

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

**Seventy-Eighth Session
May 26, 2015**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Melissa Woodbury at 3:05 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26, 2015, in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/78th2015. In addition, copies of the audio or video of the meeting may be purchased, for personal use only, through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775-684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury, Chair
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson
Assemblywoman Victoria A. Dooling
Assemblyman Chris Edwards
Assemblyman Edgar Flores
Assemblyman David M. Gardner
Assemblywoman Amber Joiner
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford
Assemblywoman Shelly M. Shelton
Assemblywoman Heidi Swank

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblyman Derek Armstrong (excused)
Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz (excused)
Assemblyman Pat Hickey (excused)



GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Ben Kieckhefer, Senate District No. 16
Senator Ruben J. Kihuen, Senate District No. 10

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

H. Pepper Sturm, Committee Policy Analyst
Kristin Rossiter, Committee Policy Analyst
Karly O'Krent, Committee Counsel
Sharon McCallen, Committee Secretary
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Crystal Abba, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Nevada
System of Higher Education
Christopher Jones, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
William McCurdy II, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Antonio Gonzalez, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Kyle Dalpe, Associate Dean/Chief of Staff, President's Office, Truckee
Meadows Community College
Justin Harrison, Director of Government Affairs, Las Vegas Metro
Chamber of Commerce
K.C. Brekken, Executive Director, Public Affairs & Government Relations,
College of Southern Nevada,
Luis Valera, Vice President for Government Affairs, Diversity, and
Compliance, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Randy Robison, Member, Institutional Advisory Board, College of
Southern Nevada

Chair Woodbury:

[Roll was taken. Committee protocol and rules were explained.] I will open the hearing with Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint).

Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint): Creates the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program. (BDR 34-216)

Senator Ben Kieckhefer, Senate District No. 16:

I am very proud to be here with this bill. This is going to be one of the most important pieces of legislation we have passed this legislative session.

Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint) was created for the sole purpose of helping Nevadans attend and graduate from college. I have always believed that Nevada's colleges are of tremendous value. Based on student registration fees alone, the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) is one of the most reasonable in the nation. I do not believe that at this point that paints the whole picture.

When you look at the total cost of attendance—or how much it actually costs for a student to go to college full-time—as a percentage of median household income, Nevada has the least affordable college system in the country. In 2012, it took 18.9 percent of the median family income to attend a community college full-time in Nevada, the highest percentage of any state in the nation. The national average was 13.5 percent and in other western states like Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and New Mexico, it was much closer to 10 percent. As you move down the income ladder, that disparity gets worse. For the poorest 20 percent of Nevadans, it requires 62.4 percent of family income to attend college full-time. While Nevada's registration fees may be a great value as compared to other states, Nevada's colleges simply remain unaffordable for many students, particularly those from first-generation and low-income families.

This bill is an effort to address that gap by creating a state-funded, need-based scholarship program for Nevada students enrolled in community colleges or Nevada State College.

The bill creates the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program, which will be administered by the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada. To be eligible for a grant, an individual must be a degree-seeking, full-time student who is a bona fide resident of the state and has prepared to enroll in college-level courses. This money cannot be spent on remediation.

Ms. Abba will provide additional details on how the grant is calculated. I believe it is important to note that state money will be awarded only after considering other types of financial aid, the family's ability to pay, and to the largest extent, the student's share and responsibility so that everyone has something invested. Along with creating the program, the bill originally appropriated \$10 million over the biennium to support the program. That is truly a drop in the bucket of what is needed. I am currently very hopeful that we will be able to see half of that amount included in the Appropriations Act, a work in progress that has not been introduced yet. Starting this program and ensuring that we help these students close that gap to be able to attend college full-time will generate the result that we all want to see—which is graduation. That graduation rate is what determines their success on a go-forward basis.

Senator Ruben J. Kihuen, Senate District No. 10:

Last year, Senator Kieckhefer and I hosted the first ever Nevada College Affordability Summit at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). We brought together higher education leaders, faculty, staff, and students to discuss some of the solutions to put more students through college and to make sure they are graduating and that they have all of the tools possible. This bill stemmed from that conversation we had at UNLV.

As Senator Kieckhefer alluded to, Nevada is one of the only states in the country that does not have a need-based grant for college students. As we all know, creating a clear path to the middle class and ensuring our state's economic prosperity and economic diversification means opening the doors to higher education to more Nevadans.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, today in the United States, three-quarters of the fastest-growing occupations require education and training beyond a high school diploma. Yet nearly half of the students who will begin college in this country do not finish within six years. Tuition continues to rise, putting college out of reach for the very families that it needs to reach.

Over the past three decades, average tuition at a public four-year college has increased by more than 250 percent. A college credential remains an excellent investment, but the average borrower now graduates with \$30,000 in debt. Student loan default rates are rising by the day. Of those who enter college, too many leave without earning a degree. That is a severe problem in low-income communities where a young person's chance of graduating from high school and entering and completing college is only about 9 percent. Thirty-eight percent of Nevada families are low-income working families. Of this population, 47.8 percent are low-income minority working families. These are the very families that will benefit from Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint) and can have an affordable path to a college education. The lack of affordability also means that Nevada's workforce is still not prepared for the demands of our current and future employers.

Some statistics that you have heard before are that by 2020, 58 percent of the jobs in Nevada will require, at least, a career certificate or college degree. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 30 percent of Nevada's adults ages 25 to 34 have an associate's degree or higher. Again, we are 50th in the nation. The national average is 41 percent.

As we all know, economic diversification has been and will continue to be one of our state's top priorities moving forward, but the reality is that we will not have a diversified economy without a well-educated and well-trained workforce.

We must make an investment in our students today to make sure we have a prosperous economy in the future. Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint) will give a greater opportunity to low-income students to pursue and complete college, giving them the opportunity to achieve the American dream and help them continue to expand our middle class.

Crystal Abba, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education:

Without trying to sound melodramatic, Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint) is absolutely a game changer for students of need. I will be going over the mechanics of how the program will work because it is not necessarily intuitive. We have submitted three items for the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS). There is a letter of support from Daniel J. Klaich, Chancellor, Nevada System of Higher Education and the presidents of Nevada State College and the community colleges indicating their support for the measure ([Exhibit C](#)) and a report from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) ([Exhibit D](#)) that was discussed in detail at the Nevada College Affordability Summit at UNLV. This is where the shared responsibility model comes from. It is a nationally recognized model and has been in place in Oregon for several years and has shown great success.

There is also a set of slides ([Exhibit E](#)). I will only go over the first three slides because the last five you have seen before. The last five say what we have been indicating this session—students who take more credits are more likely to graduate. We also have a severe problem of affordability in our state, particularly for students from low-income families based on the total cost of attendance. That includes base registration fees and room and board. Students are unable to afford to go to our institutions, which is why when you look at the participation rate of students from low-income families in our state, it is one of the lowest in the nation. That is what we are trying to combat with S.B. 227 (R2).

On page 1 of the slide handout ([Exhibit E](#)), you will see a graphic that shows the relative portions of the total cost of attendance and how it would be shared under this model. This is not your typical scholarship. Students will not walk away with a flat grant amount. Unlike the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship that is based on a pure credit amount, this is based on a formula where it assumes that the state, the family, the federal government, and the student share in the student's cost of going to school. When you look at the graph, you will see that the student portion is the greatest portion. That is because it is assumed that the student, being the primary beneficiary of an education, should have the most skin in the game.

Page 2 ([Exhibit E](#)) shows what Senator Kieckhefer has already gone through with the eligibility requirements, which are also found in section 3 of the bill. You have to be enrolled full-time, you have to be in a degree or certificate program, and you have to be college-ready. If you place into a remedial course, you will not be eligible for this award. You have to be a resident of Nevada, and you have to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). That is critical because without a completed FAFSA, there is no way of knowing what the expected family contribution is.

Page 3 ([Exhibit E](#)) provides several examples so you can see how the award would vary based on the family income level. We start with an annual cost of education. That cost of education is calculated by the institutions pursuant to the regulations that are in place by the federal government. They calculate various costs of attendance. There is a cost of attendance for living on campus, living off campus, and for living with your family. For the example we have used on page 3, the cost of education is for those students who have chosen to live off campus. The average across the community colleges and Nevada State College is approximately \$18,000. From that we would subtract the student contribution that is based on an expectation that they would work. In this case, you will note in the footnote that the calculation is for the student to come up with \$8,000; we are expecting that student to work 15 hours during the semester and full-time during the summer. We understand that you cannot get a job and say that you are going to work part-time here and there. The calculation is to just come up with that figure.

The student contribution can be covered in a number of ways. It can be covered through work; student loans, institutional aid, and the Millennium Scholarship would go toward that \$8,000 as well.

The family contribution is what drives the three different examples that we show on page 3. There is one example of a student with no Expected Family Contribution (EFC). These are the poorest of the poor students that are attending our institutions. The center column on page 3 shows a very small EFC of \$4,000, then in the third column, an EFC of \$6,000. Those EFC amounts drive the federal contribution. If you have a zero EFC, the federal contribution, or the amount you would receive in the Pell Grant, is \$5,730. In the first example, a student who comes from a family with a zero EFC, the award under this grant would be \$4,021. You split that over two semesters and you can see that it goes down slightly for the student who has the very small EFC, and a little bit more for the student who has the small EFC. What that means for the total amount the student walks away with shown in the first example, they will walk away with \$5,730 from the Pell Grant, \$4,021 from the Silver State Opportunity Grant, and if they receive the

Millennium Scholarship or other forms of private or institutional aid, they could walk away with over \$10,000. Why we are at the 15-credit requirement is because the expectation is with that critical mass of funds, that student would be able to attend full-time. The entire purpose of this is to give students enough money so they can concentrate on their studies and attend full-time, and avoid going part-time and having to work full-time.

Senator Kieckhefer:

I want to reiterate Ms. Abba's point that this is an effort to bridge that gap for certain students. We know this is not a panacea; this grant amount would not allow every student to attend full-time and not have to work full-time. There is nothing that would prevent or preclude a student from working more than the amount that is outlined based on these assumptions. The idea is to try to fill that gap to ensure that they can attend full-time because it has such a dramatic effect on graduation rates. The effort is to get them in, get them out, get them working, and on with their lives. This will accomplish that for many students who are in the most need.

Senator Kihuen:

There are a lot of students who have received the Millennium Scholarship or a Pell Grant. The Silver State Opportunity Grant will be the gap-filler. There are still many students who are at such a low income that even though they receive the full amounts of the Millennium Scholarship and the Pell Grant, they still cannot afford to pay for their education.

I worked for more than ten years at the College of Southern Nevada and I saw these students every day. It is incomprehensible to me why Nevada has not established a state grant before. This is long overdue. I hope the Committee agrees and that we set this in place.

Assemblywoman Swank:

This is a great program that we need in Nevada. I want to make sure that the intent and who this scholarship is going to serve is clear. I am a little confused on how it is a need-based scholarship. My understanding is that to be a need-based scholarship, you must be considering income. When I look at what the eligibility requirements are in section 3, subsection 4, none of them address low-income situations, so it seems it is much more merit-based. I understand that once you get into the mechanics of it that low-income students get more money out of this because they require more assistance through the process outlined here. I look at the proficiency that students need to be college-ready and my concern is that the highest percentage of our students who are not college-ready are low-income students. If our requirements do not include their income, it is not clear to me that the FAFSA

says they have a certain level of need, but that they also have to be college-ready. I want to be clear who this is serving.

Crystal Abba:

I strongly urge that you read this document because it gets to every issue that you have just inquired about. It is absolutely a need-based grant. While it does not explicitly say that students will be targeted at a certain income level, that is, in effect, what the expected family contribution does. When you complete the FAFSA, you are providing information on your income level, your resources, and your expenses as a family. Let us take the example of the family who is making six-figures per year, owns their house, and only has one child. When they complete the FAFSA, the EFC will be so high that it will basically overwhelm the calculation, so that person would not be eligible versus the person who has a zero EFC or a low EFC. We are targeting individuals who have an EFC between zero and \$8,500. What we have seen from the data is that those are students that we typically refer to as the working poor. They receive a small Pell Grant, which is enough to get them over the edge so that they will go part-time, but the problem is, they go part-time and they do not succeed. You have heard me cite this statistic before. We provide a great deal of aid to students in this state—often coming from the federal government, the Millennium Scholarship, and from institutional aid—that goes to students who do not graduate. That is partly why we are so adamant about the 15 credits. We want to make an investment in students who will graduate.

As for the college-readiness provision, I absolutely understand your concern. This is the first year that we have done a placement versus an enrollment rate and as you know, the placement rate shows that 55 percent of graduating Nevada seniors entering our institutions are placed into remedial courses. That means they are not ready for regular coursework. We are going to focus on the 45 percent who are. This is not just targeting recent high school graduates; when they complete that remedial requirement and they are ready to do college-level coursework, they will become eligible for this program.

Assemblywoman Swank:

Is there a place in the bill where it states that you will be targeting that certain range of students who have that financial need? I did not see that in the bill.

Senator Kieckhefer:

In section 3, subsection 4(e), it talks about completing the FAFSA as a requirement of the eligibility. It is at that point that the family contribution will be determined. If the expected family contribution is high enough to overcome the cost of attendance, then there will be no gap to fill.

Assemblywoman Swank:

In the family I grew up in, the family could contribute part of the tuition and expenses, as opposed to my neighbor down the street whose family could not possibly contribute anything. I am not looking at those huge ranges. I am saying that we are going to have students who will come from working-class families and students who come from the working poor. They are both going to have need and I am not sure that I see in this bill that we are targeting that certain range of intense need that you are talking about.

Senator Kieckhefer:

I think we are. One of the reasons is, aside from the Pell Grant, any additional aid that a student receives is part of the student's contribution and not the family's contribution. The Millennium Scholarship, a Rotary scholarship, or anything else available like that is considered the student's contribution. It is the family contribution that determines the Pell Grant eligibility.

Assemblywoman Swank:

I would like to see it in the bill that we are actually targeting that certain group of students. In section 4, subsection 2, it says you can only use this to pay for the cost of education; does that include books? Sometimes these books are expensive for students.

Crystal Abba:

Remember, the whole calculation is based on the total cost of attendance. That \$18,000 includes everything—transportation costs, books, personal expenses, room and board. When you look at the base registration fee, particularly at the community colleges, they will receive funds that far exceed that. The rest of those funds are essentially intended to support the student so they can go to school full-time.

Assemblywoman Swank:

When I was a professor at UNLV, I had students who were going to school full-time and working full-time. They were not learning the things they should have been learning. There will be the exception, but I would like there to be some limit on the number of hours they can work. I want to ensure that they are spending their time on their studies.

Senator Kieckhefer:

The student contribution is estimated based on a student working 15 hours a week at a minimum-wage job during school, then 30 hours a week in the summers or off sessions. It is not anticipated to be a heavy load but recognizes the student has to have a responsibility in this endeavor.

Senator Kihuen:

We want to make sure we are targeting students who not only have the need but also have the want to complete college and finish on time. Right now, it is taking six or seven years for a student to finish a four-year degree. The longer they are taking to get their education, the more debt they are acquiring. That is why there is the requirement of 15 credits. I was that student working a full-time job and going to school full-time. It was not because I wanted to make extra money; it was to help my family pay the bills. We want to make sure the program is successful and that it is targeting students who are in need and also students who are on track to graduate on time.

Assemblyman Edwards:

Do you have an expected breakdown of those who will attend community colleges versus a four-year college? It does not sound as though there is an age limit. Is it targeted at all to any of the business needs such as engineering or information technology?

Senator Kieckhefer:

It is exclusive to community colleges and Nevada State College. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the University of Nevada, Reno are not included as eligible institutions for purposes of the grant. This is designed for workforce development and as a potential stepping stone to the universities. That issue was raised in the initial hearings in both the Assembly and the Senate as to whether we needed to align the grants with students enrolled in specific courses of study. Ultimately, the decision was made that we wanted to keep it open because the difference between graduating and not graduating, regardless of subject matter, is so significant.

Assemblyman Edwards:

I did not see the actual amount of money that you are looking for in this bill. Can you tell me how many students you expect to serve?

Senator Kieckhefer:

Originally we had put into the bill a \$10 million appropriation over the biennium, \$5 million each year. I am working on trying to get a portion of that into the Appropriations Act.

Crystal Abba:

For \$5 million, if you average it out for a \$4,000 award based on the examples, it is approximately 1,250 students. Those dollars will go very quickly. If you look at current students who are attending the College of Southern Nevada who have a zero EFC and are taking 15 credits, there are more than 540 of them. That number goes up to close to 1,200 when you consider the other community

colleges and Nevada State College. If you look at everyone in the target EFC range of zero to \$8,500, it is more like 4,000. We are not going to be able to serve all of those students, but the ones that we do, based on the criteria, we are hoping it becomes a game changer for them so that they do not have to work and they graduate.

Assemblyman Flores:

There have been many emails from my district in support of this bill. There are a lot of students who desperately need this help and are going to benefit from it. It is an honor to have this conversation now. I do want to share and discuss one concern I have about the idea of not being able to use the grant for a remedial course. Typically, many of the students from underrepresented communities are not where they are supposed to be because they were already working in high school. I was one of those students. I got a job in middle school and worked through high school; I had to. My family needed me to help. I see these students in these situations and maybe just one subject is not where it is supposed to be; maybe everything else is up to par and they are ready for college. Can we have a conversation about why it is so important that we cannot help that student take that one remedial course he or she may need?

Senator Kieckhefer:

That is a legitimate issue, obviously. Half of the students coming out of our high schools need remediation in one subject or another. However, this is a very limited pool of funds. Ms. Abba, what would you say the unmet financial aid need in our state is?

Crystal Abba:

It is close to \$450 million. It is on page 8 of ([Exhibit E](#)).

Senator Kieckhefer:

We have an unmet financial aid need of \$400 million to \$500 million. We are talking about \$5 million to \$10 million. I felt it was important as we brought this bill forward that we proved its worth and we invested the money in that area where we knew we were going to get the greatest results to make it difficult for the Legislature to come back in 2017 and not fund this program again. Also we want to be able to say, That worked really well, look at all of these students we have helped, and to expand it, do more, and help more students. It is narrow. We have had a lot of discussion about the credit-hour limits. Some wanted us to bring it down to 12 credits. We stood firm on 15 credit hours; that is what it takes to graduate. It is difficult to tell people no because I understand individual circumstances vary, but I have to play the

averages. The average is telling me that these are the students who are going to benefit the most with our very limited resources.

Senator Kihuen:

The ideal scenario here is that we approve the funding, it becomes a complete success, we come back next session and go from \$5 million or \$10 million to \$20 million or \$30 million. You saw what happened with the Zoom schools. We were all hesitant to invest in that last session. We finally took the step forward and invested \$50 million, and it has been one of the most successful programs we have had that is now helping students stay in school and graduate. We are hoping this bill will have that same effect with our higher-education students and that eventually \$10 million is not enough. We have to show results that it is working in order for us to come back next session and request more funds.

Crystal Abba:

Also, in the WICHE report ([Exhibit D](#)) is a recommended national best practice to link things like this so you create an incentive for the student to be college-ready. In April, we had statewide administration; all juniors across the state took the ACT. In December 2014, the Board of Regents adopted a policy that basically said that if you hit the college-readiness benchmarks in math and English, you will be exempted from remediation. We are setting a goal of an ACT score of 22 in math and an 18 in English. For those students who are aware of this, it will create an incredible incentive for them to do well on that ACT.

The next question would then be, what resources do you provide to help those students prepare? This year the Chancellor purchased a statewide membership in NROC, which is a national repository of online materials that students can use. One of the public goals of that membership for 11th and 12th graders is that they have an online portal they can access to prepare for the ACT. In many respects, this is a patchwork quilt we are building in terms of financial support and financial aid and other policies. We are trying to create a culture of completion and not only give students the best help in being college-ready but in having the resources to attend school.

Assemblywoman Swank:

How are we going to make sure students know about this program?

Crystal Abba:

That will be my job, in conjunction with the institutions, to make sure they get the word out. Often when they package the financial aid they will tell students that they are eligible for this, but if they are at 12 credits, they will suggest the

student take 15 credits. Recruiters will also be aware. I can tell you that these dollars will go fast.

Chair Woodbury:

I will ask for those who are in support of Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint) to come forward.

Christopher Jones, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am the current student body president at the College of Southern Nevada. I have looked at the bill and I definitely think the offer is a great opportunity for the students who would be benefiting from it. I have also inquired about the onboarding process as to how the students would be aware of what is being offered to them and how to prepare them to take advantage of this benefit.

William McCurdy II, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a former student body president of the College of Southern Nevada. I would be a recipient of the grant created by this piece of legislation. It is an extremely important time for us to create something to help incoming students to be able to succeed and thrive in our local and state communities. Please consider Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint).

Antonio Gonzalez, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am a student at Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC). I am in support of Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint) and the Silver State Opportunity Grant program. This program would help me and other students that are less fortunate and may not qualify or be fully covered by federal grants to be able to go to school full-time without having the need to work 40 or more hours per week. With school tuition going up every year, it becomes much harder for us to be able to afford school. It forces us to either rely on our parents or full-time jobs or, if neither option is available, take out student loans that in the long term would drown us in debt.

When I was 18 years old, I had an overwhelming schedule with school and work. As Assemblywoman Swank mentioned, I was one of the very driven students. I forced myself to take on three classes for 12 hours per week of homework plus another 40 hours per week for work. While I did pass some of the classes I registered for, I also did not get the grades that I wanted in one class, and due to serious time constraints with my job, I had to drop another class. After the first semester, I decided that I had to slow down. I could either quit my job or take fewer hours and cut down to two classes per semester. My class pace was very slow for the next two semesters, and by 2010, I was forced to take a long break from school. I ended up working one or two full-time jobs for the next four years trying to make it back to school. After so

long, in 2014, I finally had the tools to return. However, I am still only able to take two classes at a time, and it will take much longer than I would really need to finish if I am forced to take this path. This program would help other students have the opportunity to fulfill their education without having to go through the same nightmare that I had to go through. It would also help me and other students avoid taking out student loans.

This would not only be a help for me but also a help for TMCC. Currently they are facing a \$2.6 million deficit that is connected to class completion. If this program becomes a reality, it will help TMCC meet its threshold of completion rate percentage and meet its goals in the long term. Also, with Tesla Motors coming, we need a well-trained workforce to cover those jobs so that they do not have to look out of state for employment. If this bill becomes law, not only will Tesla focus on hiring workers in Nevada, but it will also show other businesses that we have a workforce that is prepared to take on these jobs and challenges. I ask this Committee to please support S.B. 227 (R2), which will help many students like me.

Kyle Dalpe, Associate Dean/Chief of Staff, President's Office, Truckee Meadows Community College:

Like community colleges across the country and in this state, we are here for access for students just like Antonio Gonzalez. This program will help with that. It will help more students enroll, attend, and succeed in their pursuit of education beyond high school. Every year Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) calculates that unmet need of our students, which is the amount of money that goes uncovered that students must pick up either by working or by taking out loans. For the 2013-2014 school year, that unmet need of TMCC students alone was \$33 million. That means 2 percent of our students who fill out the FAFSA receive the Pell Grant and federal aid, but for most of them, that is the only financial assistance they will get. Funding through additional grants, scholarships, and work-study is very limited and will not meet the demand. The TMCC Foundation has worked very hard to award scholarships to students. Last year we had 300 students receive awards out of the 1,000-plus applications.

Students receiving financial assistance who begin at TMCC taking 12 or more credits are three times more likely to graduate. Bump that up to 15 credits and they will graduate in a two-year time frame. Financial assistance makes this possible, and we expect an immediate impact.

Completion of a postsecondary credential, as most of us know, not only benefits the individual but helps the pipeline of trained educated workers in the

local community to serve our business and industry. Thank you again for your support.

Justin Harrison, Director of Government Affairs, Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce:

We are also in support of Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint) because it would provide students the ability to access resources to help with their efforts to pursue and complete their postsecondary education in Nevada. We believe an educated workforce will help improve Nevada's economy, support economic development efforts, and sustain job growth.

K.C. Brekken, Executive Director, Public Affairs & Government Relations, College of Southern Nevada:

President Michael Richards extends his regrets that he could not make it today. I am here to add a few points that perhaps have not been touched upon as to why this bill is historic in Nevada. The College of Southern Nevada (CSN) is the 11th largest community college in the nation with 36,500 students. Of those, 33 percent are currently receiving the Pell Grant. At least 17 percent are first-generation college students. Of those students, 75 percent attend part-time and our average student is a woman, 27 years of age. As mentioned, approximately one-third of our students are Pell Grant recipients and you might be asking, why is this necessary? The average Pell Grant is nearly \$6,000 per year and about 75 percent of Pell Grant recipients earn about \$30,000 per year in terms of their family income, while the average cost of attending CSN is about \$16,570. You can see the gap. It is not enough to attend full-time. These students need our help and support and CSN is behind this historic legislation 100 percent.

Luis Valera, Vice President for Government Affairs, Diversity, and Compliance, University of Nevada, Las Vegas:

While we understand that this does not apply to UNLV and UNR, we have a great relationship with our community college and Nevada State College partners and receive our transfer students there, so we are in support of this legislation as well.

Randy Robison, Member, Institutional Advisory Board, College of Southern Nevada:

I see great value in this proposal. Some of you may remember that I spent quite a number of years in this building representing K-12 education. Along the way, we learned that specific funding for specific programs led to specific results. From our perspective, this is that kind of a program. It is very targeted, strategic, and focused, and we believe it will help the students of CSN graduate

on time and fill some of those careers that our industries need to help us continue to grow and serve our customers. We are in support.

Chair Woodbury:

Is there anyone else in support of Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in either location who would like to testify in opposition to S.B. 227 (R2)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone who would like to testify as neutral to S.B. 227 (R2)? [There was no one.] Are there closing comments?

Assemblywoman Swank:

Would the bill's sponsors be open to an amendment that would include language saying this is a priority for students who had the numbers for a zero to \$8,500 EFC? Could we put that into the bill language? It would give more comfort for the long term to ensure that intent.

Crystal Abba:

We are in the process of drafting the Board of Regent's policies that will promulgate should the bill be enacted. It is in that language. It will have the force and effect of law essentially because it will be in Title IV of the *Board of Regents Handbook*.

The challenge of putting it into state law is that those EFC amounts tend to change from year to year as the economy changes. I would not like to restrict us in any way and have to go through the complication of changing statute. It is more flexible if it is in Board policy. I would be happy to provide you with a draft of those regulations that we are currently working on.

Assemblywoman Swank:

Maybe we could just say that there was some kind of preference for low-income students. If we could do something along those lines so that intent was in the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS), I would personally feel more comfort.

Senator Kihuen:

I would be amenable to that. I cannot speak on behalf of Senator Kieckhefer. I completely agree. I think the same students who are going to be impacted by this are our constituents. Again, the EFC number changes every year. If you put that in statute, it would have problems in moving the bill forward.

Assemblyman Edwards:

I like the fact that it is broad enough so it is more inclusive. I want to make sure the people in my district are not left out of it. I would encourage you

to keep it as broad as possible so that we meet the needs of the people rather than constantly making it too small.

Crystal Abba:

Again, I would remind everyone of how that formula works and that there is variation in there, but as you have indicated, Mr. Edwards, that variation is intentional so that we can focus on the working poor. Those students who you heard during public testimony who were in a situation where they got a very small Pell award, with something like this, they could have gone to school full-time and not worked.

Senator Kihuen:

I would just like to reiterate, this is obviously going to help certain parts of the state more than other parts. Everybody can apply for FAFSA as long as you are a legalized resident of the country. The bottom line is that the less money that your family makes and can contribute to you, the more money you qualify for. Regardless of where you live, once you fill out the FAFSA, submit your tax information, your parent's tax information, and your EFC number is determined, you prove that you do need the money, they will approve you for the Silver State Opportunity Grant as well as the Pell Grant that you are qualified for at the federal level. It impacts everyone across the state regardless of where you live or what area you represent.

Chair Woodbury:

Are those your closing comments?

Senator Kihuen:

I want to say thank you for giving this bill a hearing. I know Senator Kieckhefer agrees with me that this is singlehandedly probably the most important piece of legislation that I have worked on in my five legislative sessions. I also want to thank Ms. Abba as she has been working tirelessly by our side in making sure that we have this bill drafted.

Chair Woodbury:

I am going to close the hearing on Senate Bill 227 (2nd Reprint). We have a work session on two bills.

Senate Bill 338 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to safety in or at a public school. (BDR 34-870)

Kristin Rossiter, Committee Policy Analyst:

Senate Bill 338 (1st Reprint) was sponsored by Senators Smith, Woodhouse, Ford, Kihuen, Parks, and Assemblyman Sprinkle. It was heard by the

Committee on May 25, 2015 and was presented by Dale Erquiaga, Superintendent of Public Education, Department of Education and Dotty Merrill, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards. This bill requires the Director of the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, with the Department of Education, to establish the Safe-to-Tell Program. The Program must enable any person to anonymously report dangerous, violent, or unlawful activity being conducted or threatened at a school, a school activity, or on a school bus. This bill provides that any information received by the Program is confidential, and requires Program procedures to ensure information received is promptly reported to the appropriate entities and the identity of a person reporting information is not disclosed. [Continued to read from work session document ([Exhibit F](#)).]

In addition, the bill creates the Safe-to-Tell Program Account in the State General Fund to be used to implement and operate the Program. Finally, the bill creates the temporary 19 member Safe-to-Tell Advisory Committee within the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment. The Committee must be appointed on or before July 31, 2015, and it must complete its work and report its findings for the 2017 Legislative Session on or before June 30, 2016. The Office and Director were created under S.B. 504 and signed into law on May 20, 2015.

You have a mock-up of the proposed amendments to this bill in your work session document. There is a fiscal note.

Chair Woodbury:

I will accept a motion to amend and do pass Senate Bill 338 (1st Reprint).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SWANK MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS
SENATE BILL 338 (1ST REPRINT).

ASSEMBLYMAN ELLIOT T. ANDERSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

Assemblywoman Dooling:

I will vote it out of Committee but need to do more research on the funding.

Assemblyman Edwards:

I was not able to be here yesterday for the Committee hearing that discussed this bill. I am extremely sensitive to people who would be falsely accused under this program. I will probably vote yes on this to get it out of Committee but may have to change my vote as we proceed.

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYWOMAN SHELTON VOTED NO. ASSEMBLYMEN ARMSTRONG, DIAZ, AND HICKEY WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

Chair Woodbury:

Assemblywoman Swank will take the floor statement.

Senate Bill 414 (1st Reprint): Encourages the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada to enter into a reciprocal agreement with the State of California to authorize waivers of nonresident tuition to certain residents of the Lake Tahoe Basin. (BDR S-993)

Kristin Rossiter, Committee Policy Analyst:

Senate Bill 414 (1st Reprint) was heard by the Committee on May 25, 2015, and was sponsored by Senator Settelmeyer. This bill encourages the Board of Regents to enter into a reciprocal agreement with the State of California to authorize waivers of nonresident tuition to residents of California in the Lake Tahoe Basin to attend Western Nevada College ([Exhibit G](#)). There are no amendments and there is no fiscal note.

Chair Woodbury:

I will accept a motion to do pass Senate Bill 414 (1st Reprint).

ASSEMBLYMAN GARDNER MADE A MOTION TO DO PASS
SENATE BILL 414 (1ST REPRINT).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DOOLING SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the motion? [There was none.]

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEN ARMSTRONG, DIAZ,
AND HICKEY WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

Assemblywoman Dooling will take the floor statement. Is there anyone here for
public comment? [There was no one.] The meeting adjourned [at 4:01 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sharon McCallen
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Assembly Committee on Education

Date: May 26, 2015

Time of Meeting: 3:05 p.m.

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
S.B. 227 (R2)	C	Crystal Abba, Nevada System of Higher Education	Letter of Support
S.B. 227 (R2)	D	Crystal Abba, Nevada System of Higher Education	Report from WICHE
S.B. 227 (R2)	E	Crystal Abba, Nevada System of Higher Education	NSHE Summary
S.B. 338 (R1)	F	Kristin Rossiter, Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session Document
S.B. 414 (R1)	G	Kristin Rossiter, Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session Document