

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

**Seventy-Sixth Session
April 6, 2011**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair David P. Bobzien at 3:23 p.m. on Wednesday, April 6, 2011, in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/76th2011/committees/. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775-684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman David P. Bobzien, Chair
Assemblywoman Marilyn Dondero Loop, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Paul Aizley
Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson
Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz
Assemblywoman Lucy Flores
Assemblyman Ira Hansen
Assemblyman Randy Kirner
Assemblywoman April Mastroluca
Assemblyman Richard McArthur
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford
Assemblywoman Dina Neal
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart
Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, Washoe County Assembly District
No. 30

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mindy Martini, Committee Policy Analyst
Kristin Roberts, Committee Counsel
Taylor Anderson, Committee Manager
Sharon McCallen, Committee Secretary
Sherwood Howard, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Keith Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of
Education
Julie Butler, Records Bureau Chief, Records and Technology Division,
Department of Public Safety
Nicole Rourke, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Community and
Government Relations, Clark County School District
Lonnie Shields, Assistant Executive Director, Nevada Association of
School Administrators
Mark Coleman, Deputy Director, Clark County Association of School
Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School
Superintendents
Craig Stevens, Director, Education Policy and Research, Nevada State
Education Association
April Medlin, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Lesley Pittman, representing United Way of Southern Nevada
Lawrence Charlton, Member, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council
Delores Hauck, Director, Community Development, United Way of
Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada
Rhonda Clausen, Mentor, Success by 6, United Way of Southern Nevada,
Las Vegas, Nevada
Leah Guevara, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Angela Triché, President/CEO, Sunrise Children's Foundation, Las Vegas,
Nevada
Theresa DeGraffenreid, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Bette Katz, Program Manager, Parent and Provider Services, Child Care
Resource and Referral Department, The Children's Cabinet, Reno,
Nevada

Kathleen Cooke, Owner, Sunflower Preschool, Reno, Nevada
Margot Chappel, Director, Head Start State Collaboration and Early
Childhood Systems Office, Department of Health and Human
Services
Joanne Everts, Director, Early Childhood Education, Washoe County
School District
Colleen Petrini, Director, Noah's Ark Child Center, Reno, Nevada
Patty Ogan, Director, Summit Ridge Christian School, Sparks, Nevada
Linda Hollis, Owner, Magic Treehouse Preschool, Sparks, Nevada
Shelly Nye, Program Director/Grant Coordinator, Nevada Registry,
Reno, Nevada

Chair Bobzien:

[Roll was called. Committee protocol and rules were explained.]

We are going to open the hearing on Assembly Bill 393.

Assembly Bill 393: Requires criminal background investigations of educational personnel upon renewal of a license. (BDR 34-8)

Assemblywoman Marilyn Dondero Loop, Clark County Assembly District No. 5:

I am here to present, for the Committee's consideration, Assembly Bill 393. The purpose of this measure is to require criminal background investigations of educational personnel upon renewal of a license.

[Read from prepared text ([Exhibit C](#)).]

Ideally, great educational personnel make it their life's work, serving multiple decades in our schools. However, as with any profession, there may be some educational personnel who are convicted of crimes during the course of their career. I believe it is important for the state to remain vigilant in protecting students.

Personally, I would not have objected to being subjected to criminal background checks throughout my teaching career because I understand that it is a routine precaution to ensure the safety of students. Then again, I do not object when a sales clerk asks to see my federal identification either, when using my credit card. While I could take offense at the sales clerk's request, instead I understand that simple action protects all consumers from the few who would commit criminal acts.

[Continued to read from prepared text ([Exhibit C](#)).]

Assemblyman Stewart:

This is an outstanding bill. I have one question. Do we have to do the fingerprinting for renewal?

Assemblywoman Dondero Loop:

Yes. Each time you would get renewed, they would run your fingerprints again. You are only fingerprinted, right now, initially. Then you are never fingerprinted again during your time as a teacher.

Assemblyman Stewart:

Would not my initial fingerprints still be valid?

Assemblywoman Dondero Loop:

I believe when Julie Butler from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) comes up to speak she will explain that those are destroyed. She will also explain that when you rerun fingerprints, many times people have changed their names, addresses, and personal information, so you cannot just continue to rerun.

Assemblyman Anderson:

I would just make a comment that this is not unprecedented at all in terms of employees in this state. I as well as other people who work in the gaming industry have to do this every time we renew our gaming license.

Assemblywoman Mastroluca:

I want to thank Ms. Dondero Loop for bringing this issue forward. I have a constituent who is a teacher and has asked me, over the years, why teachers are never background checked again. She was concerned. Coming from a teacher's standpoint, I thought that was interesting and as a parent, it makes me feel better.

Assemblyman Kirner:

I recognize that this is a policy committee. My notes say this suggests a two-thirds majority, but it looks like the fiscal note is removed, so we can approve this on a simple majority here, can we not?

Assemblywoman Dondero Loop:

Yes, the fiscal note has been removed, but because it is a raising of fees, it will be a two-thirds majority on the floor.

Assemblyman McArthur:

For clarification, it says that if someone has been convicted of a felony, the superintendent can determine if the conviction is unrelated to the position with the county school district. What does that mean?

Assemblywoman Dondero Loop:

I will allow Dr. Rheault to speak to his position as the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Keith Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education:

We support the bill and will get to an amendment I requested, but in response to Mr. McArthur's question, there are a number of situations on the initial license. For example, I have seen everything you can imagine as far as crimes, and convictions. One of those whom I had licensed had been charged with felony embezzlement 20 years ago, and has had a clean record since. That might be an example where I would say, was the embezzlement related to teaching physical education classes in a school? There are a few cases where there might have been a felony; usually the deciding factors are how long ago it was and if the crime was anything related to children, or sexual orientation-type crimes—those are never approved.

Assemblyman Munford:

If they have something on their record that was committed under the age of 18, and maybe they did not actually commit anything, but they happened to be in the company of someone who did commit the incident that was a felony, can that be held against them?

Keith Rheault:

A lot of times those types of incidents are hidden in the record of someone who has applied if they were under 18 years old. But sometimes they are not. In all cases, if they are reported and they show up on the FBI report, we do follow up and require that he provide the full background of what happened in the case, and then we make our determination after he has had an opportunity to explain the situation, arrest, and conviction.

Chair Bobzien:

Seeing no other questions, do you have additional testimony?

Keith Rheault:

Yes, Chair Bobzien. I did request Assemblywoman Dondero Loop consider an amendment to the bill ([Exhibit D](#)). It was scheduled to take effect July 1, 2011. If you look at the regulations for renewal of a license, you can submit the renewal up to nine months ahead of time. If it took effect July 1, 2011, and we were required to start collecting the fingerprints and the fees to process them, many of the licenses would have to be sent back to the person who applied saying the fees had gone up July 1, and you will have to resubmit with fingerprints. By extending it to January 1, 2012, if the bill passes, we will have

time to put this on our website as well as change our applications so that it is noted clearly on a renewal that you will need to provide a set of fingerprints with the renewal. That will give us a six-month lead time so we can process it without wasting staff time and the applicant's time.

Chair Bobzien:

This is the proposed amendment by Assemblywoman Dondero Loop that is online.

Assemblyman Stewart:

Right now, you only have to submit fingerprints on the initial application, is that correct?

Keith Rheault:

Yes, that is correct. Currently, an applicant submits them with the initial licensure and then we never ask for them again.

Assemblyman Stewart:

In the past few years, we have had several teachers who were accused, and in some cases, convicted of sexual crimes. Do you think if this new system were in effect, we would have been more apt to have caught these people?

Keith Rheault:

I do not know if in a lot of the cases it would have affected it, because the first thing I get is a call from a reporter saying, how did this person get licensed? All I can say is, that at the time, we would not have issued the license if there had been anything criminally that would have prevented us from issuing it. In many cases there is no previous background. I am aware of a few cases, in the state, where a person during the summer leaves the state, goes home, then we get word that certain things happened out-of-state and that would catch those. The FBI report is very thorough.

Assemblyman Munford:

Does this also apply to the investigation of licensing for substitutes and aides and any type of personnel that is going to be working in the school system?

Keith Rheault:

Anyone who would submit a renewal application, including substitute teachers, would be required to submit fingerprints. Teacher's aides do not necessarily have to be licensed. They are paraprofessionals, but they are not licensed. School districts are required to collect fingerprint background checks on nonlicensed employees when they are hired. I do not know how often they do

that. I am assuming it is just once when they are hired. That is up to the local school districts.

Assemblywoman Dondero Loop:

In response to Mr. Munford's question, as this bill is written, it would not include those support staff. Initially, we needed to start out with the people who are with the children the most and basically touch their lives most consistently within the hours of the day.

Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, Washoe County Assembly District No. 30:

This is really an important piece of legislation, and I would not imagine most people would know that licensed personnel are not checked periodically.

I have a personal story I would like to tell you that really brings this home. The husband and brother of a friend of mine were killed by a teacher from Arizona who was in Reno on vacation. When he was released from jail on bail, he went back to Arizona and back to the classroom. I happened to be following the media while this was all unfolding and we were waiting for him to come back and stand trial. I was shocked when I found out that he was back in the classroom. I called the licensing office in Arizona and inquired about it. They did not know that this person had killed two people and was getting ready to stand trial on murder charges. I am assuming, at some point, they would have found out, but the idea that this person had killed two people with a gun—shot my friend's husband and then literally chased him into a corner and shot him several more times. Yet, this person was back in a classroom.

I think we have to do everything we can do to make sure that the people we are putting our children in the hands of are periodically checked on. It is a very small minority of licensed personnel that you would ever have a concern about, but that one person being in the classroom, to me, was very frightening. Whether it is someone from this state going to another state or from his state coming here, that is the kind of information we want to know. It is not too onerous or too expensive. Also, how would the colleagues of that person feel, knowing that he, on vacation, had killed two people with a gun and they were working alongside him every day?

I wholeheartedly support this bill and hope that you will give it your consideration.

Chair Bobzien:

It is pretty rare and unusual that we, as members, testify on other bills, but when we do, it is for a reason.

Assemblyman Stewart:

In Ms. Dondero Loop's testimony, you said that a bachelor's degree was every five years, master's every six years, and doctoral every ten years?

Assemblywoman Dondero Loop:

Six years for a master's degree plus three years of teaching. Eight years for a specialist's degree and three years of experience and ten years for a doctoral degree and National Board Certification.

Assemblyman Stewart:

To me that eight years and ten years is a little long. I do not know if an advanced degree would justify opening that up. You might want to consider an amendment to make them all the same.

Assemblywoman Dondero Loop:

Once again, I think the initial piece was to try to make it work for many parties, so we could get this started, but I would certainly entertain an amendment to that.

Chair Bobzien:

If we have no additional questions, Ms. Dondero Loop, did you want Julie Butler to come up?

**Julie Butler, Records Bureau Chief, Records and Technology Division,
Department of Public Safety:**

My office houses the Central Repository for Nevada Records of Criminal History and conducts the preemployment criminal history background checks for teachers and a variety of other occupations ranging from day-care workers to realtors.

I am here today to testify in support of Assembly Bill 393. As a best business practice we recommend to all our civil applicant account holders a periodic "rebackgrounding" of employees at regular intervals. Although, we do have a limited rap back service where we let school districts know if teachers have been arrested for various offenses after the initial background investigation, it only captures Nevada arrests. If an offense were committed out of state, there is no way to know about it unless another FBI background check is conducted. Such means are provided in A.B. 393.

The Records Bureau has been criticized in the past for not turning around background check responses in a timely fashion. But, with the periodic rebackgrounding contemplated in A.B. 393, we are sensitive to the fact that we

need to turn the responses around as quickly as possible so as not to unduly delay the license renewal process. My office is in the planning stages of an information technology project that we will start later this spring that will allow us to take paper fingerprint cards and convert them to an electronic format for shipment to the FBI. We are very excited about this project because of the positive impact it will have on our customers.

It currently takes the FBI four to eight weeks to process a paper fingerprint card. Electronically submitted fingerprints are processed by the FBI in a matter of hours. In addition, electronically submitted fingerprints can be processed faster by my office staff, thus cutting down the time it takes to generate a state background check response.

When this project is implemented, hopefully, by early 2012, I can say with confidence that we will consistently be able to turn around our state and FBI background check responses for all of our civil applicant customers in seven to ten working days rather than months. This assumes, of course, that the Records Bureau's funding remains intact. Senate Bill 491 . . .

Chair Bobzien:

This is a policy committee, not a money committee and we do not talk about other bills. Here is a chance for your technical questions, everything you ever wanted to know about fingerprints.

Assemblyman Anderson:

Especially with all of the electronic things we are seeing today with fingerprints, is it possible for you to store them, as opposed to everyone having to go through the process again and again, making it faster?

Secondly, what do people in the rural school districts do for their fingerprints? In Las Vegas there are several areas where you can go to be fingerprinted, but outside of Las Vegas and Washoe County, what do you do?

Julie Butler:

We do retain the prints of teachers and concealed weapons permit holders. We do have a very limited ability to notify the superintendent if a teacher or a concealed weapons permit holder is arrested for a subsequent offense. The problem with using the prints that we retain is that we do not have a very good mechanism to track the prints that are submitted in terms of assigning a tracking number. Also, people's demographic information tends to change. Their name could change, their address, the actual quality of the prints themselves. There could be an amputation, or a scar, something in that

five-year period of time that could change. That is why, in meeting with the bill's sponsor, we requested that it be a whole new set of fingerprints.

The other reason for requesting that is that our whole system is triggered on the actual submission of fingerprints. If we were to run backgrounds on retained prints, we would have to make significant technological improvements to our systems at significant costs. That is why we are able to remove the fiscal note for this bill because we have requested that it be new prints each time.

As to your question about the rural districts, some of them go through their local sheriff's office; for those, we mostly get paper fingerprint cards. In the larger cities, Reno, the Las Vegas area, there are some private fingerprinting sites that people can utilize. They can always go down to their local law enforcement agency as well. Some of them are paper; some are not.

Nicole Rourke, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District:

We support Assembly Bill 393 and appreciate the efforts of Assemblywoman Dondero Loop in bringing this bill forward. We believe the time of renewal of a teacher's license is a natural time to update his records with a current background check, and that ongoing checks of current employees could help the district to provide a safe learning environment for students, protect other staff and the public with whom we interact, protect district resources and property, and protect the district from liability.

We would like to ask that the district be notified of all misdemeanors and felonies that appear on the background check in addition to the current offenses outlined in the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS), as this information could have an impact on the maintenance of their employment. Also, we look forward to the improvements in the Department of Public Safety that will allow it to return background information more quickly to school districts which will help us expedite the placement of new teachers in classrooms as well as continued employment.

Lonnie Shields, Assistant Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Administrators:

We also feel this bill is very important for the safety of the students. If you consider how many lives, for example, the .08 percent drunk driving law that was passed in this body has saved, and yet we do not know who those people are, we do not know their faces, or their background, but we know that that bill is saving lives. If this bill can save one student's life, keep one student from going through the torture of sexual abuse, it is well worth the price and we support it.

Mark Coleman, Deputy Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees:

We support the bill, and we support everything that has been said.

Nicole Rourke:

Mr. Hulse also asked me to convey the support of Washoe County School District.

Chair Bobzien:

Do we have questions for the panel? [There were none.]

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

We would also like to thank Ms. Dondero Loop for bringing this bill forward. Our Association is sensitive to the cost of the fingerprints for our teachers, but we are very supportive of this bill. We feel it adds another layer of security for our students and our other educational personnel in our schools.

Chair Bobzien:

Is there anyone in Las Vegas in support of A.B. 393 wishing to speak? [There was no one.] We will come back up to Carson City for opposition.

Craig Stevens, Director, Education Policy and Research, Nevada State Education Association:

There are some bills that I can come up here and very easily oppose; then there are those that are very difficult to oppose. This table can get very lonely at times in opposition. This is one of those cases.

Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) takes no offense to ensuring the safety of our schools, and the safety of our students is a top priority. Background checks and timely notification of criminal activity is something NSEA can support and we support heartily. However, it is the increased fees for our educators which are something that we cannot support. Our educators pay for their license, they pay for their professional development credits, they pay for the course credits to get higher degrees. They also pay their own money to get Nationally Board Certified.

During this recession, education has received constant cuts and educators have also received furlough days and salary cuts and freezes. The Governor's budget, if it should pass, would also cut education salaries by an average of \$6,000 per year. Just adding another fee onto our educators is something we feel would be very difficult to do. In these committees, making sure there are no fiscal notes is very important. Making sure this body does not increase fees, or increase taxes is very important to many members here and we feel the same

way about our educators. They have taken a big hit over the past few years and they are going to continue taking one this session. We feel this bill would add onto that. Yet, we understand that safety is incredibly important and we fully agree with that in making sure our educators have the proper background checks and fingerprints is critical. We certainly do not want to shy away from that issue; it is something we do believe in. Again, it is just the increased and mounting costs for our educators that are difficult for us to support.

Chair Bobzien:

Is there anyone in Las Vegas opposed to A.B. 393 wishing to speak?

April Medlin, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

As a parent of two Clark County School District students, I am all for background checks. However, teachers and educators should not be subject to this bill due to the increase in fees.

Chair Bobzien:

Is there anyone in the neutral position? [There was no one.] Madam Vice Chair, are there any closing remarks?

Assemblywoman Dondero Loop:

I would like to make the comment that I recognize that teachers and educators, in general, have taken huge cuts. We are asking other personnel to be licensed every year with a business license that costs \$200. We are only asking this every five, six, eight, or ten years, depending upon the license. I am sensitive to the fiscal piece to this. I have been a teacher for many years and I continue to renew my license, but I just think the safety of our children is of the utmost importance and I would appreciate your support.

Chair Bobzien:

We will close the hearing on A.B. 393.

[Chair Bobzien turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Dondero Loop.]

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

We will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 546.

Assembly Bill 546: Makes various changes to provisions governing early childhood care and education. (BDR 38-739)

Assemblyman David P. Bobzien, Washoe County Assembly District No. 24:

This measure is a request for our Committee to improve the early learning and development of children in Nevada. I would like to provide my Committee with some background information for this measure.

School readiness is a continuum that begins at birth. In the United States, children typically start their formal education around age five. However, with the increased attention to the performance of even the youngest students, many states have already enacted policies to ensure children arrive at school prepared to succeed on day one.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates there are approximately 196,000 children between the ages of 0 to 4 years living in the State of Nevada. Of these, about 17 percent live below the poverty level. We know from studies that at least half of the educational achievement gaps between poor and nonpoor children already exist at kindergarten entry. The larger the gap at school entry, the harder it is to close.

We have also learned from the Race to the Top program that the federal government is taking an aggressive approach to improving schools and increasing positive academic, social, and economic outcomes, especially for the most vulnerable students. Policymakers in each state are being asked to establish comprehensive P-20 education systems that are connected from one stage to the next. The earliest years, those being from birth to Grade 3, are being recognized as the cornerstone of effective P-20 systems.

Creating an effective P-3 system is the challenge. An effective system requires that two traditionally separate learning systems, early child care and education be more closely coordinated or better aligned. For this measure, the alignment refers to the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education. The common issues that will bring the two entities together, in the measure, are Nevada's Pre-K academic standards and the necessity for training child care employees and how to teach the standards to young children.

Now that you have some background and a highlight of the key provisions, the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council was created by an executive order of the Governor on September 11, 2009 ([Exhibit E](#)). By the terms of the executive order, the Council will cease to exist on July 31, 2011. Assembly Bill 546 statutorily provides for the continuation of the Advisory Council within the Department of Health and Human Services.

To begin the alignment, the measure requires the Advisory Council, to the extent practicable, to consult with the Department of Education to:

- Develop standards and establish goals for the training of early childhood care employees in Nevada's Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.
- Assist in developing trainer qualifications.
- Ultimately, create or adopt a model for highly effective teachers that be used as a resource in early childhood education for teachers and caregivers of children.

The measure requires the Board for Child Care within the Department of Health and Human Services to adopt regulations that formally establish the provisions of the training program. Training hours for employees of a child care facility are increased from 15 to 30 hours per year, with at least 16 hours related to early childhood development and the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.

Some bills are introduced in their final form, fully grasping the subject with the intent to move forward as written. Other bills, such as A.B. 546, are intended as conversation starters. You have an attachment online which is a state-by-state look at what other states have in terms of requirements for training ([Exhibit F](#)). Nevada has existing requirements. You will see states that have more aggressive requirements. This bill is putting forth the opportunity to look at where we fit with all the other states.

I have certainly heard from those who are concerned about the impact of these hours on their operations, their employees, and on the people who do a great job right now taking care of our youngsters in these facilities. We know there are challenges related to meeting the suggested standard. We will hear from the United Way of Southern Nevada some opportunities, perhaps, for moving forward and being able to do more training hours. Will it be enough to satisfy the requirements of this bill? Perhaps not. With that, I would say that this is a section for which I am open to working on with those who are interested.

In turn, this measure requires each licensed child care facility that receives state or federal reimbursement funding to ensure that certain employees receive the approved training in the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards as required. In an effort to assist child care facilities with this requirement, the measure requires the Department of Education—to the extent that money is available—to arrange to have training in the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards provided at no, or reduced, cost to the employees of child care facilities.

Lesley Pittman, representing United Way of Southern Nevada:

I would like to express my appreciation to the Chairman of the Committee for the hard work and the long discussions we have had in terms of trying to craft a piece of legislation that, while it is not necessarily a big bill, accomplishes a lot in terms of increasing training standards and the quality of early childhood

education in Nevada for our preschoolers. I speak on behalf of the United Way when I say that this is an important dialogue for our state to be having.

As you look through the bill, you will see in the Legislative Counsel's Digest, page 2, line 25, section 12 takes the current 15 hours of training to 30 hours. The national average is 60 hours; we just want to get to half the national average. We think that is significant progress.

It is important to consider that there are private entities, namely fast food entities like McDonald's, which currently require more than 15 hours of training for their employees before they can work with McDonald's products and with the consumer. Certainly, in this circumstance, our product is our preschoolers and we believe that training standards should be higher.

Lawrence Charlton, Member, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council:

I come before you today as a 38-year resident of Nevada, a business leader, and current cochair of United Way's Education Council.

[Read from prepared statement ([Exhibit G](#)).]

As a businessman, I know that for every dollar spent, we have a 17-to-1 return if a person does not drop out. Remember, starting early is always starting "right on time."

Delores Hauck, Director, Community Development, United Way of Southern Nevada:

This is an opportunity to come before this Committee and present the work that we have been doing for the past five years. We want to take some of the key ideas that came out of the Nevada Vision Stakeholders Group's final report. One outstanding discovery that has already been published is college readiness begins in preschool.

Students' ability to compete in a global economy starts with basic skill levels. We have coordinated and connected with all of the key stakeholders during the last five years to bring forward the most important components that we can work on together.

We know that this bill represents an opportunity for existing dollars and services to be streamlined; it is not to create an additional burden to any one entity. We are looking to open the playing field for children. What we need to do is raise our standards and stop subsidizing substandard requirements that are barely being met. The centers and teachers that do work harder to achieve higher standards, and work closely with children and families, and have smaller ratios,

get stipends. What we are looking for is what is best for the child, not what is best for the teacher or the business owner in child care. Our regulations are completely within our jurisdiction to redirect and to streamline and to make sure we are not duplicating services.

Of concern—I will say it clearly—is children watching children. We cannot develop children's brains, lives, and have the opportunity to advance in a career if we cannot move forward with our requirements.

According to the American Community Survey, Nevada lags behind the national average with just over 1 in 4 children attending preschool compared with nearly half of all children that attend nationally. Our state's goal should be to cut that gap with the national average in half by 2015, match the U.S. average in 2020, and move to the current top third of all states by 2030. We have to have a long-term vision.

United Way is unique in its work with training preschool teachers, working with capacity at centers, providing scholarships for preschool children, and working to discover what the state gap is. The families that are losing a child care subsidy due to underemployment or unemployment are still living within the poverty matrix, and we are able to help with scholarship assistance. With that comes an understanding of the high school graduation rate. We are working with high schools in Clark County, and we are looking at the number of children who have dropped out in their freshman year in the first semester. We are now able to identify when and where we can put the intervention.

I would like to address some of the preconceived assumptions in terms of what the obstacles and the challenges would be. Specifically, it tells us as a business community and as leaders that prequalification would be the best answer, upping the standards by having qualified staff before they are hired, not after they have worked with children. The objection to more training hours and linking them to Pre-K standards training can be addressed before anyone ever works with a child, just like the reference to the training of McDonald's employees.

This is an important time in this community and in this state to work wisely with the dollars we have. We have the opportunity for other agencies' government silos that are willing to work together and reallocate their dollars and combine training dollars to make this happen. As a nonprofit, we completely support this bill.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

Are there any questions for this panel? [There were none.]

Assemblyman Bobzien:

We hear a lot of talk in this Committee about how we rank, how we fall out in terms of performance and other metrics compared to other states. We have heard today about the training hours and where that fits with other states. We talk about meaningful goals, trying to achieve the halfway point of the national average, but there is rhyme and reason behind the 30-hour figure. It was not just an arbitrary figure.

The American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, in a document titled *Caring for Our Children*, suggest that child care directors and caregivers should have at least 30 hours per year of continuing education in their first year of employment—16 hours in child development, 14 hours in safety, child health, and staff health. Each year after, it is recommended that directors and staff should continue to receive at least 16 hours in child development training and a minimum of 8 hours in health. This gives you some background of where those numbers come from.

To give the Committee a preview of other legislation we will be hearing next week, there is a bill dealing with social promotion and whether or not kids should be required to read at a third-grade level and what the expectations are. I welcome that focus on performance at the earliest grade levels in our K-12 system. I would submit to you that the focus on early childhood education, which we find in this bill, is an essential component. It is, indeed, the foundation to making sure that we can make that goal.

Assemblyman Stewart:

Can you tell me about the makeup of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council as it is now constituted, how many are on it, if they are paid or unpaid? It was set up for two years and now we are going to make it permanent. Are we going to continue with what was already established as far as the makeup and number of people? Can you give us more information on that please?

Lesley Pittman:

That is an unpaid group of council members. Mr. Charlton is the only business member. The others who are members of that Council operate various aspects of the state child care program. If you would like more information about what they have been doing over the course of the last two years and what this bill assigns them, in terms of new responsibilities, I would like to ask Mr. Charlton, because he is a member, to come to the microphone.

Lawrence Charlton:

It is an interesting Council. As a private businessman, sitting there with a lot of the people who run the state's early childhood, it has been fascinating to me.

One of the first things I asked at the first meeting is how much money do we have coming into the state? Is it federal or state funds? Interestingly enough, no one could answer the question. The first thing we had to do, and we got a federal grant to do this, was to get a study going to find out where the money is. We are still awaiting the results of that study. Also interesting to me is that as we sat in the various meetings, some of the people met each other for the first time. I have found it very interesting, as a private business leader, to see the inner workings. It is an extremely important Council to keep for the state because it has created that dialogue of everyone who works within the state and of course with someone from the outside to come in and discuss exactly what is happening in early childhood education in the State of Nevada.

Assemblyman Munford:

We have quite a few of these Head Start programs. What is the difference between this and Head Start? Do Head Start teachers have to be qualified under the same type of requirements and eligibility? Are those teachers trained? Many of the elementary schools in my district have Head Start programs. Is there a difference?

Lawrence Charlton:

Yes, there is.

Delores Hauck:

The difference between Head Start, which is federally funded, and the collaboration we are speaking about is that these are private, nonprofit, and faith-based child care centers and facilities. The requirements for Head Start teachers and Early Head Start teachers is a five-year plan where they have increased the training hours in the certification. We would love to follow that plan and have a five-year rollout exactly like the Head Start requirements, but at this time, we are starting with the first step. This is within the business community. All you need to do is get a business license to open a child care facility. This is where we are starting with requirements in looking to put the first step in place.

Assemblyman Stewart:

I would still like more information. How many are on the Council? Are they all unpaid? Does the director get paid? What have you done in the past? Are you going to develop the curriculum for this training? Will you administer it? Who will administer the training? Can you give me more information, please?

Lawrence Charlton:

The Council itself will ultimately get to those goals once it has established the foundation and the framework within the resources available. Margot Chappel

is the chairman of the Council now and runs it. I have had many discussions with her regarding every one of those issues as we move forward in order to coordinate the resources which would be the money, and how we would bring this training out and make certain everything does occur. Ultimately, it would be curriculum.

Delores Hauck:

I would like to address how the training would be developed. We believe it would be a great fit, the best fit, under the Department of Education, so that the Pre-K standards are directly aligned with K-12. At this time, it is disjointed. We want to bring it under one umbrella. Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Comprehensive System and the Department of Education are willing to work together ([Exhibit H](#)). That is a great step forward.

Assemblyman McArthur:

I need clarification on the big picture. Are all of these schools private schools and do any of these schools get state funding? Which ones have to follow these rules we are talking about?

Delores Hauck:

I would appreciate the opportunity to address that. These are private businesses. Child care facilities are private businesses. They can be faith-based, they can be nonprofit, and they can be corporate, for profit. They do receive state subsidy. They can qualify to be a center and accept children who receive taxpayer dollars. We are asking, at the very beginning, that these centers start to train their teachers and implement the Pre-K standards.

Currently, a center is equally subsidized for a child who could be in a car seat for ten hours a day watching television, or if a center decides, as policy, that they will have certified teachers and a curriculum. There is no distinction.

Assemblyman Stewart:

Will there be consideration for rural communities? If a rural community has one daycare center, and the community is dependent on that one center, and if a teacher has to travel, will there be online training or things of that nature to not put a hardship on a teacher that has a hard time getting to a training session?

Delores Hauck:

We would want to investigate all possible training opportunities—virtual, online, anything that would bring the rural community up to speed—and also work with employees who work full-time or single heads of household. We need options. We just want it to be quality training aligned with the Pre-K standards.

Assemblyman Stewart:

I just do not want it to put people out of work who are working now because they cannot get to the training.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

Are there questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there anyone else in Carson City in support of A.B. 546? [There was no one.] In Las Vegas?

Rhonda Clausen, Mentor, Success by 6, United Way of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada:

When my church's preschool asked me to be one of its teachers, all I had to do was get my sheriff's card and my health card. Within 90 days I had to complete nine hours of training, which had to include CPR certification, first aid, classes on signs and symptoms of illness, child abuse, and neglect. That was it. I was legal to teach three- and four-year-olds. I then had 12 months in which to receive three hours of training in child development and three hours in child care training. I started teaching in September and I waited until summer when I had more time to take the six additional hours. I taught the entire first school year without one hour of training in developmentally appropriate child care, and it was okay with the State of Nevada.

Luckily, I was at a very good center and I did have some good experience to build upon. However, not all entry-level child care providers are in the same situation. I was fortunate to be part of a curriculum training class offered by United Way that awarded 120 training hours over a nine-month period and preparation for earning a Child Development Associate Certificate. Part of the course was online, and we met for two days at a time approximately once a month. The class was made up of child care providers making \$6 to \$8 an hour all the way up to those with master's degrees in childhood education.

During the early classes, many of the participants kept their heads down and seldom volunteered during class discussions. It was fascinating to watch. As the training progressed and we all implemented what we were learning in our classrooms, the confidence and enthusiasm increased each time we met.

During our final class, a moment occurred that I will never forget. We were sharing what we had learned over the past months and one young lady spoke up, her eyes filling with tears; she said, "When I first started this class I thought of myself as a babysitter. I never talked to the children's parents; I did not even make eye contact with them. Once I started doing what I learned in this class, the children started paying attention. I started talking to parents. I even had parent teacher conferences. Now, I am a teacher."

Her salary had not changed, her job description had not changed, but how she saw herself, how she interacted with parents, and most importantly, how she interacted with children in her classroom changed.

As I looked around the classroom on the last day of training, I realized that how we can best ready our children for school in this state is to improve the professional development of their teachers.

In my current position, I interact with teachers in classrooms all over the valley and see them implementing things they have learned in training classes. I work with centers in very nice areas of town and those in which many of the children's families are receiving assistance of one kind or another. The one thing I see in every center I visit, are teachers who want to do a good job. Whether they are new teachers, or have been in a classroom for many years, they welcome new ideas and strategies to use in their classrooms. Studies have shown over and over again that satisfied workers miss fewer days of work and are more likely to stay with the same employer. Teachers who are better trained will have more success, be happier in their jobs, and bring stability to their centers.

One of the greatest joys in working with young children is to see their growth and watch their faces as they learn something new. One of the greatest joys in what I do now is to watch a child care worker grow into a teacher.

I have been talking about teachers, the real issue is what is best for our young children in the State of Nevada? Let us not kid ourselves—children are learning every waking moment. If they are with a caregiver for eight hours or more a day, that caregiver, no matter her training, is that child's teacher.

Do not let us just park our children for their first five years. Do not let us just maintain them, only providing for their health and safety issues. Let us prepare them for success in school, and in life, by giving them better trained teachers.

Leah Guevara, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am in support of this bill. I am coming from two perspectives; the first is that I am a single mother raising three children. I have 4 1/2-year-old twins who will be entering kindergarten this September, and I have a 9 1/2-year-old daughter. Fortunately, for me, I was able to enter my children in a preschool here in the State of Nevada, in a Pre-Kindergarten classroom that is absolutely phenomenal. I find myself asking every day, what is in the best safety and best interest of my children? Basically, their education is a component that I am extremely concerned about in this state. I want what is best for them, and each day that I go into class there is some documentation, whether it is on the walls or verbal

communication at this specific center, something that I had not experienced elsewhere.

I did not qualify for a child care subsidy, so I did go through United Way and received scholarships for both my twins. I am still working with them at home. It is my job as a parent to work with my children at home—reading, learning computers, one-on-one interaction, arts, crafts, baking, consistent communication, and open-ended questions.

I am fortunate to say that I am also speaking as an early childhood care director. I was a center director both in California and here in the State of Nevada. I currently am a family education manager where I teach preventative child abuse classes. I visit about 13 of our local Title I schools and teach parent and child interaction classes as well, much of the area that is covered is kindergarten readiness. That is something, again, that I am just as passionate about as a parent as I am as an educator.

I know the hardships that we as directors suffer when we hear our staff say to us that they do not know how they are going to make the training hours. They are very concerned about their job. The bottom line is, we either need to make the time to stop, or stop to make the time. Again, it is the loaded question of what is in the safety and best interest of the child. If we want our children to succeed, then we need to make the time to help the staff succeed. Sometimes, it may take a little extra effort, whether it means in our own homes and personal lives. Sometimes you need to take that professional life home and do a little more studying. If you are qualified and a great role model in a pre-kindergarten classroom, then perhaps you need to spread out and role model a little more in other classrooms that may be in need.

In speaking to our parents, it is amazing how many educators do not know the components of a classroom or their children's development—the social, physical, cognitive, creative, and emotional enhancements and the developmental components of each child. Those are things we all need to consider as educators in how we are enhancing the children for success.

I want my children to be success stories, not statistics. I want that both as a parent as well as an educator. I am in full support of this bill.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

Are there any questions or comments?

Assemblyman Stewart:

I know of former teachers in my neighborhood who taught kindergarten for two or three years, got married, quit teaching, and then as their children got older, formed a licensed preschool in their home. These women have a bachelor's degree, and in some cases a master's degree, in teaching. They operate on a very frugal basis, and the clients they have pay a very nominal fee. It would perhaps be counterproductive to have them take 16 hours of training. Would there be some consideration to exempting them in that situation?

Delores Hauck:

It is a different category of care. We know that in the State of Nevada you can care for your own children plus up to six additional children in your home. The majority of these care providers are of the older generation. When we look at what would be important, it would be important for everyone to have the same standards. I am suggesting that we look at the licensed facilities, and that we start the training there and get everyone on the same page. Home care, which is an important component, as you said, to the economy and for families to survive, should have the opportunity to have access also to the training.

The first component of this bill would be to look at center-based instruction.

Angela Triché, President/CEO, Sunrise Children's Foundation, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am also the Early Head Start Director for Clark County. As the previous speaker stated, she is a parent, and all parents want what is best for their children. As a community I think we have a duty to want the same thing and to take the steps to get the best for the children. We know that the better child care provider staffs are trained, the better the outcomes are for the youngest and most vulnerable of our citizens. It is not only good for the children; it is also good for the staff. It encourages them to pursue educational aspirations and to perhaps see things and reach goals in their own lives that they may not have thought themselves capable of.

Someone asked a question about Head Start earlier and I want to speak what we, in the Early Head Start community, must have in terms of training in order to provide services. In order to be an Early Head Start teacher, nationally, you must begin by already having what is called a Child Development Associate (CDA) Certificate. That requires 120 hours of training. It also requires 460 hours of practical experience providing those services in a classroom with young children. Then you are examined and assessed, and if you are successful, you will receive your CDA. After that, in Clark County, you must

still take 15 hours that the state requires. Beyond that, you are obligated to have ongoing training every year.

We are seeing more mental health issues as early as two months to three years of age, which is the population we serve, and teen mothers who have no idea what their role is beyond changing a diaper.

If we are serious, and we do want the outcomes for our children and the education for our children that we speak so much about, it starts now; it starts early. We do owe it to them, to ourselves, to our community, and most of all to our young children.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

We will go to opposition here in Carson City.

Theresa DeGraffenreid, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

I hold an A.A. degree in Early Childhood Education and have over 25 years experience as a preschool teacher and, for the last nine years, have been a preschool director at a center.

[Read from prepared statement ([Exhibit I](#)).]

**Bette Katz, Program Manager, Parent and Provider Services, Child Care
Resource and Referral Department, The Children's Cabinet, Reno,
Nevada:**

The Children's Cabinet is responsible for the administration of child care subsidies throughout northern Nevada and the Statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network under a contract with the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services ([Exhibit J](#)).

[Read from prepared statement ([Exhibit K](#)).]

In addition, to clarify the impact throughout northern Nevada, 83.9 percent of the licensed providers—center and family child care providers—do accept subsidy clients. This would have an impact on a great number of people ([Exhibit L](#)).

Washoe County has 94.4 percent of its providers accept subsidy children, and the figure is 47.7 percent in Clark County.

[Continued to read from prepared text ([Exhibit K](#)).]

Assemblywoman Mastroluca:

You are saying that programs that receive subsidies from the Division of Welfare should not have to follow this, but everyone else should?

Bette Katz:

No, the bill says that anyone who accepts children who have a subsidy needs to complete it within 90 days. Everyone else would have the full year to complete the process.

Assemblywoman Mastroluca:

Would you be more open to it if those who accepted the subsidies had a full year?

Bette Katz:

I think that all licensed child care providers should need to meet the same requirements, whether they accept children who have a subsidy or not.

Assemblywoman Mastroluca:

Would a year be acceptable?

Bette Katz:

Are you asking if it would be acceptable to have training in the Pre-K standards? Actually there is training in the Pre-K standards that is currently offered to all of the child care programs in the state at no cost.

Assemblywoman Mastroluca:

Is it required?

Bette Katz:

No, it is not required.

Assemblywoman Mastroluca:

Would you be open to having this required for all child care providers if they had a year to complete it?

Bette Katz:

It would depend on what the actual details of the requirements were. I do not, not support it.

Vice Dondero Loop:

Are there additional questions?

Kathleen Cooke, Owner, Sunflower Preschool, Reno, Nevada:

I have been a resident of Nevada for over 59 years. I own a private preschool in Reno, Nevada. I have served on both the Bureau of Services for Child Care, as well as the Nevada State Board for Child Care.

This bill is in its infancy, and I applaud the United Way for taking up the interest in improving child care training for child care workers in the State of Nevada. However, I do have some concerns. Again, I want to say I realize that many employees in the child care arena do not come equipped with proper training. It is imperative to sufficiently make them credible staff in the early childhood field.

The most obvious problem, however, is cost. I fully fund all of my staff's training for 14 employees. This can range from an evening class costing \$20 to a full conference located out of Nevada at hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars. To say the increase of Early Childhood Education (ECE) hours is a budget nightmare for schools in a field that does not make anyone wealthy is an understatement.

Do fees go up for parents who are already suffering from expensive child care costs? Do we lay off people? This is a difficult question as we are the only industry that is mandated to have a predetermined staff/child ratio at all times. Furthermore, how do I tell my staff, who have 25 or more years at my center, that they now have to take an additional 15 classes? These teachers have bachelor's and master's degrees. If they have to take one more class on how to make Play-Doh, or how to incorporate music in their curriculum, it will not be very pretty.

What I see as being necessary to make something like this happen in a more cohesive and acceptable way is to have a graduated system starting with those employees who are newly hired and have no experience to the employee that you hire with a master's degree in ECE. I do not think it is right or viable to ask teachers who have had 25 years of experience and an incredible background in education to take these types of classes. I do have to send my administrators and staff out of state to get new and challenging classes. Even those can be redundant.

I feel that we are putting the question out there, but there is so much lack of information. I, for one, receive no taxpayer money. I am not subsidized at all.

I am curious where the United Way got its average of 60 hours per year in the United States for ECE credits. I have that same form that I copied myself ([Exhibit F](#)) with the hours for each state and nothing is comparable to that.

I also looked up continuing education requirements for real estate and insurance agents, and they require 15 credits per year. I realize that we are working with children, and that is something different. We are also working with a less educated workforce. I understand the importance of having these classes available to them, but it has to be reasonable and cost effective. I do not think it should be putting private schools like mine in a precarious financial position because I am forced to provide 15 more hours of child care credits for each of my staff.

Assemblyman Stewart:

Are any of the classes available online?

Kathleen Cooke:

They are online, but you have to pay for those as well.

Assemblywoman Flores:

I see the point of this bill in trying to emphasize something more than just playing with Play-Doh at that age. Maybe there is a difference in terms of what your facility intends to do as opposed to a facility that is actually meant to teach early childhood development literacy skills. Perhaps it is just babysitting as opposed to . . .

Kathleen Cooke:

I failed to mention that I am a nationally accredited center. We are required to have 20 hours for our staff and 30 hours for our administrators. My school is exceptional. There is not a teacher there who does not have a bachelor's or master's degree. You are not talking down to the high school or freshman college student who just walked in the door and wants to watch children for a couple hours a day. What is not being offered is classes that challenge teachers or administrators who have been in the field for years. I am sorry, but every month you get all kinds of flyers stating that they are having this or that class, and many of them are repetitions and many of them are exactly what I described to you.

Assemblywoman Flores:

In no way did I mean to insinuate that your particular school does not teach development or literacy skills. That is actually what I wanted to clear up because there are some facilities that just take care of the children as opposed to actually teaching them.

Kathleen Cooke:

True. I think the purpose of this bill is to find those schools and make sure that those employees and administrators understand the need for a better informed and educated workforce.

Assemblyman Anderson:

The last presenter told us about people getting paid near minimum wage to do the job. That would sound more like kids are just being watched. Is she talking about people who are actively doing development? I do not think I would want my children—which I do not have yet—being developed by someone who is making minimum wage. That is something I would want to spend a little more money on.

Kathleen Cooke:

My staff's average salary ranges between \$15 and \$20 per hour. Many of them are on salary with full benefits. A lot of schools are not equipped, able, or willing to do that. You have a huge span in types of schools and how they are run.

Assemblyman Hansen:

An earlier person testified that the advantage from early childhood development apparently goes away by second or third grade, the initial surge where it shows improvement. Can you elaborate on that? Is that accurate? What do the studies actually show?

Kathleen Cooke:

I have heard that argument, but I do not necessarily believe that. Particularly for social and emotional growth, preschool, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten are absolutely essential. I have been doing this for 40 years, and the parents who have come back to me over the years have told me their child had gotten such a good start at our school and how the most important thing that they saw was the confidence their child had in the classroom as they went through school. The child would raise their hand, answer the question, be a team leader. It certainly makes a difference.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

I believe that the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) website has some really good research on that. As an early childhood person myself, I think that is a really good place for information.

Margot Chappel, Director, Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office, Department of Health and Human Services:

I would like to clarify that one of the advantages and opportunities with this bill would be to streamline and develop some of the more advanced trainings that Kathleen Cooke spoke of. There are many opportunities in this bill to align our programs across the divisions in the department.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

Are there questions from the Committee?

Assemblyman Aizley:

That sounded like testimony in support.

Margot Chappel:

I apologize; it was just clarification.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

Is there anyone else in opposition?

Joanne Everts, Director, Early Childhood Education, Washoe County School District:

I am also a member of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, and I represent the local education agencies in the state on that Council.

I really support the goals of the Council. I think what is happening here is that this bill needs some adjustment, and Mr. Bobzien said that in the beginning. This is our opportunity to move forward as a state, to develop a cohesive system of early childhood.

Earlier, they were talking about people who are on the Advisory Council not knowing each other because a lot of our systems are in silos. We have health and human services in one place and education in another, so the actual bill that focuses on this Council is essential for us to move forward with. If the Advisory Council could make those decisions—the roadblock of 30 hours of training and some of the ultimatums in this bill—the Council could work with the community to develop the system, provide the training, and help people get that training.

We have been providing Pre-K standards training since 2004 when the standards were developed by our office. We work with the Department of Education. I have staff that has gone everywhere from Ely to Elko to Las Vegas to provide that training. If we really look at the essence of this bill, it is to create this Advisory Council and to move forward with a cohesive system.

Colleen Petrini, Director, Noah's Ark Child Center, Reno, Nevada:

I have been the Director of the center for 21 years, and I have been in early childhood education for over 35 years.

If you would have presented this to me four years ago, I would have said the timing on this bill was great and this was the direction we needed to move, but in this economy today, I find this almost incredulous.

We have centers in Washoe County in the State of Nevada closing all the time due to the fiscal economy and lack of enrollment. My center has always been full and we are currently operating between 60 and 70 percent; we are a quality center that has always met our criteria. We have always provided the children with excellent developmental background.

We have parents who are losing their jobs. We have families moving in together. I do accept state subsidies because we do take The Children's Cabinet, but we are also losing money by accepting The Children's Cabinet. To be a center that has to meet the 30-hour requirement, because we get that subsidy, would be another hindrance in terms of our own healthy economy for the center and the continuance of my center.

I also think it is really important while we are talking about educating young children and Pre-K standards and Play-Doh, to understand, over years and years, there has been so much presented in terms of research about the value of play with young children. It is important that not be forgotten. A child might be just spending time with a young caregiver and making Play-Doh and coloring and talking about shapes and doing something that may not seem educational, but he is still learning in that arena. While I agree with the importance of education, sometimes I have had very educated people come into my center that have not been the most nurturing or the person to meet the heart of a child.

This is not the economic time to put pressure on any center to add 15 hours to the educational standards for its staff. My staff has not had a raise in three years. We have had to cut back on benefits for the staff in order to keep the center open. I am sure other centers can say the same thing.

Patty Ogan, Director, Summit Ridge Christian School, Sparks, Nevada:

I am the Director of a faith-based nonprofit center. I have worked in early childhood in Nevada for 25 years. I completely agree with Mrs. Petrini that I have no objection to having the amount of training increased, but right now, a lot of schools are coming out of some of the hardest economic times. You are aware, even more than we are, of where Nevada is economically.

My staff and I view the 15 hours as a minimum standard and we want to be above the minimum standard, but right now a little over 5 percent of my budget goes to staff training. To double that to 10 percent right now, my margin is very close.

What I would like to see is that it be gradually increased as the economy improves in Nevada.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

Are there any questions for the last three ladies? [There were none.]

Linda Hollis, Owner, Magic Treehouse Preschool, Sparks, Nevada:

I have had this school for 25 years. Prior to that I taught in the Washoe County School system, K through 3, for 13 years and I still hold my credential.

I am in agreement that the child care profession should be held to the highest of standards. We understand that we have the most precious cargo that you have. I do challenge the fact that doubling the credits would help.

I am here to just add and agree with all my peers, but I would like to make a suggestion, that in fact, if this does become law, that we do have some quality classes to chose from and a larger variety that apply to the curriculum we are talking about, as well as some direction.

Also, I would like to say I am here with regard to my staff. We have talked about this a lot. They do fulfill all of their requirements very graciously, and they are anxious and eager to learn more all of the time.

We are in opposition to the way this requirement is being done, but we are in favor of having more information.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

Are there any questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there anyone in Las Vegas that would like to testify in opposition? [There was no one.] We will continue in Carson City then.

Shelly Nye, Program Director/Grant Coordinator, Nevada Registry, Reno, Nevada:

We are the training approval system for all of this training that everyone has been talking about. I would also be in support of the graduated training increase that others have mentioned so that we can address the quality issue. We took on the training approval system in 2004, for the entire state. Prior to that time it was handled by five different licensing entities. With the Nevada

Registry taking on that system, we have had to build the system as we go. We fully intend to look at trainer criteria which will hopefully increase the quality of the training being provided. But, we need time to have that system developed and put into place. The suggestion to have step increases in the training requirements couples nicely with our plans to look at improving the quality of training over time.

Right now, our focus is on mandatory participation which was adopted in the state child care regulations in 2009. By the end of December 2012, we will have approximately 7,400 child care providers registered with our program. That is our priority right now.

While we are not looking at trainer criteria right now, it has always been the intention of the program to look at that piece and to build a higher quality training approval system for child care providers.

Assemblyman Stewart:

Do you get most of your ideas for curriculum for training from university programs? Where do you get the ideas from?

Shelly Nye:

Actually, the Nevada Registry only reviews and approves the training. We do not provide the training. At this time training is provided by a wide range of individuals across the state, ranging from higher education folks to directors. There is a wide variety of trainers who are eligible to do the training at this point because we do not have those trainer criteria in place.

Assemblyman Hansen:

From the people who have testified, it sounds like most of the people, at least in this audience, are already highly educated with years of experience in these fields. For most of the people who come through your programs, is that consistent, or is this an exceptional audience?

Shelly Nye:

It is an exceptional audience. We definitely have some work to do with regard to our education levels of our child care providers. One of the unique opportunities that we have is that by making participation with the Nevada Registry mandatory, we are collecting a vast amount of data about our workforce. By the end of 2012, we will know exactly what our workforce looks like and we will know where people are with their training and education. The ladies that are here provided a great example of what we aspire to be as a workforce.

Vice Chair Dondero Loop:

Are there additional questions? [There were none.] Is there anyone else in opposition in Carson City? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in opposition in Las Vegas? [There was no one.] Is there anyone neutral? [There was no one in Carson City or Las Vegas.] I will close the hearing on A.B. 546

Is there any further business before the Committee? Seeing none, we are adjourned [at 5:20 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sharon McCallen
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman David P. Bobzien, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Education

Date: April 6, 2011

Time of Meeting: 3:23 p.m.

| Bill | Exhibit | Witness / Agency | Description |
|----------|---------|------------------------------|---|
| | A | | Agenda |
| | B | | Attendance Roster |
| A.B. 393 | C | Assemblywoman Dondero Loop | Prepared Testimony on A.B. 393 |
| A.B. 393 | D | Assemblywoman Dondero Loop | Proposed Conceptual Amendment to A.B. 393 |
| A.B. 546 | E | Assemblyman David P. Bobzien | Governor's Executive Order Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council |
| A.B. 546 | F | Assemblyman David P. Bobzien | Minimum Requirements State by State |
| A.B. 546 | G | Lawrence Charlton | Prepared Testimony on A.B. 546 |
| A.B. 546 | H | Delores Hauck | Makeup of Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council |
| A.B. 546 | I | Theresa DeGraffenreid | Prepared Testimony on A.B. 546 |
| A.B. 546 | J | Bette Katz | 2009 Demographics Report: <i>Child Care in the State of Nevada</i> |
| A.B. 546 | K | Bette Katz | Prepared Testimony |
| A.B. 546 | L | Bette Katz | Executive Summary: <i>The Economic Impact of Early Care and Education in Nevada</i> |