with another alternative, and they find another reason to shoot that alternative down, and again it is a "no." I have even had people tell me that our per pupil spending, in this state, is not as bad as it says. It is really on par because we are building schools.

[Assemblyman Horne, continued.] The real debate is if the money is getting to the classrooms. We can build a thousand more schools. We can pack each classroom with 30 to 40 kids in each one. What good is it doing? They say that they never want to increase teachers' pay when it comes up—how poorly we pay teachers in our state—yet, they don't ever have a problem when you hear countless stories all over the state of teachers dipping into their own pockets to get school supplies. It doesn't make sense to me. I will be voting for this measure.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

I think what is really important to remember today is that this is the first step in what I'm sure will be a very long road of both discussion and dissection of A.J.R. 2. Having said that, I would entertain a motion.

**Assemblyman Manendo:**

I have been on this Education Committee for 6 terms, 12 years, and the ranking member. I want to say that I heard Garrett's and Samantha's testimonies and I really appreciate it. I heard Garrett say he attends Whitney Elementary School, which is in my district. In fact, I know his mother. She is a wonderful lady and a good public servant. There is a teacher at Whitney Elementary School who has a part-time job. Her part-time job is to put money into her classroom, because there are not enough textbooks and supplies. She does this out of the goodness of her heart. All the money that she makes as a waitress—her salary and tips—goes into her classroom. Not everybody can do that, because people have other things to do. She chooses to use her free time to do that.

This is an example of the type of teachers that we have in the state of Nevada. With that, several years ago, this Legislature, this Committee, and our Governor supported a bill to give the creativity to the school districts, allowing them to do some advertising on school buses to provide money for textbooks and supplies. The school districts refused to do that. I am not sure why; that is another issue.

The fact is, we have issues out there, and whether it is creative or we are copying, like the lottery, the main thing is that we need to take steps to move forward and look at creative or copying ways to come up with funding. I have not had one person in my district contact me and say not to support this.

I know the needs. We have another elementary school that doesn't have books and their copy machine broke down. They could not use the Xerox copy machine. Instead of fixing it, the school district came with another copy machine that was also broken. They went for a half year without even paper, no books, no papers, and nothing to take home. Madam Chair, it needs to stop.

ASSEMBLYMAN MANENDO MOVED TO DO PASS  
ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 2.

ASSEMBLYMAN HORNE SECONDED THE MOTION.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

Is there a discussion?

**Assemblywoman Angle:**

I will be voting no on this. I do have a constituent letter before me: "Please vote no on A.J.R. 2, the lottery. We have enough gambling and gaming-associated problems in Nevada. Other states have not improved their education by having a lottery. Let's not make things worse for our children here in Nevada." I think it is risky business to be gambling with our children's future, and that is what a lottery is. I have cousins that work for the New Jersey Lottery, and most of that money goes to bureaucracy, not into the funds that it was established for.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

Is there additional discussion on the motion?

THE MOTION CARRIED, WITH ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANGLE,  
ASSEMBLYMAN MABEY, ASSEMBLYMAN HARDY, AND  
ASSEMBLYMAN McCLEARY VOTING NO.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

We have two things to take care of—two Committee introductions.

- BDR 34-934: Revises provisions relating to charter schools.  
(Assembly Bill 162)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SMITH MOVED FOR COMMITTEE  
INTRODUCTION OF BDR 34-934. (Assembly Bill 162)

ASSEMBLYMAN MANENDO SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.



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- BDR 34-476: Making various changes regarding information provided to and provided by school districts and charter schools. (Assembly Bill 161)

ASSEMBLYMAN HORNE MOVED FOR COMMITTEE  
INTRODUCTION OF BDR 34-476. (Assembly Bill 161)

ASSEMBLYMAN ATKINSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

Tomorrow is the subcommittee on A.B. 110 and A.B. 60 at 4:00 p.m. in Room 3161. Monday we will once again be meeting in this Room 1214 at the regular time, 3:45 p.m. We will be having a presentation by Mr. Andre Agassi and starting a discussion on a charter school bill. The meeting is adjourned [at 4:47 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Paul Partida  
Committee Attaché

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chairman

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXHIBITS

**Committee Name:** Education

Date: March 2, 2005 Time of Meeting: 3:22 p.m.

[illegible]