

**MINUTES OF THE
JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON K-12 EDUCATION/HIGHER EDUCATION
OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
AND THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**Seventy-sixth Session
February 28, 2011**

The Joint Subcommittee on K-12 Education/Higher Education of the Senate Committee on Finance and the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means was called to order by Chair Steven A. Horsford at 5:05 p.m. on Monday, February 28, 2011, in the theater of Green Valley High School, Henderson, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Steven A. Horsford, Chair
Senator Moises (Mo) Denis
Senator Barbara K. Cegavske
Senator Ben Kieckhefer

ASSEMBLY SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, Chair
Assemblyman Marcus L. Conklin, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Paul Aizley
Assemblyman Pat Hickey
Assemblywoman April Mastroluca
Assemblyman John Ocegüera

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblyman Tom Grady (Excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Shirley A. Breeden, Clark County Senatorial District No. 5
Senator David R. Parks, Clark County Senatorial District No. 7
Senator Michael Roberson, Clark County Senatorial District No. 5

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STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marian Williams, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Dwight D. Jones, Superintendent, Clark County School District
Jeff Weiler, Chief Financial Officer, Clark County School District
Daniel Hickey
Rita Hickey
Colleen Case
Frank Russo
John Carr, President, Education Support Employees Association
Patricia Quinn
Zhan Okuda-Lim, Student Representative, Nevada State Board of Education
Angie Sullivan
Woody Stroupe
Michael Chamberlain, Executive Director, Nevada Business Coalition
Michelle Knopp
Tim M. Hager
Amber DeSormeau
Chris Hughes
Patty Martinez
Erin Riddle
Julie Hagerman
Debra Cooley
Rachel Spilsbury
Gerald Simmons
Resha Johnson
Chris Miller, President, Nevada Stonewall Democratic Caucus
Teralee Burbank
Bobbi Gardner
Kerri Carlin
Daniel Pappageorge
Bernava Johnson
Nicole Hill
Scott Miller

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Sheri Manning
Victor Joecks, Communications Director, Nevada Policy Research Institute
Rick Korbel, Public Education Foundation
Wade Poulsen, Trustee, Lincoln County School District
Karen Egger
Betsy Giles
Belinda "Bo" Yealy
Lauriann Bradford
Eric LaBar
Donny Grayman
Patrick Gibbons
Dikka M. Rian
Kristina Intinarelli
Tyler Davis
Amanda Ketzenberger
Jean Melby-Mauer
Rhonda Cohen
Ann Moody
Dora Barnum
Allen Rosoff
Robert Hollowood
J.E. "Ed" Smalley

CHAIR HORSFORD:
We will begin with the Superintendent of the Clark County School District (CCSD), Dwight Jones.

DWIGHT D. JONES (Superintendent, Clark County School District):
Should nothing change in the current proposed budget, CCSD will be crippled. I would like to show you how devastating this budget will be on CCSD and the programs we offer. I would also like to speak about the approximately \$300 million that has been proposed to be swept from the bond debt services fund and the effect that will have on our ability to repay the bond, as well as our debt rating. It will also cause us to increase local property taxes. The CCSD agrees that we must share the sacrifice during this current budget crisis. We remain committed to reforming the school district. We want to support some of

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the reforms that the community is currently speaking about. I hope to work with the trustees on issues such as:

- Educator effectiveness.
- Early childhood education.
- Literacy support.
- Accountable benchmarks at the first-, third- and sixth-grade levels.
- Online and virtual education options as cost-cutting measures.
- School choice options.
- Empowerment schools.
- Transparent data systems.
- The Nevada growth model.
- Providing transparent data.
- Decentralization of resources.

I want to say this on the record. We will continue to do what is best for the students of Clark County School District. But there is a "but." I have tried to be consistent in a message that I really don't believe we can cut our way out of this budget crisis to better results. And so what we are asking you to do and in our conversations with the Governor's office, is to try to say that we agree with shared sacrifice, but what might be the right balance?

Certainly, tonight's hearing is very important. The size of the crowd here tonight indicates that there is a lot of interest about the education budget and how it might affect the school district. As you can see on slide 2 of our PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit C](#)), CCSD plans to hold four community meetings to hear public testimony about the budget. We also have a CCSD budget survey that is available online ([Exhibit D](#)). We hope that both the Legislators here tonight and those in the audience participate in that survey. Each of our principals, in conjunction with their Parent Teacher Associations, will also be holding meetings regarding the budget in order to get feedback from the community.

JEFF WEILER (Chief Financial Officer, Clark County School District):

On slide 4 of [Exhibit C](#) you can see the projected shortfall for CCSD in fiscal year (FY) 2012-2013, which will be between \$250 million and

\$275 million. On an expenditure basis, we currently spend approximately \$7,000 per student. These cuts will put us below \$6,200 per student. In addition, 939 federally funded jobs will be cut in the next fiscal year. These jobs were funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Title I of the Social Security Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and EduJobs. The ARRA funds run out at the end of this year. The EduJobs funds run out at the end of next year. Although these are not directly related to the Governor's budget, they are important to keep in mind.

On slide 5 of [Exhibit C](#) you can see why we are short nearly \$275 million. You can see that State funding is down nearly \$196 million. It is proposed to be offset by about \$150 million a year in debt service funds. The room tax was originally passed by voters to provide money to school districts starting next year. The Governor's budget will continue to sweep those funds into the General Fund and this sweep will deprive Clark County of about \$35 million. Clark County's property taxes are projected to go down 10.50 percent next year, which is a loss of approximately \$48 million. In the last year we have used about \$62 million in fund balance to balance last year's budget, so those funds are no longer available. Finally, employee contract provisions total about \$68 million, which includes step increases, educational increments and the 2.25 percent Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) rate increase. We are bargaining with our negotiating units and we are trying to make some changes in this area. This shortfall assumes that there are no new revenue sources.

On slide 6 of [Exhibit C](#) you can see exactly how bad a \$275 million shortfall looks and what kind of cuts will need to be made. These are not proposals, but rather they are meant to quantify the magnitude of the projected shortfall. In order to meet our shortfall we could do any one of the following:

- Add 14 more students per class.
- Cut 33 work days in the year.
- Cut pay and benefits by 16 percent.
- Cut the central office by 95 percent.
- A combination of many other possibilities.

In total, if we met the shortfall just with staffing, it would mean that 3,200 to 3,800 positions would be eliminated.

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Finally, on slide 7 you can see an overview of the proposed sweep of our debt service reserve. This sweep would translate to about \$150 million redirected to the General Fund each year of the biennium. This would increase property taxes over time. We would either have to increase the property tax rate or restructure our bonds. State law would need to be changed. Nearly \$150 million would be offsetting what was to be guaranteed by the State's Distributive School Account. This is a onetime stop gap measure. Finally, this goes against promises from the District to the voters when we had our capital program approved in 1998.

CHAIR HORSFORD:

I would like to recognize the school board trustees from the Clark County School Board who are here this evening.

DANIEL HICKEY:

I have lived here since 1982. "Don't spend what you don't got," is what my Daddy used to say. The Governor has suggested that we take a 5.2 percent cut to our budget for the next biennium. That is not enough. After reviewing the budget, I noticed that we are duplicating a number of services. For example, every community within CCSD has its own police force. We waste approximately \$15 million a year on this. Secondly, we pay about \$122 million a year toward the Public Employees' Benefit Program (PEBP). The employees themselves also contribute. If we opened PEBP up to bidding by private entities, we could save 30 percent. Please do not spend what I do not have.

RITA HICKEY:

I would like to point out some of the names and salaries of employees in CCSD. There are people being paid \$165,892, \$145,653 and Mr. Tom Rodriguez makes \$113,902. There are Diversity and Affirmative Action Programs listed. What does that have to do with teaching our children? None of these salaries reflect the health care benefits or retirement benefits of the employees. There are pages and pages of salaries like these. During the prosperous times of the last decade here in Nevada, we continually increased the education budget, but test scores kept getting worse. If you were to increase the education budget by 50 percent, the results would be no different. It is time for innovation and change in the system. With Obamacare looming over our heads and an unsustainable federal deficit, we can no longer sustain your thirst for our

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money. You cannot spend what you do not have. It is time for you to do what we all have to do and that is to live within our means.

COLLEEN CASE:

I have submitted my full testimony ([Exhibit E](#)) in writing for the record, but I would like to discuss a few of my concerns. I am a fourth-grade teacher at an at-risk school in North Las Vegas. I have been with the school district for eight years and over this amount of time I have seen drastic changes in the way that education is delivered in this State.

But before I get into the issues that need to be discussed, I need to explain the situation that my colleagues and I are faced with every single day at school. As of now, our school serves roughly over 700 students. We are a Title I school, which receives federal funding because well over 90 percent of our students live at or below the poverty level.

I am here to speak to you about my very deep concern about the state of education in this State and the future. First, I have deep concerns about the idea of merit pay for test scores. Currently, I am teaching in a climate where it is no longer important that students learn skills that they need to succeed in school, but it is only important that they pass the test. As of this year, instead of teaching, I have administered Instructional Data Management System tests, School Improvement Plan tests, Benchmark Tests, Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) practice tests and I will administer the CRT test itself in two weeks. Right now, it seems that there is already tremendous pressure to pass the test. My fear with this merit pay model is that we will put even more pressure on our students to pass a grade-level test, when we know that some students just are not on that grade level. If we are to enforce merit pay, it needs to be in a fair manner with a growth model. If a student comes into fourth-grade on a first-grade level, and by the end of the year they are on a second-grade or third-grade level, that should be sufficient growth. We should only have to administer a test at the beginning of the year and that same test at the end of the year.

Another concern I have is the idea to raise class sizes in elementary, middle and high school. I have read that next year, the Governor wants to increase the class size by eight more students. That is catastrophic. We all know that the

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more individualized attention a student receives, the better the student will do in school.

Lastly, I am expected to work harder for less pay. Please think before you act. It is the future you are dealing with. You have to ask yourself, what is more important, balancing the budget on the backs of our students and teachers, or paying slightly more so our children can succeed?

FRANK RUSSO:

I am a teacher at Silverado High School in Las Vegas. The faculty and staff on campus are the most important reason 300,000 students in CCSD are going to go to school tomorrow. The secretary who knows the student, the lunch lady who knows his name, the custodian who thanked him for throwing the water bottle in the garbage can instead of on the ground and the coach teaching life lessons besides what is happening on the field, they are the most important reason for these students attending class everyday. The faculty and staff are living, breathing entities. I am sure you know that, but sometimes we have to get back to basics. Please remember this as you go through this very difficult budget process. You will be in our thoughts and prayers. Make your decisions wisely. Think about the future of our children.

JOHN CARR (President, Education Support Employees Association):

Cutting the funding for education should be against the law. When you cut funding for education, you are cutting quality education out of our children's future. Quality personnel insures quality education for our children in public schools. Education Support Personnel, support staff and teaching staff are always the first ones thought of when there is a need for budget cuts. They are the last ones thought of for any increases. These are the employees who have a direct impact on our students' education. From the start of their day to the end of their day, they are constantly in direct contact with students, and often the first person the student comes in contact with. These are the employees who have taken cuts four times in the last three years. In the first round of cuts, 45 employees lost their jobs. In the second round of cuts, 794 of them were rified from their jobs. The third cut was a freeze on our step increase and longevity pay. The fourth cut was that the district cut us from 12-month employees to 9-month employees. During all these cuts, there was a negative impact on the quality of education students receive. Our Governor and

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lawmakers need to realize that gaming and mining are not the only industry in this town. Cutting education affects all industry. When you are at the bottom of 50 states in education, how much more can you cut and survive? I know we live in Nevada and at one time this was the wild west, but Mr. Sandoval, this is not the little house on the prairie. Stop funding education like you are. The Governor said in his State of the State address that we would go back to 2007 funding for students. In 2007, we were funding students at the 2002 level. When were we ever funding at a 2007 level? You were elected to serve and protect the people. Please do your job and make the Governor stop cutting our children's future.

PATRICIA QUINN:

I am a first-grade teacher. My hope for today is that you actually hear us. I am afraid. I am scared for the children of this State and the children of this Nation. Education is under attack in our Nation and in the State of Nevada. Teachers are being demonized for states not being able to balance their budgets and for the state of education today. The fact is, once the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 came into effect, teachers have been told what to teach, when to teach it and what materials to use. We are told what assessment tools to use and when to use them. Our voice and our autonomy have been taken away and replaced with the voices of school administrators and Legislators. In the case of some school-wide reading programs mandated by federal programs, the voices of teachers have been replaced by the book publisher's voice. Teachers are not to blame for the state of education or the lack of money available to balance the State budget. We should no longer be demonized. We should no longer be blamed and our livelihood attacked. I have been in this District for over ten years and have never heard of a teacher afraid of being held accountable for their job. I have heard teachers say that they do not want merit pay. I am not a slacker teacher. On average, I spend eight to ten hours a week working beyond my contract hours. I do this because of my students. I have always had good reviews. I would probably be a teacher who would earn merit pay, yet I am not in favor of it. There are too many variables that cannot be controlled. Teaching is not like other businesses where quotas can be measured. Please put Nevada in the news for doing the right thing and not cutting deeply into public education funding. This is our chance to show the rest of the Country that Nevada does care about the education its children receive. Let us make the news for funding education, not because we cut it.

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ZHAN OKUDA-LIM (Student Representative, Nevada State Board of Education):

I have submitted my full testimony ([Exhibit F](#)) in writing for the record, but I would like to discuss a few of my concerns. I am a senior in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program at Valley High School and I currently serve as the proud Student Representative to the Nevada State Board of Education. I appear before you today deeply concerned about the budget cuts students face. I am grateful that I have had outstanding teachers who have empowered me to accomplish, achieve and succeed in my academics.

I will always remember my Algebra II/ Trigonometry Honors teacher, Ms. Brown, for how she stayed after school every day and missed dinner with her own family to help me and other students with our homework. I have seen the joy in my friends' eyes when they have achieved great things, from passing a rigorous calculus class with a grade of A, to being declared a valedictorian candidate, to making all-State honor band, to being a member of the most spirited Key Club in the region, to winning first place in advertising during the Distributed Education Clubs of America, commonly known as DECA, State Conference, to making it to Regional and State events in sports, to breaking a leg during a successful theatrical performance of *Whodunnit?*

I am grateful for everything which has inspired me to someday serve as a State Senator, Governor and United States Senator to give back to my community and State. But with drastic budget cuts, what has helped me to learn and accomplish may be eliminated for the students of the future and the future of our great State will be shattered. If you slash away at our education, if you take away our outstanding teachers and the activities that enrich our education experience, if you take away the joy we students have in our education, then we will go nowhere and we may even regress. One thing is certain, to ensure that all students can accomplish, achieve and succeed in the classroom today and the world of tomorrow, education must come first.

I hope that when all of you, your colleagues in the Legislature and the Governor must make your decisions you will keep in mind a lesson that I learned early on in student leadership. Do not make decisions first, then get the facts and others' perspectives later. Get the facts and others' perspectives first, then make the best decisions for the common good. This has nothing to do with politics. All of us, teachers, students, parents, administrators and State leaders have to work

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together as one Nevada to make the best decisions for the common good of our future, the students of our great State of Nevada.

ANGIE SULLIVAN:

I am a first-grade teacher at Jesse D. Scott Elementary in CCSD. I am concerned about the Governor's plan to cut, cut, cut, cut and cut education. It is not fair and it is not right. I am a skilled and dedicated educator and I love what I do. I think this plan cuts and hurts people without a voice to fight back. It is pretty easy and cowardly to pick on children and youth.

I believe that there are other sources of revenue in this State besides taking from our kids. We need to take a good look at why the billion-dollar mining industry, which is more profitable than casinos, is allowed to only pay 1 percent or less in taxes. Gold is up 1,028 percent. Mining is booming. Mining is a protected industry in this state. Yet, my students and I are expected to keep on sacrificing. Mining should sacrifice the same amount that you would expect a six-year old to sacrifice. If you can require a first-grader to give back one-fifth or one-sixth of the funding they normally have, we should expect the same from a foreign owned mining corporation. Instead of losing teachers, we should require multibillion dollar industries like mining to pay its fair share.

I am willing to do what it takes. I have proven that for 20 years as a teacher. I expect you to hold other people to that same standard.

WOODY STROUPE:

During the 2007-2009 school years, Clark County teachers received pay raises totaling 11.7 percent. This increase came at a time when unemployment grew to over 20 percent. In spite of 20 percent of their neighbors being out of work, the tax-and-spend Legislators want to raise taxes that would kill even more jobs. The tax-and-spend advocates say that our education system is failing so that we must spend more money. That statement is false. Over the last 14 years we have poured billions into public education, test scores have gone down and dropout rates have increased. In 2007, the Nevada graduation rate was a startling 41.8 percent. How can we keep throwing money at schools with these appalling results? Budget Director Andrew Clinger stated that even with the budget cuts suggested by Governor Sandoval, K-12 education could spend more in FY 2009-2010 and FY 2010-2011 than was spent in

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FY 2006-2007 and FY 2008-2009. We are not talking about cuts from previous levels. We are talking about reduced spending growth. That is from the Budget Director. In many states, reforms have made real improvement in public education performance. These improvements include rewarding good teachers, firing bad ones, giving parents the right to choose schools and increasing the number of charter schools. Tax-and-spend Legislators, it is time to stop being the "party of no" to real education improvement and back reform that will improve our education system. It is time to stop raising taxes and killing jobs.

MICHAEL CHAMBERLAIN (Executive Director, Nevada Business Coalition):

The businesses and employees in the private sector have been suffering for years. Businesses have cut back, workers have lost their wages and jobs. As many as 25 percent of the people in the State of Nevada, unofficially, may be unemployed right now. Business owners have had to dip into their own savings to keep their doors open and many of them will be unsuccessful in doing so. Thousands of businesses have already closed their doors, leaving tens of thousands of people out of work. Nearly 200,000 Nevadans are out of work right now.

We cannot afford to burden those families and those businesses even more than they already have been with increased taxes to fund more government programs. Education has seen increases in funding over the last several decades, but there has not been any correlating increase in student performance. That is what this is really all about. It is about how well our students are learning. With all of that additional money, our students have not been learning any better than they were before. It is time for a new approach. It is time for some reform. It is time for real solutions to improving education, rather than continuing to spend more money on it, money that we do not have.

If education is a priority and if it is more important than other programs, then by all means, take money from the less important programs to fund education. We cannot afford to further burden the struggling and suffering businesses and families in this State who have already suffered over the last several years and cannot afford to suffer anymore.

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MICHELLE KNOPP:

I am a Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) specialist for CCSO. I am here to represent special needs. Whether GATE is or is not being considered to be cut, I am here to remind you of the need for this program. All students need to perceive school as purposeful and useful. The regular classroom is geared toward majority needs, which may not be gifted needs. Many student talents are overlooked due to behavior issues that develop as motivation wanes. Many gifted students exhibit attention deficits and learning disabilities in a specific area, which may actually be a nontraditional learning style. Gifted students need a different and specialized environment for at least part of the week. This environment must welcome what they bring to the table and draw out and expand their gifts which are valued. They also need time with intellectual peers for a sense of belonging and to bounce more complex ideas off of each other. The discourse in a GATE class is more sophisticated than in a regular classroom. If GATE is ever cut, these students may lose interest and motivation. We cannot afford to lose great minds by denying them the experiences they need in order to thrive in school.

I took some quotes from my students, my favorite of which is,

This program is kind of like people who are blind that need to learn Braille or deaf people with sign language. That is kind of like GATE, but we are not blind or deaf. We are smart and need this class.

I have submitted other quotes by my students for the record ([Exhibit G](#)).

TIM M. HAGER:

I am a sixth-grade teacher at Mike O'Callaghan Middle School. When I began my teaching career, I felt my profession was one of those few meaningful careers that was valued because it contributed positively to society. Teaching is so much more than just chasing after the bottom line and chasing check after check like when I was in business. I had the opportunity to instill in young people morals, honesty and a work ethic. I sincerely believed that I could make a positive difference in my students' lives. I could be an example that playing by the rules, working hard and setting goals did indeed make a difference and one could be successful. Not to mention, my mother is so proud of me.

Lately, my colleagues and I feel that we are under attack in the media. Everywhere we go, no matter which channel we watch or which state we keep an eye on, we are being devalued as professionals. To begin with, when one feels devalued, he begins to question the selfless decision to enter the teaching profession. All of the teachers in this room knew we were not going to make a ton of money getting into this business. We knew that and we knew that if we traded pay raises for perks down the road, it would all come out even. We negotiated this openly in our contracts. A devalued teacher's confidence starts to erode, not only in ability but in self-respect of the profession. I just wonder how soon it is going to be before my students say, "Yeah, my dad says you guys are not anything, anyway. You do not do any good. You do not mean anything." Moreover, one loses pride that he or she is a teacher, a leader, a mentor and a good citizen. One's frustration can easily surface in the classroom with no patience, sarcasm, disrespect, open anger and even resentment.

Please value us and what we do.

AMBER DESORMEAU:

I am a junior here at Green Valley High School. I am here today to ask you to fund education fully. As the budget becomes tighter, the school district must find programs to cut. Some of the first places often targeted are sports, performing arts and afterschool activities. These may seem like nonessential elements to education, yet these programs are the very heart where we train and grow our leaders of the future. Discipline, hard work, team building and time management skills that we as students develop while engaged in extra curricular activities transform us into the people who can and will make a difference in our communities all across the State. You know why education is important. You know that educating the youth of Nevada is an essential part of securing a prosperous future for our State. What you may not know exactly is how many segments of the community benefit when education is fully funded.

Just this last weekend, I met students from all across the Las Vegas Valley as we volunteered at the Children's Heart Foundation Walk. This opportunity came to us through various school groups. Community service is an integral part of many extracurricular activities in Clark County schools. Some groups benefitting from our efforts are Three Square Food Bank, Opportunity Village, Hands and Feet Foundation, Baby's Bounty, The National Parkinson's Foundation, the

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United Nations Children's Fund, commonly known as UNICEF, the American Cancer Society, Henderson Animal Shelter, the City of Henderson, the Clark County Parks and Recreation Department, senior citizen homes and homeless and needy children in area schools. Most of these community service opportunities are available only to clubs and organizations because volunteers under 18 must be supervised. Without school groups and clubs, there are literally tens of thousands of volunteer hours that will disappear from our community. Thousands of families we help will lose that support and will have holes in their lives. This effect will be immediate and crippling. Please think not only about students and teachers, but about the families in our community as well.

CHRIS HUGHES:

I am in third grade at Beatty Elementary School. Beatty has a lot of programs like art, music, library, physical education, GATE and Fast Forward. If you cut our budget, you are cutting the learning and experience that happens in GATE. We will not have enough money to buy supplies and we will not be able to get ahead of what we are learning now.

I have Type I diabetes. If you lower our budget, we won't be able to hire or pay a nurse. Kids that take pills or that have diabetes will not be able to be safe anymore. We will not be safe anymore. Please support our education.

PATTY MARTINEZ:

I am the parent of three students in CCSD. Two of my children go to Green Valley High School and my third student goes to Greenspun Middle School. Funding education means funding our economy and our future. These are our future employees, they are the future people who will be sitting right where you are. Nationwide, Nevada has one of the lowest per-pupil education funding rates in the Nation. Under the Nevada Plan, Clark County, the fifth largest school district in the Nation, is at the bottom. Our students deserve the opportunity to succeed in school and in life. We have all been hit hard by the economy. Clark County taxpayers can no longer afford to support the State when many families are struggling to provide food and a roof over their head.

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We talk about larger class sizes. When we go to a concert or to a movie, they have a maximum occupancy. If those venues exceed that occupancy, they close it down and no one else is allowed in. Yet, we are asking our teachers to put into their classrooms more students than the maximum occupancy under fire code. That is very unsafe. We do not have the funding to build or expand our schools, so we need to work with what we have. We need to keep this in mind.

If we buy a ticket to see *The King's Speech*, but we get into the theater and they show us *Tom and Jerry* for an hour, we are going to be very upset and ask for our money back. As a taxpayer, I am paying taxes that are earmarked for education and I want them to go to education. I hope that you will fund education.

ERIN RIDDLE:

I am a pre-kindergarten teacher at Fay Herron Elementary School in North Las Vegas. We are a Title I school. The cuts that you are looking at right now are going to be very hard for the teachers to deal with. Programs are going to get cut, which will mean you will not get the best from us for our students. If you cut our funding, it is going to be very hard for us to provide more for our students. We also have to get the community involved in education. It is important that we look and see not only if these cuts are affecting teachers, but also the students and the workers of the future for Nevada.

JULIE HAGERMAN:

I am a fourth-grade teacher at Judith Steele Elementary School. I appreciate everyone being here, but I am very tired of how Legislators, the media and some of the public continue to say how important education is, but then do everything possible to sabotage it. I have experience in several other areas, including small and large corporate businesses, but I have never been in a profession until now where teachers are so vilified and blamed for problems that are clearly societal. Having said that, the Governor is trying to put the burden of a budget deficit on the backs of students and teachers. Education will not get better by taking money away. Should there be more transparency and accountability regarding where that money goes? Yes. I am not responsible for where that money goes. In fact, I would like to know myself how that money is allocated. If money was designated for something in particular and it was designated years ago, such as for an update in technology, the public and the

teachers should know this. I do not have my own secretary to do all of this research and the CCSD Website is very cumbersome. If this information is on the Website it should be stated and itemized. If our technology needs updating, for example, every five years due to a State law, people should know that. I was one of the very few people who groaned when we were told today that we were getting new computers. I do not need a new computer. Sure, it runs a little slow and the screen is hard to see because it needs a new monitor, but I believe that money can be better spent elsewhere. Put the money somewhere else. Do something else. Reallocate the money and I think that would save money in the long run. If you do this, you will not have to place all the burden of responsibility on the students and teachers.

DEBRA COOLEY:

I am a kindergarten teacher. Teachers in Nevada are at the bottom of the pay scale when compared to teachers in other states. Instead of our already low pay, I suggest that we hold school districts more accountable to the transparency of how the money you allocate to them is spent. There is too much waste in our education system and I think teachers would be the first to agree with that, but it is not because you are overpaying teachers. In fact, for the amount of education we complete, the personal time we spend in performing our duties outside of the classroom and our contract and the amount of money that we personally pull out of our own pockets to motivate and education our students, we are rather poorly paid.

I have a few suggestions that would save money and would reduce the need for cutting teacher salaries. First I suggest that vice principals run our elementary schools, because their salaries are lower than the principals' salaries and that way they can gain more experience. I think principals should rove and be in charge of several schools, allowing them more time to mentor their vice principals and their teaching staff. I also think that we should cut out the four in-service days that are added to our school calendar. Instead, I think teachers should be trained before the school day begins.

To illustrate this fact, let me tell you about my day today. Today there was an in-service for teachers and support staff in CCSD. Approximately 100 primary teachers from 8 schools attended a primary training on teaching for phonemic awareness. For two and one-half hours, we were a captive audience to a sales

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pitch to purchase a particular program with our own money ([Exhibit H](#)) which cost between \$199 and \$387. This was a complete waste of the money you pay us for our salary and our time. Every teacher left that room complaining about how that valuable teaching time could have been spent with their students. Let me remind you that we are your constituents. We voted for you to represent us in Carson City. You have already heard from several of us over and over again in these types of hearings and we are begging you to find different sources of revenue instead of cutting from our children.

RACHEL SPILSBURY:

I am a freshman at Arbor View High School in North Las Vegas. Tonight, you are determining my educational future, so please listen. According to the National Center of Educational Statistics, as of February 10, 2011, Nevada is 49th in student funding ([Exhibit I](#)). If you cut the budget as you plan to do down to \$6,200 per student, we will be last. If you cut educational funding, you have to accept the consequences. Larger classrooms may lead to new textbooks every seven to twelve years, new computers and cuts to the fine arts and janitorial staff services. In my opinion, you need to raise taxes. How do you think you will attract new businesses to Nevada and earn their trust if you are already in the hole in your own educational system?

Gaming taxes have not been raised since 1978. Mining taxes have not been raised since the Nevada Constitution was written. We need to find a new revenue source. Dedicate your money to education. Leave the Millennium Scholarship money where you promised it would go. I personally cannot attend college in Nevada without the Millennium Scholarship. How do you think the other approximately 3,000 students at Arbor View are going to pay to get a higher education? What about the students who go to more economically at-risk, inner-city schools?

Fund education first. Find new revenue sources. Improve education so that new businesses will be attracted to Nevada, making a better economic place for us all.

GERALD SIMMONS:

I am a building inspector for CCSD. A previous testifier alluded to the fire code and class-size reduction. We have a perfect example in this room tonight. If I

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was to count the bodies in this room and find out that there are more than 600 people here, I would have a fiduciary responsibility to shut down this room and call the fire department. I am a certified fire inspector for the school district.

Our schools are buildings, not just four walls and a roof. Keeping up with today's society and the technology we need in the classroom to keep our kids competitive costs money. When you pass fire codes, building codes and the life safety codes, that is what we use as our jurisdictional responsibility to ensure that the contractors and our in-house staff do their jobs properly. When you start cutting things, keep in mind that we are rehabilitating heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems in 18 different schools. We are finding that schools built in or before the 1970s are money pits. There was no inspection back then. If I could take you to some of the schools, you would be shocked at what you would see. Some of our schools are in seismic design Category D which is the same as California. This means that if we have an earthquake, we would have catastrophic events at some of our schools.

I know the Governor wants to take the money from the construction bonds, but remember that most of our unemployed in this State are in the construction industry. You have to make priorities. I do not envy your jobs, I know you have a tough job. You must think from a societal perspective. Please, look at the right thing to do.

RESHA JOHNSON:

I am a bachelor's of social work (BSW) student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). I am very concerned about the budget cuts. It seems that the State of Nevada values gaming and mining over education. Nevada is 48th in the Nation for education, and yet we are faced with a budget cut which results in programs at UNLV being eliminated and tuition costs rising. Because of the budget cuts, the Dean of Urban Affairs is proposing to cut the BSW program and the President of the University is thinking about declaring bankruptcy. How many programs will have to be cut and how many jobs will be lost before Nevada Legislators decide to stand up for education and vote against the proposed budget cuts?

My solution to the problem is to start taxing the mining corporations and stop cutting education.

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CHRIS MILLER (President, Nevada Stonewall Democratic Caucus):

I am here as a gay man who does not have a dog in this fight. People ask why I am here and why I care. Whether you are young or old, married or single, have children or not, education is important to everyone. In a time when education was a priority, I received a first class education that has garnered me big opportunities. As you cut education funding, similar opportunities will dry up like water in the desert. Businesses already will not relocate here because executives do not want to subject their children or the children of their employees to Nevada's already poor education system. This means no high paying jobs for Nevada citizens like myself and everyone else in this room.

What we should be discussing tonight and in the current Legislative Session is not budget cuts, but ways to find and raise money to fund a broken system. Where do we look? We can look at gaming. We have not raised gaming taxes since 1978. Casinos here pay the least amount of taxes of anywhere that they operate and we are basically subsidizing their growth across the globe. That is wrong. Mining companies strip away our nonrenewable resources and run away with the profits. Nevada's dollars are leaving the State. I chose to move to Nevada because I believed that it was a State with great opportunity. If you as elected officials decimate the budget, those endless opportunities will become a thing of the past.

For those of you who are looking to cut the budget, an education is an American right and it is our future. If you want to cut the education budget, I have to question your patriotism as an American. I know your job is tough. I ask you tonight to not be so shortsighted and to think of Nevada's future.

TERALEE BURBANK:

I assure you I am not here for my health. I have three kids. One is at ballet, another one is at a group meeting and I brought my son with me. My husband is at his union school. I am going to be blunt and to the point, especially for you, Senator Roberson, because I know you did not hear me testify last time. We have families, we have jobs, we have other things to do. We are your constituents and we voted you in to represent us. We are here in force to tell you that education budget cuts should be taken off the table. I cannot believe the Legislature is still arguing this point. We want mining to be held liable. We

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want gaming to be held liable. We are not asking you to tax our local mom and pop businesses. We have huge corporations in this state. For the money and revenue that these companies are bringing in, we should have the best education in this Country, not the worst.

For those of you who are interested, the Associated Press contacted me and they followed my family and me around for three days. Those reporters will tell you that the recurring theme in my family is that education is everything. From my littlest one, to my husband to myself, we struggle to get our education. We are tired of being told that we do not deserve it. Most importantly, if you educate us, it will be paid back tenfold. We will bring jobs here, because we are educated. We will put money back into the State because we are educated. We will not leave this State because we will feel obligated to it because it will have given education to us.

BOBBI GARDNER:

I am a teacher in CCSD. This is my 10th year of teaching in the District and my 20th year of teaching overall. I am concerned that with continued cuts to salaries, benefits and retirement, there will be no one who will want to come and teach in this District. Last year, four of the best teachers I know left because of cuts. This year, I know four more teachers who are leaving because of cuts and because they feel like their children are not receiving the education here that they will receive in other states. I have a friend who has six years of college under her belt. Her husband, who never attended college, makes 40 percent more than she makes. He is a government employee.

We paid for our education. We went to school and we worked hard. Many people do not pay for their education. Electricians get paid while they work. When they start, following their free education, they make more money than a first-year teacher.

My son has attended college for as many years as I have. He just started his first year in the private sector and is making more money than I make after 20 years of teaching. I am happy for him, but is that not sad for teachers?

This District has had a hard time getting teachers. Five years ago, I helped to open a brand new school. After Christmas, our principal was calling teachers

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out of state, asking them to fill the open positions in our classrooms. One teacher who came from out of state said she was asked one question in her interview: how soon can you get here? That is how desperate we were.

If wages and benefits continue to go down, who will come and teach our children? Who will teach the future of America?

KERRI CARLIN:

I am a fourth-grade teacher in CCSD. There has been so much testimony tonight and I agree with many of the opinions that have been expressed. The complaint seems to be that students are not scoring well enough on these standardized tests and that cutting teachers' salaries will not change things at all. Nothing will change if you get rid of the so called "bad teachers." We need reform in education. It is as simple as that.

I would also like to thank you for your public service. This is what America is all about. I am so grateful for America.

SENATOR HORSFORD:

It is times like this that everyone is most interested in what is happening. I think the comments of the last speaker are very appropriate. This is our democracy. Everyone will not agree, but we can all respect each other and have a civil discourse. We are doing this field hearing so that we can hear from you. If we do not hear from you tonight, you can submit your testimony in writing for the record.

DANIEL PAPPAGEORGE:

I am a student in the eighth-grade at K.O. Knudson Magnet School. I am in the National Junior Honor Society and I play trombone in the jazz band. I am just like all the other kids here today. I am serious about school and I want to go to college, but the cuts the Governor is making takes those opportunities away from me. I had to wait a year to get into magnet school because there were not enough spots. Now it is going to be a lot worse. Who will fight for us? The Governor has his lawyers and the big corporations have their lobbyists. Who will fight for the kids? Maybe you do not care about us because we cannot vote, but our parents can vote and we will be talking to them. I think you do care about us, so please do the right thing and fight for our future.

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BERNAVA JOHNSON:

I have submitted a copy of my written testimony for the record ([Exhibit J](#)). I am a school psychologist with CCSD and I am currently serving in my 18th year. I was recruited here with a master's in School Psychology and I have since earned a Doctorate in Education.

The Governor's proposed budget will devastate education as we know it in Nevada. He is proposing to cut per-pupil expenditure by over \$200 per student. Our education system is already ranked 46th in the Nation. Where would proposed cuts place us in the national ranking? How does the Governor propose to bring new businesses into Nevada when it becomes next to impossible to educate the children? Supplies will be reduced and programs eliminated due to decreased funding. Teachers are already subsidizing their particular students' education by providing supplies and some are even paying for student lunches.

What does it prove to lay off educators now when they are needed the most? The Governor's proposed plan will somehow increase per-pupil class size by up to ten children. I can guarantee that when more students are in a classroom, behavior becomes a problem. We are already complaining about students not passing standardized tests. When we have more behavioral problems, it will simply continue to take away from the teaching occurring in the classroom.

How do educator layoffs affect our economy? These same individuals who are in danger of losing jobs will look to other areas of the economy to subsidize their income. Those who are laid off will be entitled to unemployment, so how does cutting education help with unemployment? Please, think about what you are doing. I know there are other ways for us to find the funding we need for education. Do not destroy our schools by cutting funds in an effort to save money.

NICOLE HILL:

I am a teacher at Silverado High School and a mother of a student in CCSD. I was asked to come and speak tonight about what these cuts will mean for myself, my students and my children. Within my classroom, it will stifle creativity. I teach at the high school level. I find project-based assignments in order to be relative in the world today. I ask students to create and synthesize

information, so they can apply their assignments to things like the debate on the budget or how the digital age has different education needs. My students have learned that we need to address and take care of the problems that have been created by the age in which we live. I had eight groups with four students in each group tackle these questions. It took me over a week to prepare for the lesson, because of limited time. If I had ten more students in the classroom, I would be forced to revert to worksheets and the stuff that is already in the textbook. I would no longer be challenging my students with higher order thinking skills or the depth of knowledge skills. I would not be teaching them the skills that our workforce is asking of them. We are trying to educate for a global community, not just for the State of Nevada. Our students are competing with students internationally, as we are involved in that in this Country.

We rate 50th in the Nation in too many things, and in the bottom 45 in others. For our students, cuts in education mean that you do not care about them or their future. You will be teaching them that their elected officials do not care about what our students are going to be doing, and only care about keeping certain industries in this State happy. For my students, rating bottom in the Nation and asking them to just process the paperwork and not do the creative assignments is going to take away their ability to succeed in college and in the future. We were given statistics earlier tonight: 14 more students per classroom, 33 less work days. Cutting the school year in a State that already has low education turnout would be awful. The 16 percent pay benefit cuts will cause good teachers like myself to leave the district. Any of those suggestions could destroy our education system. When the Governor takes away the 3 percent in sales taxes, despite running on "No New Taxes," he will force the County to raise property taxes and make the schools the bad guy.

SCOTT MILLER:

I am a music teacher at Hyde Park Middle School. I wish I had brought my baton with me tonight. If I had, I would be better able to make my point. I have come here today to teach you something that I teach the students in my middle school class every year. Today's lesson is on intention. Before an ensemble can perform anything together, it needs to thoroughly understand the intention of what it is performing. I ask my students to think about what Mozart or Beethoven intended to convey when they put those notes down on the lines and spaces in front of them. Why did they make those particular choices and

not others? Most importantly, I teach them to honor the silence when I lift my baton, to hold their thoughts firmly on that intention before I give them the first downbeat. Today, I ask you, what is the intention of the education budget for the State of Nevada? What did the citizens of Nevada intend when they designed their public school system? What did they expect it to provide to their children? What was their intention for these allocations? Can these expectations even be met with fewer resources?

If we truly understand this analogy, it becomes clear that we cannot hear the beauty and the depth of this composition if we do not have enough players on each part. Can we truly say that we performed Beethoven's 9th Symphony if we cut out the tympani part? In this lesson, the budget you have before you represents the lines and the spaces and all of the symbols in that sheet of music. You are the ensemble that has come together to breathe life into it and this is the moment of silence. I lift my baton before you and like a thousand times before, I pray that you are thinking about the intention of our public school system. As I hold the silence, I say just one more prayer, that you understand your parts and you perform them well.

SHERI MANNING:

I work in the secondary fine arts department of CCSD. I taught high school for 20 years in Utah and have been teaching here for 18 years. I have been doing this a long time. My current position is to oversee and work with all the band directors in our School District. I work with 106 band directors from 58 middle schools and 39 high schools. I have been in every single middle school and every single high school in our District this year and the four previous years that I have been in this job. I want you to know that there are many wonderful things happening in our School District and many wonderful, dedicated teachers working in this District. I am concerned because there is a lot of negative publicity and I think it is important to understand that our teachers are working very hard.

One of my principals told me the other day that our State has more stringent requirements on testing and how we pass the test than most of the states in our Country. If you look at the Texas model, a school is allowed 200 failing students, but in our district, a school is only allowed 25. Many people are complaining about testing, but there is a lot more to education than passing the

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test. I have seen so much growth in many young students. Their teachers are putting in countless hours. Please fund their education.

I would like to close with a quote from Benjamin Franklin, who once said, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

VICTOR JOECKS (Communications Director, Nevada Policy Research Institute):
Before any discussion of education funding takes place, we should study Nevada's history of education spending. Contrary to the myths some may believe and we have heard tonight, Nevada's State and local funding of K-12 has dramatically increased over the last five decades. Adjusted for inflation, Nevada's per-pupil spending in 1959 was \$3,100 which is \$30 per pupil in unadjusted dollars. In the 2006-2007 school year, the latest data available from the Department of Education, Nevada spent \$8,682. This means that Nevada has nearly tripled its inflation-adjusted, per-pupil spending in the last 50 years, and this does not include billions of dollars in capital costs.

If you have a question about education funding in Nevada, ask this: how can we triple per-pupil spending and have the quality of education decrease or stagnate? Where is the accountability?

The evidence suggests that as Nevada has spent more, performance has declined. According to *Education Week*, Nevada's graduation rate in 1997 was 65.7 percent. Nevada spent about \$7,500 per-pupil in 1997, adjusted for inflation. In 2007, Nevada's graduation rate was 41.8 percent and Nevada had increased per-pupil funding to \$8,682. So we spent over \$1,000 more per-pupil, inflation adjusted, and our graduation rate plummeted. These numbers are from the Department of Education, available to anyone on a federal Website.

Instead of being accountable for spending more and attaining worse results, the educational establishment, led by the teacher union, not teachers, an important distinction, tries to distract parents, teachers and lawmakers by saying that Nevada ranks low when it comes to education funding. This, however, is simply a way to distract you from asking the question you would ask your mechanic, plumber or barber if they did a lousy job and tripled their price: "Excuse me, before you tell me you need more money, where is the accountability for the money we have already spent?"

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The alternative and solution is substantive reform, including parental choice, which currently benefits students in 16 states. Some of the most dramatic gains have come in Florida, where Hispanic, African-American and low-income students are reading 2.5 grade levels higher than they were 12 years ago, when then-governor Jeb Bush enacted significant education reforms.

CHAIR HORSFORD:

Can you provide your testimony and research to our staff? I would also like to clarify, that figure does includes capital costs, correct?

MR. JOECKS:

Yes, I will provide my testimony ([Exhibit K](#)) and research ([Exhibit L](#)) to your staff for the record.

My figure does not include capital costs, just local and state funding.

CHAIR HORSFORD:

Local funding, including capital funds?

MR. JOECKS:

Not to my knowledge. I have it sourced in my documents so you can look up where I am getting these figures.

RICK KORBEL:

I have submitted a written copy of my testimony ([Exhibit M](#)) for the record, but I would like to make a few remarks. I support Governor Sandoval's budget. The tide of economic prosperity has left us. The decline has left businesses barely staying afloat. At the same time, the efforts of our schools have given us a graduation rate somewhere between 40 percent and 50 percent. In the classroom, that is considered a failure.

The system of education is broken. Public schools are not preparing our kids for college or the workforce. Throwing more money at it is not going to solve our problems. Putting more tax dollars in a broken system is akin to putting more gas in a car with a blown motor: it simply will not work.

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There needs to be a complete overhaul of the education system. Step one is more positive parental involvement. Schools cannot replace parental responsibilities. Step two, students with repeated discipline issues need to be removed from mainstream schools where they hinder other students. Neither problem would be solved by raising taxes.

The most effective way of getting parents engaged in the outcome of their child's education is to have them invest in it. I am suggesting parents need to take money out of their pockets every month to support their child's education. When I asked parents about contributing even a small amount of money for their child's education, many said, "If I have to pay for school, I want better results." Is that not what we are asking for, better results from our schools?

I know money is tight for all of us. That is why I am against raising taxes. As a community working together, we can improve education and create better futures for our children and our community. The current budget reduction comes to about \$2 per day per student. I challenge all of us who can afford to invest the \$60 per month per student to do so. And for those of us who cannot, please invest what you can every month, even if it is just one dollar per month. Every dollar will make a difference in your child's education.

The system to handle donations is already in place with the Public Education Foundation. In this room tonight are the most vocal advocates for raising money for public education. If you so strongly believe in raising money, please donate to the Public Education Foundation now.

It is time for parents to support teachers and schools. If they do that, businesses will follow. Parents and businesses need to show leadership, and together we can bring this together.

WADE POULSEN (Trustee, Lincoln County School District):

Lincoln County School District has given plenty of leaders to the Las Vegas area and to the State of Nevada. The federal government and the Bureau of Land Management owns 97.2 percent of Lincoln County. Only 2.8 percent of our land can be taxed for property taxes. The State currently gives Lincoln County School District 83 percent of its current funding. Lincoln County has had several issues trying to balance its budget. Over the last two and one-half years, we

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have cut 26.1 percent of our total budget. Lincoln County School District has two high schools, two middle schools and four elementary schools in four different communities. These communities are separated by more than 90 miles. Some students ride the bus up to 120 miles a day. School populations range from 53 students to 210 students. We are plagued by many common, rural, frontier county problems. Because of an overall low, socioeconomic status; high unemployment rates and high transiency rates; many of our students are faced with future challenges. Community populations range from affluent business people to welfare recipients with nothing. The educational base, although increasing, is low. We also face many problems because of our remote location. We have ancient buildings and facilities, low funding, limited supplies and few resources. Our diversity in size, school structure and community makeup produces a wide variety of needs.

One of the things we have done to reduce our budget and costs is to establish a district-wide, four day school week system. Lincoln County School District has not found a single school to be in need of improvement since No Child Left Behind was enacted. One of our eight public schools, a middle school, was designated as high achieving for the 2009-2010 school year. Another school, Caliente Elementary School, was awarded blue ribbon status and athletes from both of our public high schools rank amongst the top of the State when ranked on academic achievements. We have been extremely successful in our school system. Until last year, we were one of the few remaining school districts to avoid the dreaded watch list. Even last year, it was only one subpopulation that was our undoing. Our staff prides themselves on the quality of their work. If you were to take the time, you would see that they do indeed produce the highest quality of work with the bare minimum of men, women, power and tools. We have been very successful in Lincoln County School District in reducing our budget. However, we are at the breaking point. If we are to be reduced by 10 percent, it could be devastating to our schools and to the quality of teaching we are able to do in Lincoln County.

KAREN EGGER:

I am the school librarian at Fay Herron Elementary School and I am also a member of the CCSD support cadre for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certified teacher candidates. I ask you today to please think deeply about these cuts to education. College graduates are not entering the

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teaching profession anymore because they can make more money doing other things. The class behaviors of some of our students have discouraged many career-minded teachers to seek other employment. We are a minority majority district, with a huge number of English language learners. Making class sizes larger is only going to silence their voices.

Quality teachers do not just work their required hours. They work after school, evenings and weekends tutoring, encouraging and scoring proficiency exams for students throughout the State of Nevada. Additionally, they seek professional avenues that will take their skills beyond those of a college graduate to the National Board Certification level in order to become accomplished teachers, who, research has shown, impact student learning.

We are fortunate in this State that National Board Certified teachers are paid a premium and we hope that this will not be taken away. In order to encourage more teachers to come to the State of Nevada, we need to be able to pay them. I ask you now to keep that in mind.

CHAIR HORSFORD:

The National Board Certification of teachers and counselors came up in committee today and I suggest that you continue to follow that legislation. The Board Certification program is on the list of things to be put into a block grant and have its funding reduced. If that happens, it will be up to each district to determine whether they want to continue the pay incentive for National Board Certification.

BETSY GILES:

I have been teaching in CCSD for 30 years. I teach first grade at Sandy Searles Miller IB World School and I am a National Board Certified teacher. I am here as the voice for the 400 Board Certified teachers in Nevada. Research has proven the impact of having an accomplished teacher in a classroom. With these teachers, test scores are higher and students make gains of more than a half a school year over their peers. In Clark County, we have had the pleasure of having additional funding for National Board Certification and we would like to thank the State for that funding. It is important that we keep this in mind and consider it in reference to our decisions for programs like Race to the Top, Pay for Performance and Great Teachers, Great Leaders. All the states

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across the Country that have received Race to the Top funds have included National Board Certified teachers in their programs. In Clark County, we have 237 National Board teachers and we invite you to our classrooms. We would love to be a part of your conversation about what good teaching looks like. Thank you for your support in the past and we hope we get to enjoy it again in the future.

BELINDA "BO" YEALY:

I am a mother, grandmother and a CCSD special education school bus driver. I want to discuss how the decisions you make affect me and my family, and what I believe should happen. Less money in my household means less money spent on goods and services in southern Nevada, so there is less to go around paying for important services to those who need them. This could even include me, my grown-up children, my under-18 child and my grandson. Everyone still lives with me and they will continue to live with me if they cannot afford to live on their own.

We in K-12 education have had less money given to us by the Legislature for raises, health insurance, PERS and other things than all other government entities over the 30 years that I have worked here. At the most, we have seen a 6 percent raise over a two year period that was bargained for cost-of-living increases. Most of the time, we have only seen raises of 1 percent or 2 percent.

My health insurance makes it possible for me to receive care when everyone's children bring whatever illness to me at my job. Many times, we are not even aware of the infections children have. Parents send their children to school because that is where they are supposed to be, often no matter how sick the child is. Taking away or decreasing my health insurance would put more kids at risk, because if I contracted something that I could not treat without health insurance, I would spread the illness myself. There are also repetitive injuries to talk about, such as neck, shoulders, back and knees from the job itself.

I have been a CCSD school bus driver for 30 years. For two years of that I was a substitute. I show 27.32 years on the PERS roll. We have paid our own contributions as we have been told that they are taking percentages away from raises we have been granted by the Legislature. With our raises over the years being so small, any employee-required increase in PERS contributions would

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mean less money in my household. Right now, I do not even know how long I will have to do my job just to get my 30 years in PERS to retire. I love my job, but 30 years is a long time to stay focused if I am going to always have to worry about my family's bottom line.

We should also recognize the quality of teachers. If we offer them nothing but anguish, that is what you get in return. It also affects the quality of the workforce because education will be seriously lacking.

Banks are just sitting on tax dollars with the large number of foreclosures. Banks are not paying the taxes on those homes. That is less money coming into our economy. Why do banks not pay? Why are big businesses coming into Nevada not paying their fair share to education or other services when they need a quality workforce to make money? They pay taxes in every other state in the Nation, so why not here as well? We need to stop being afraid and make them pay for a change. Property owners have paid forever because of this belief that everyone needs to pay. We also need a lottery. People like to spend a little money for something like lottery tickets. Let the casinos run a lottery. We also need new jobs in renewable energy and to provide training for these new industries. I have submitted the rest of my testimony in writing ([Exhibit N](#)).

LAURIANN BRADFORD:

I have lived in southern Nevada since 1986. My children have attended public school, magnet school, charter school, home school and even private school. I have spent thousands of dollars of my own money on education. It is incredibly valuable to me and my family. I am currently a student at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). I have a son who is attending Nevada State College to become a teacher and I have another child who will be applying to UNLV. We need education to improve the quality of life in Nevada. Businesses do not want to come here if they cannot have an educated workforce and places for their own children to be educated. I realize that there is a very real and serious budget crisis. People are emotional and scared, and that does not make for good dialogue. I believe that there are always creative solutions to problems. We have very smart people in Nevada. Why are we not creating think tanks and brainstorming sessions to find creative solutions? Money thrown at a problem is not necessarily the best solution, either.

A few years ago, CCSD was No. 1 in water use. The water bill does not contribute to the education of our children. We could seriously reduce that water bill. We should be smart about these things. We do not need to have water running for twenty minutes at a time with water running down the street. Where is the money going? I would like to see transparency not only in the school budget, but the State budget as well. We need accountability and we need to have the opportunity to come together as a community and listen to all kinds of suggestions and ideas. We do not have to agree, but we have to listen and come up with new, creative solutions.

ERIC LABAR:

I have lived in Henderson for almost 25 years and I have a daughter in kindergarten this year. We all know that Nevada's pockets are empty. There are only a couple of choices in a situation like this. First, you can make bigger pockets, which is not feasible for a lot of us. Second, you can optimize, which should be done whether there is money in your pocket or not. Third, you can make cuts which, quite frankly, we have already done. Finally, you can find more pockets. There are a lot of pockets in the private sector. There are a lot of companies in Nevada. Today's students are tomorrow's employees.

As a parent, I would not be offended to see a school bus with a sign on it saying "Target supports the CCSD, its teachers and staff." I would not be upset if I flipped over my daughter's homework and saw a coupon for the latest Pixar movie. There is money out there and it does not have to all come from the State. We need creative ways for that money to pay for our children's education.

Right now, I work for a local home security company. I do not sell the security system, but if I do, I get paid a commission. I am willing to give 75 percent of my commission to the school and department of the customer's choice. I challenge any company and any business owner to start similar programs. Education is everyone's responsibility, not just the State's.

DONNY GRAYMAN:

I am here to represent my two children. My son is about to graduate high school and my other child will start school next year. I do not support education budget cuts. I know there is a big crowd here. I know everyone is concerned and we

know what the issues are. We are charging you, our elected officials, to do the right thing. I know the job and task is tough to do, but I think the message is clear that we do not want anything taken away from our children. The bottom line is that we do not want to take away anything from our kids. We want our children to have the best and whatever we need to do to make that happen will be the best thing for everyone.

PATRICK GIBBONS:

I am an independent researcher and consultant. I used to be a history and special education teacher in Virginia. There has been a lot of talk in Nevada about the size of the budget cuts and a lot of hyperbole that has gone along with it. While the cuts are very large, about \$275 million, it only represents 6.5 percent of CCSD's operating expenditures for the next biennium. This is manageable if it comes down to the inability of Nevada to get more revenue. The correlation between student achievement and spending has been growing weaker every year and in some instances it is nonexistent. For example, the state of Montana lost an adequacy lawsuit against a union a few years ago and it dramatically increased per-pupil spending. Montana has not seen an ounce of student achievement. The country of Estonia spends as much money to graduate a student who is better educated in math and science than we do to get a student through the fifth grade. We need to stop focusing on how much we spend and start focusing on how effectively we spend the resources we already have. Why are we talking about hiring 3,800 teachers when teachers make up less than one-half of the employees in the school district? Why are we talking about devastating budget cuts, when less than 50 cents of every dollar spent on education in Nevada goes to teachers, school supplies and textbooks? We need education reform. It is not the teachers' fault. It is not the parents' fault. It is not the administrators' fault. We need fundamental reform and I know you are going to be working on that this Session. Please give parents the right to choose their own schools. Stop focusing on zoning kids based on how much house their parents can afford. Give principals the ability to decide how to use their resources, rather than central office bureaucrats. Give teachers the ability to innovate and control their own classrooms.

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DIKKA M. RIAN:

I have been an elementary school art teacher in CCSD for 22 years. I am also a National Board Certified teacher, which means that my teaching practice has met a high and rigorous standard. I coach other teachers who go through the process to become better teachers. I am here tonight to ask you to preserve our K-12 visual arts programs. Not for me, because if I am laid off, I will just take an early retirement. I will take my money and my skills to another state. I am asking you to preserve the visual arts programs for our students because they teach our children:

- To think critically
- To solve problems creatively
- To collaborate
- To make and support judgments with information and observation
- To investigate ideas that have mattered to people of all cultures and times
- To examine and understand diverse viewpoints
- To respect people of different cultures
- To communicate both verbally and nonverbally

These are twenty-first century work skills and skills that contribute to leading a rich and satisfying life. The arts also balance our obsession with test taking and the emphasis that has students engaged in regurgitation of rote learning. We all know that life is not a multiple choice test. Our students need the skills that the visual arts teach. I have submitted the rest of my written testimony ([Exhibit O](#)) for the record.

KRISTINA INTINARELLI:

I am a liberal arts student at CSN, Henderson Campus, and I am also an employee at CSN, Henderson. I am also a taxpayer and a voter, so this issue means a lot to me. I would like to read you a selection from a textbook from an essay that we recently studied in my English literature class that I believe is very relevant. You should pay attention.

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which

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the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

When I was a little kid, my mom told me I could be anything. I have always loved reading and American literature, and I have always wanted to be a teacher at the higher education level. This means that I have to go to an awful lot of school. I have to get a Ph.D. to be competitive at any university.

That being said, we moved to Las Vegas when I was ten years old and I got stuck in this educational system. I tried to learn as much as I possibly could. But I see a city, which you represent, that puts importance on industries that have no interest in higher education. I have seen girls from my high school classes forced to work in strip clubs and as cocktail lounge waitresses. I see kids in my college classes selling drugs to make tuition money. I have friends who have given up their education in favor of \$40,000 a year salaries working at blackjack tables. I see posted signs, magazines and city newspapers advertising naked women for all who wish to be serviced by them. What this industry tells me as a future educator of your grandchildren means little. It means absolutely nothing to you sitting up there at this table today.

You expect me, as a female of Las Vegas, to serve you a drink, charge you \$50 for a lap dance or sell my body for whatever it is that allows me to escape the misery that is my uneducated life. I am sorry, but this is the city that I see if our educational opportunities are taken away from us. As young people in this City, we are very influenced by what is around us. Please remember what you put on those billboards before you take away my educational rights.

TYLER DAVIS:

I am a student at the CSN Henderson campus and I am working on my associate's of science degree. Education has always been an important thing to me. I was homeschooled from fifth grade through high school because we felt that the education I was receiving in public school did not fit our standards. Through this, I have learned that education is not a piece of paper or a certificate with a stamp on it saying what I did in school.

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I agree with Dr. John G. Hibben, the former president of Princeton University, when he said, "Education is the ability to meet life's situations."

We know our economy is at rock bottom compared to all the other states. I believe that is directly linked to our education system. Why are our economy and our school system both at the bottom? If our education system stays at the bottom, so will our economy. If we continue to cut education and not place the proper value upon it, our economy will continue to slide.

My friend has a quote on the back of his business card. It reads, "In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. And we will understand only what we are taught." This quote shows that in the end, what we end up with depends on our education. For our future, I hope our education can improve rather than continue to be cut, no matter what we must do to save it.

I would like to make one more suggestion to you. I am sure that everyone on this stage has had some type of formal education. Think about what life would be like if you had not received that formal education, if people had not thought and cared about your education when you were a child. Where would you be without your education?

AMANDA KETZENBERGER:

Martin Luther King, Jr. and I may not look like we have very much in common, but in the very cores of our souls, we both have dreams. I am a member of the class of 2002 from Silverado High School. I graduated from CSN, Henderson, and I was a Senator for Associated Students of the College of Southern Nevada. My dream is that Las Vegas will return to the city I grew up in. It will be a city where my second-grade teacher received the National Teacher of the Year Award and my principal, Dr. Carolyn Reedom, has dedicated her entire life to education. When I grew up, there was a theme park or a rollercoaster in nearly every casino. There was a water park on the Strip that I could hang out at all day. Children were important in this town.

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When I graduated from Silverado, houses cost about \$400,000 and I went into construction. We all know what happened to construction, so I had to make the choice of going into cocktailing and making good money or did I want to be in a better position where I could not have everything taken away from me again? I made the decision to go back and get my business degree at UNLV. I am proud to have both President Smatresk and Chancellor Klaich fighting for our opportunities. My concern, however, is for the teachers today. I am not an education major.

I want to know why we are paying all these administrators instead of our teachers when we have computers that do every office thing we could possibly imagine. For example, the registration office at UNLV is filled with employees, when students are required to register online. Why do we have a whole office full of people doing registration?

In all the things that I am learning at UNLV, I am learning to be proactive rather than reactive. I am not seeing anyone with any power coming up with any solutions and if they do, they are not doing anything about it, obviously. We have to stop nipping at things before they even begin and allow things to start growing again. Social services are important, but they will always be an expense and they do not usually yield any return on their investments. Learning is the key to living a full, high quality life. The longer we procrastinate making an investment into education, the more we will deteriorate as a society. This is not anything profound, we just need to use our technology and pay our teachers, rather than our administrators. We need to be proactive rather than reactive, by learning instead of dying.

JEAN MELBY-MAUER:

I am an English Language Learning (ELL) specialist at Valley High School. I am the only person to speak tonight for the most vulnerable population within the school district. I am at a school that has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the last three years in a row. In 2008-2009, we were a high achieving, excelling, turnaround school. The limited English proficiency population at Valley High School has achieved test scores that are almost beyond belief. This success is due to the ELL program we have developed and the dedication of my teachers.

I look at Governor Sandoval's budget and I wonder what planet he is on. I challenge him to come out to Valley High School and see the population that we have and to see what we have done. He should ask us to do the same with the limited resources he is suggesting that we should have. We have achieved the unbelievable at an inner-city school. More than two-thirds of my student population has a second language background. I oversee a program for almost 700 students. My teachers have brought African refugees from nonreaders to the eighth grade in one year.

Not every child from that population, or my student population, can achieve this. I want you to put yourself in the place of a teacher in a classroom with 50 students who do not speak English. I want to ask you how would a teacher in that situation possibly achieve what my teachers have achieved? It is absolutely not possible.

Governor Sandoval, what planet are you on? Come out to our schools!

RHONDA COHEN:

I am a fourth-grade teacher and I have been in CCSD for 24 years. I came into this profession as a single parent to support my daughter and myself. I had friends who were teachers and I valued what they did. I also valued my daughter's teachers. I thought they were amazing, so I decided to become a teacher. I was told over and over what I was getting into and I knew I would not become rich. But after 24 years, I would like to think that I could make enough money to pay my own way and I would like to think that the other teachers I work with could do the same. Otherwise, we are going to become another statistic like the other 20 percent or 25 percent of the statistics in this town.

I was told all along when I made a small wage not to worry about it. I just needed to get a better education, a master's degree, a specialist's degree, because the more you learn, the better you will be able to instill in students that they should be lifelong learners. I listened to the Governor's speech and he tells me that there is no real correlation between higher education and being a better teacher. I wish he had told me that before I spent thousands of dollars on educating myself. I would not have done it.

That being said, I am not going to pick on one business or one group to say we need to raise their taxes. I think we just need to look at more creative ways to find sources of revenue. My daughter is a product of CCSD and if you get rid of sports, music, GATE, forensics and IB, you will not have your kids competing anywhere because the best colleges look a lot further than just test scores. We need well-rounded students and if we get rid of those programs, our kids will not even have a chance to compete.

ANN MOODY:

I have resided in Las Vegas since 1993. I have been a CCSD teacher for over 16 years and I have 2 children enrolled in our public school system. I have taught in the inner city, in the suburbs and in at-risk schools. Currently, I teach in a school considered at-risk, where 45 percent of our students are also ELL. Based on my experience and education, I have real concerns about possibly eliminating all day kindergarten, increasing class size and cutting the GATE program from the Nevada education budget.

First, all day kindergarten helps students from at-risk schools catch up with their suburban peers, many of whom had preschool or who were read to regularly at home by parents who were fluent in English. From classes in my master's program in Special Education, Early Childhood Development and Reading, I learned that it takes a minimum of three to five years for ELL students to read, write and speak English fluently. Also, most families of at-risk students do not have the money to send their children to preschool programs that could better prepare them for grade school. There are numerous respected research studies that indicate the most important years for cognitive and motor development in children is from birth to three years, and then from three to six years. The students who enter at-risk schools without preschool or who have parents who do not read to them, are already behind their classmates who have this advantage.

The second point I would like to make is that smaller class size really does make a difference. The research on smaller class size as a benefit is compelling and

convincing. Most people are aware that smaller class sizes aid students in raising their test scores for a period of time. But smaller class sizes assist at-risk students not only in school, but also into adulthood. Recently, researchers in Tennessee discovered that once these at-risk students became adults, they were more likely to go to college, have a savings plan for retirement and earn more money than their other peers who did not experience smaller classes. One interesting fact about the Tennessee project is that it was dismissed after five years when the students' test scores did not reflect greater strengths in growth and learning. This revisited and updated research, which was done in August of 2010, showed that these students continued to grow and learn, even though a test score did not show it.

I have submitted the remainder of my testimony ([Exhibit P](#)) in writing for the record.

DORA BARNUM:

I am the backbone of the school district. I am a special education bus driver. How many parents do not take their kids to school? Busing is a free service. It is a privilege.

I went to high school in Las Vegas and I graduated 35 years ago. My children went to school in Las Vegas and now my grandchildren are going to school in Las Vegas. I heard on the news the other day that school police are getting back pay from 2008 and 2009 for an economy raise and for a cost-of-living raise. I did not get that raise. I have been doing my job for eight years, but I did not get a raise. I also heard on the news last night that school police are getting new guns and new uniforms. Something is wrong with this.

I took a \$20,000 a year pay cut when my time was cut from an 11-month job to a 9-month job. What kind of cut did you take, Dr. Jones? I would have done your job for just \$100,000.

Secondly, we have hiring freezes in the District. No one is hiring. But recently, four of my supervisor's supervisors are making more money. What are they

doing? Disciplining us. You drive for six-hours-a-day and then you tell me how you feel. People cut us off because they do not want to be behind you. They want to make a right-hand turn. I am not going to hit my brakes because I have precious cargo. My students are in car seats and seat belts. How many times do I see drivers talking on their cell phones? I wish I could write them a ticket. They go through my stop sign, even though many of the drivers have kids of their own in their car without car seats or seatbelts. Something is wrong here.

Field trips were taken away from us because of budget cuts. That is four hours out of my week that were taken away from me. Recently, they sent out a message over our radio saying that anyone who wants to do field trips can come up and sign up, but these sign-ups go by seniority. What is wrong with this picture? You need to know what is going on.

ALLEN ROSOFF:

I would like to emphasize what you have already heard tonight. There is a lack of correlation between throwing a lot of money at the education system and the results. My only question is, when are we going to stop the fear factor fallacy? Why is it that the first thing we cut is the teachers? Why is it that we do not cut the tremendously top-heavy, bloated administration? Leave the teachers alone.

ROBERT HOLLOWOOD:

I am a teacher at Stanton Elementary School. We are an empowerment school. Before becoming an empowerment school, we made our AYP goal every year. This year, under empowerment, we became a high achieving school again. Whatever that means.

When arriving at school this morning, I was confronted with a survey ([Exhibit D](#)) from the new Superintendent, Dr. Jones. This survey proposed slashing everything in the district from stem to stern. Each item came with a price tag and we were asked to submit our survey with a total dollar figure of cuts to

match the amount of cuts proposed by the Governor. The most startling thing about the survey was that it required selecting and adding almost everything on the list to get to the figure that the Governor's budget has proposed to cut. Although the Superintendent is new, the survey was not. It is almost the exact same survey that we saw during the 2003 Legislative Session.

This problem is not new, either. We have a 50-year-old tax structure that has failed to fund our education system properly. We have increased education spending exponentially during a time when our population was exploding. What is particularly telling about those figures is that our per-pupil spending really never broke out of the bottom of the pack. Currently, it looks like we are in a race toward the bottom.

America has stopped listening to its experts. Educators like myself and the others in this room are the experts on education. Some here have talked about test scores. The Nation has compared poorly with other countries in testing since the 1950s, yet our education system continues to turn out the most creative and innovate people in the world. We are past the time when testing to see who can be the best standardized test taker in the room is what we should be looking for. We need to move away from the test booklet and the rote memorization that was needed when information was scarce. This is no longer the case.

J.E. "ED" SMALLEY:

I am here to speak against the Koch-brothers sponsored madness that is sweeping the Nation and Nevada. I would like to thank the man from the Nevada Policy Research Institute, who brought his figures for us. It brings to mind the old Will Rogers saying, "Figures don't lie, but ain't it funny how liars always seem to have figures." Cut spending, is that Nevada's Governor's idea of leadership? Who benefits from these cuts? As those of us who have lived in other states can attest, as Nevadans we do not pay very much in taxes. I am not talking about taxes for working people. Why are all these people in Nevada? They are here because corporations brought them here to work. Why do corporations not kick in and pay taxes, like they do in 47 other states? The argument against these taxes is that we do not want big government. Anyone ask themselves, without government, who is in charge? The corporations, that is who would be in charge, and they will give you a good deal, will they not?

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CHAIR HORSFORD:

We have also received written testimony from Martin Koppel ([Exhibit Q](#)), Anthony Wright ([Exhibit R](#)), Yvonne Wood-Antonuccio ([Exhibit S](#)), Theresa Clark ([Exhibit T](#)), Sam Savalli ([Exhibit U](#)), Meryl Grant ([Exhibit V](#)), Peggy Rasch ([Exhibit W](#)), Marisa Kagan ([Exhibit X](#)), Linda Turner ([Exhibit Y](#)), Yvonne Morton ([Exhibit Z](#)), Alison J. Turner ([Exhibit AA](#)). There being no further business, this meeting is adjourned at 7:17 pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Marian Williams,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Steven A. Horsford, Chair

DATE: _____

Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, Chair

DATE: _____

<u>EXHIBITS</u>			
Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
	C	Superintendent Dwight Jones	CCSD Presentation
	D	Jeff Weiler	Budget Survey
	E	Colleen Case	Testimony
	F	Zhan Okuda-Lim	Testimony
	G	Michelle Knopp	Student Quotes
	H	Debra Cooley	TLC Sales Flier
	I	Rachel Spilsbury	Education Statistics
	J	Bernava Johnson	Testimony
	K	Victor Joecks	Testimony
	L	Victor Joecks	Research
	M	Rick Korb	Testimony
	N	Belinda "Bo" Yealy	Testimony
	O	Dikka M. Rian	Testimony
	P	Ann Moody	Testimony
	Q	Martin Koppel	Written Testimony
	R	Anthony Wright	Written Testimony
	S	Yvonne Wood-Antonuccio	Written Testimony
	T	Theresa Clark	Written Testimony
	U	Sam Savalli	Written Testimony
	V	Meryl Grant	Written Testimony
	W	Peggy Rasch	Written Testimony
	X	Marisa Kagan	Written Testimony
	Y	Linda Turner	Written Testimony
	Z	Yvonne Morton	Written Testimony
	AA	Alison J. Turner	Written Testimony