

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

**Seventy-Ninth Session
February 22, 2017**

The Committee on Judiciary was called to order by Chairman Steve Yeager at 8:02 a.m. on Wednesday, February 22, 2017, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401 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/79th2017.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Steve Yeager, Chairman
Assemblyman James Ohrenschall, Vice Chairman
Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson
Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen
Assemblyman Ozzie Fumo
Assemblyman Ira Hansen
Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui
Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner
Assemblywoman Brittney Miller
Assemblyman Keith Pickard
Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson
Assemblywoman Jill Tolles
Assemblyman Justin Watkins
Assemblyman Jim Wheeler

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams, Assembly District No. 42

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Diane C. Thornton, Committee Policy Analyst
Brad Wilkinson, Committee Counsel

Minutes ID: 243



Erin McHam, Committee Secretary
Melissa Loomis, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Chuck Callaway, Police Director, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Melisse Huffmaster, Director, Evidence Vault, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Laura B. Fitzpatrick, Clark County Treasurer
Matthew Christian, Assistant General Counsel, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
John J. Piro, Deputy Public Defender, Clark County Public Defender's Office
Sean B. Sullivan, Deputy Public Defender, Washoe County Public Defender's Office
John T. Jones, Jr., Chief Deputy District Attorney, Clark County District Attorney's Office
Andres Moses, Staff Attorney, Eighth Judicial District Court
Ernest E. Adler, Corporate Counsel, Rite of Passage
Rebekah Graham, Program Director, Sierra Sage Academy, Rite of Passage
Alexa Waldmann, Clinical Director, Rite of Passage

Chairman Yeager:

[The meeting was called to order and Committee protocol was explained.] We have two items on the agenda today. First, Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams will be presenting Assembly Bill 147.

Assembly Bill 147: Revises provisions governing the disposal of property in the custody of certain governmental agencies. (BDR 14-577)

Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams, Assembly District No. 42:

Assembly Bill 147 will increase the efficiency and accountability of the way unclaimed property in the custody of a metropolitan law enforcement agency is disposed of. I have several people with me today to answer the technical questions. My purpose is to give an overview of the bill and the problem we are trying to solve. I will then hand it over to the other individuals for your technical questions.

The Las Vegas community has had tremendous growth. With the economic development and prosperity, it is going to continue to do so. In that, there are services that have taken on increased demand. One of those is the Evidence Vault of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. You will see a natural increase in property found and utilized as evidence for crimes committed. There are now three facilities or warehouses in Las Vegas that contain massive amounts of such property. The provisions for disposal and donation of such property are contained in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 179.165 and NRS 244.1505. I will direct you to my slide presentation ([Exhibit C](#)). I took a tour this January so I could see for myself what this looks like. You can see on the second slide that the facility is extremely

large, a warehouse. In this picture, you can see the facility contains many items. Everything is identified and has a bar code. It is extremely well organized. I was very impressed. On slide 3 ([Exhibit C](#)), you will see several pieces of luggage and other items. Everything is categorized and can be identified back to the date and the incident with which it is associated. On slide 4, you will see there are random items, such as brooms and baseball bats, and everything has to be tagged and identified as it comes in. The fifth slide shows bicycles, some that are never claimed and are left over. We are going to talk about what happens in the process when no one comes to claim the property. The next slide shows a bunch of luggage left over. You may leave it on the Strip, and it goes to this warehouse for storage. Here is where the problem comes in. The procedures that are required to be followed through NRS 179.165 are outdated and have decreased the efficiency and accountability of the program. The Department indicates that if the procedures are not revised, the next step would be to acquire a fourth warehouse. We do not think that is the best use of hard-working Nevada taxpayers' dollars. Instead, we are asking the Committee to take into consideration how we can increase the efficiency of the procedures in order to deal with this issue. There is also a friendly amendment ([Exhibit D](#)) coming forth. Now I will turn it over to Mr. Callaway.

Chuck Callaway, Police Director, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:

I thank Assemblywoman Bustamante Adams for sponsoring this bill for us. It is very important. I am going to briefly take you through the two sections of the bill and explain exactly what the bill does. I have our experts down in Las Vegas who can answer technical questions. First, I would like to give you a couple of scenarios that we encounter frequently to help explain how we come to possess some of this property. Let us say you have a suspicious vehicle driving through a neighborhood. Residents of that neighborhood think they are casing or generally up to no good and call the police. Officers respond, stop the vehicle, and determine they have been breaking into homes in the neighborhood and the car is full of property. The officers attempt to find the owners of that property. Let us say they locate a couple of houses that have been broken into and a couple of victims. Those victims respond out to the scene, look at the property, and say, "Yep, those are my golf clubs, here is my computer, and here is a receipt showing they are mine." We document and photograph that property and in some cases, it may be retained for the trial or the case. Then there is evidence left over in the car and we do not know to whom it belongs. Maybe the victim it was stolen from did not report it. Maybe they are out of town and have not come back yet. In some cases, they do show up and say, "Yeah, that is my TV, but I do not have a serial number or other proof." They cannot prove it is their property and so we cannot release it to them. That property then sits in our warehouse for a long time gathering dust. Once the criminal case involving that property has been adjudicated and closed, the evidence vault must try to find out who the owner is. If we do not know who the owner is, then we must dispose of it.

I am going to walk you through the bill and explain the requested changes we would think will make that disposal more efficient, bring it up to date, and make it more accountable so the public actually sees what is occurring with this property.

The second scenario I would give happens quite often. Someone is visiting from out of state. We get 43 million tourists a year. As Assemblywoman Bustamante Adams said, either they lose their luggage or someone steals their purse. They leave town and go back to wherever they are from. In the meantime, we locate their belongings. They tell us they are not coming back to Las Vegas to get it because either they had a bad experience or just do not want it. At that point, it sits in our vault and we are in a position where eventually we must dispose of that property.

I will walk you through the bill. Section 1 of the bill removes the language that says "stolen or embezzled." The reason we are removing that is because the property covers a wide variety: it is abandoned, lost-and-found, or safekeeping property. Another quick scenario I can give you is an elderly man dies and he has firearms or things in the house the widow does not want. She takes them to the police department and says, Take these: I do not want them in the house anymore. As you can see, the property runs the gamut. It is not necessarily property related to a criminal case. In section 1, we also wish to clarify that this is not property owned by Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD). This process does not refer to us getting rid of property we own. It is property that is owned by someone else: either we cannot locate them or we have given them notice and they have not come to claim the property.

In section 1, subsection 2, we are removing language that specifically speaks to firearms. The reason we are removing that is because the notification process is the same for all property. We send notifications by certified mail to the owner (we never notify people who are not the owner) and then wait the six-month period required by statute. Whether it is a firearm or a broomstick, it is the same process. Having that section referring specifically to firearms is redundant.

In subsection 3, we retain the language "stolen or embezzled property" for the requirement of certified or registered mail. The reason that was put in is because much of this property is abandoned or lost property and we do not know who the owner is. When we are sending out notice by certified or registered mail, it is usually specifically that stolen or embezzled property. However, I am told by our director at the vault that we do go through the same process for all property if we know who the owner is.

In subsection 4, it allows for the new procedure outlined in subsection 6. It is important to note that the new procedure only applies to LVMPD. We are not trying to change what the rest of the state or other jurisdictions are doing. In subsection 6, it allows the sheriff to conduct an auction for the disposal of salable property or the disposal and destruction of nonsalable property, such as narcotics paraphernalia or something dangerous for the public to possess. There are typically three ways property is disposed of if we cannot find the owner: it is either auctioned or turned over to a charity or nonprofit, donated to a government agency, or destroyed. The county maintains a list of charities to which it donates. Subsection 7 is existing language. Subsection 8 requires an annual audit of the disposition of property and reporting to the LVMPD Committee on Fiscal Affairs.

At this point I will talk briefly about the process and why the current process is somewhat antiquated. Currently, when a case is completely adjudicated and the property can be disposed of, or it is not related to a criminal case but it is found property and we do not know who the owner is, or we know and have notified the property owner and waited the six months, it is time to dispose of the property. Under the current process, we must go to the county treasurer. Originally, the statute required us to turn the actual property over to the county treasurer. With three warehouses full of property, that is not feasible. We hand over a binder that outlines the property we are looking at disposing of; it can be literally thousands of items. The county treasurer has a very difficult task of having to sort through that without actually going to the vault and seeing that property. It has become irrelevant for the county treasurer to try to be in the position to determine and authorize the disposal of this property. Once the county treasurer has completed that step, they would petition a judge to do the same thing. They sign off on the disposal of the property. The court is in a position where they are not going to go to the warehouse and look at this property item by item. They are trying to perform an unreasonable task. We would like to see those two steps removed, the county treasurer and the judge, and allow the sheriff, who is an elected official, to allow for the disposal of the property. The property that is disposed of by those methods previously described would have to be reported to the LVMPD Committee on Fiscal Affairs. The LVMPD, by statute, is governed by a fiscal affairs committee made up of two county commissioners, two city councilmembers, and a citizen-at-large. Those meetings are held monthly. They oversee our budget and finances. Those meetings are open to the public, agendas are posted, and the public would be able to see what type of property was disposed of and how it was disposed of. It would ensure transparency and accountability for the process. The only other section of the bill is section 2, which slightly changes the "stolen or embezzled" language and replaces that with "property." There is an amendment that adds more clarity to that definition, which we support.

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:

Why do the proceeds from these sales not go to the Office of the State Treasurer Unclaimed Property Division?

Chuck Callaway:

My understanding is that they do not want the property. It would be burdensome for them to get a semitruck, come down to the warehouses, and load this stuff up.

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:

My question was in regard to the proceeds of the sale, not the actual property.

Chuck Callaway:

The statute allows us to recoup our cost of doing business from the proceeds. Last year the auctions of this property netted \$70,000. By contrast, our evidence vault budget is \$5 million. The proceeds that come from the auction of this property pale vastly in comparison to the cost of doing business. Normally we roll those proceeds back into the budget of the vault to assist with the resources there.

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:

Is there a reason that the process of going to a judge is too burdensome? It looks like the current iteration of the statute was intended to provide a balance of power between the police and the county in regard to the unclaimed property. I am inquiring as to why that process does not currently work and the reason for this change.

Chuck Callaway:

Let me briefly clarify about the property. Property of a significant evidentiary value, such as homicide scene or sexual assault evidence, is saved forever; it is never disposed of. What we are talking about here is not that type of property. If this was associated with a criminal case, that case has been adjudicated and whatever was of significant evidentiary value has been turned over to the district attorney's office. In the case of some of this property, like televisions, computers, or golf clubs, those would have been photographed and turned over for trial purposes because we are not going to take that sort of stuff into the courtroom. It has been well documented on the front end. The case is no longer active. The judge or the district attorney's office on the criminal's side has already said this property is no longer needed for evidence. It is already cleared. You are right that in the past, the process of turning over the property to the county treasurer was a balance of power. That is no longer realistic with the amount of property we have. It has become more of an administrative function where someone looks at a binderful of stuff and says, "Okay, LVMPD, I think you have all this stuff. Go ahead and do what you need to do." The final step of the judge okaying the county treasurer to destroy the property has created a burdensome process. I spoke to Judge Elizabeth Goff Gonzalez about this process when she was here. She agreed that it was antiquated. I do not want to speak for the judge today and say that the court supports this, but when we spoke she verbally expressed to me that she felt the process was unnecessary. Originally, it was a check and balance, but I think we can transfer that check and balance to the fiscal affairs committee process, which is open to the public. The current process is not open to the public. It provides an equal, if not better, level of accountability and transparency.

Assemblyman Pickard:

It sounds as if this is just codifying what is currently happening. I share the concerns of Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson. As I see it, the transfer to the treasurer's office meant that someone else outside of the Department was looking at the process. How much does this deviate, not from what the law says, but from the current practice? What form of check does the fiscal analysis then provide? Just making something public does not necessarily mean anybody is looking at it.

Chuck Callaway:

We are still following what the statute currently says to the best of our ability. Obviously, we cannot transfer the property to the county treasurer. I will let our vault director and the treasurer speak specifically to the process. My understanding is we are giving them a binder that outlines this property and they have to review that document. It makes the process more

cumbersome and time-consuming than it would be if that step, which is now unrealistic, were removed. Was your second question about what would be the fiscal outcome if no action were taken?

Assemblyman Pickard:

No. With the process that exists, we have a separate agency looking over the shoulder of what is being collected and how it is being disposed of. We have some independent oversight. In the new process, is there any independent oversight, anyone looking at this outside of saying, Hey public, the information is out here, and hoping someone is interested and has enough time to look at that?

Chuck Callaway:

The fiscal affairs committee has two county commissioners and two city councilmen, so now, rather than just the county, we have county and city representation, plus a citizen-at-large. Our current chairman of the board is Mr. Bill McBeath and he is the citizen-at-large. The body that would be reviewing the audit we submit to them is made up of a citizen, two county commissioners, and two city councilmen, and again it is open to the public. They can come in and make a public comment, and it is all a matter of public record. That is a much higher level than the current process, which is simply going to the county's office and delivering the report.

Assemblyman Thompson:

I know the public administrator is in a different chapter of the NRS, but is there any relationship? There are times when law enforcement is involved in the death of someone. Does this bill relate to any of the property or estate in question with the Clark County Public Administrator?

Chuck Callaway:

I am going to defer down south, but my understanding is no. The public administrator and the coroner's office have their own processes for the property that belongs to the deceased. If for some reason we came into possession of that property, we would make every effort to locate the next of kin, but we do not take possession of that type of property.

Melisse Huffmaster, Director, Evidence Vault, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:

Chuck Callaway is correct: we do not as a standard practice take property from the coroner's office. If we were to receive that property, we would make every attempt to return it to the family members.

Assemblyman Thompson:

In a scenario where it is a crime scene where the public administrator, LVMPD, and the coroner's office are all on location, you will need to make a decision as to who takes it from there?

Chuck Callaway:

Let us say you have a crime scene where someone has been murdered and law enforcement is there. First and foremost, that is a crime scene so our forensics people and detectives have total control and will gather anything of an evidentiary value. They process that evidence whether it is blood spatter, a weapon, clothing with stains on it, or whatever that evidence may be. Anything of that nature is kept forever. Those detectives have fully exhausted their investigation, the forensics team has spent two days in the house processing evidence, and now we are done with the crime scene. At that point, the coroner and the mortuary would come in and remove the decedent's body. If they did not know who the next of kin was or could not locate them, then the public administrator's office would become involved and they would take charge of the property in that house that is not needed as evidence. Anything we took as evidence would more than likely be retained forever because of the nature of the crime.

Assemblywoman Jauregui:

You had mentioned that if this does not pass we will have to get a fourth warehouse. Do you lease or own the warehouses, and what would be the cost of a fourth warehouse? If this does pass, would this allow us to eliminate ownership of some of those that we have?

Chuck Callaway:

Because of the current lengthy process and the amount of property we receive, we would more than likely have to expand eventually to another warehouse. We do lease. The problem is that by statute, LVMPD cannot own property, so all property we occupy is either owned by the county or leased. The problem with this type of warehouse is that they have to be built to spec. You have to have security measures, proper ventilation, and shelving. It is not just throwing up a Tuff Shed and putting our stuff in it; you have to have the proper infrastructure, so it can be quite expensive. I will defer to Director Huffmaster for more specifics on that.

Melisse Huffmaster:

The gross estimate for one-time costs for setup and initial lease of a warehouse is around \$165,000. We are looking at the purchase of pallet racking, installation of pallet racking, inspections, installment of security measures, and one-time costs for moving equipment—forklifts, pallet jacks, pallets, and a variety of items required to be able to manage a warehouse.

Assemblywoman Jauregui:

So passing this bill will not prevent us from needing a fourth warehouse?

Chuck Callaway:

I could not say for sure that we would not need to build another warehouse if this does pass. I would say that if the current process stays as it is, it is very likely we will have to expand to a fourth warehouse.

Assemblywoman Cohen:

When animals are taken as evidence, are there separate regulations or statutes to follow?

Chuck Callaway:

Animals go to animal control. If there was an incident where a dog attacked someone, we would not take that animal to our facilities; we would call animal control and they would take the animal and house it at a kennel, pending whatever criminal or civil action might be against the owner. I am not aware of our ever taking live animals into our care and custody.

Assemblywoman Cohen:

I assumed they were not staying at the warehouse. As far as the guidelines to be followed, what if it is cattle that can be sold, not just an issue where you have an animal that is potentially dangerous, but animals that have property value?

Chuck Callaway:

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department does not get involved with the sale of animals or livestock. If we had those types of animals, we would turn them over to the state, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Wildlife, or whoever would actually take that over. We have had cases where someone's cow gets loose and is walking down the roadway. We call the state and the state takes possession of that cow because animal control cannot care for those types of livestock: they are more for the dogs and cats. The state people look for a brand and try to identify the owner. If they cannot locate the owner, I assume they have a method they use for sale or disposal of those animals.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

My question is about the timeline for citizens trying to get their property back. Maybe it was taken by police and the case was resolved or it was not filed. Will this speed up the process for citizens getting their property back?

Chuck Callaway:

Because this is a procedural change on the back end for disposal of property, this change is going to kick in when we cannot locate the owner, after having made every attempt to do so, or if the owner has not responded or has told us they do not want the items. This probably will not affect that, but there are a lot of factors that do. For instance, if there is a criminal case, how long is it going to go before it is adjudicated and closed? If it is found property, how quickly can we locate an owner; if we have sent registered mail, have they moved or responded? There are factors that play into how quickly we can get somebody's property back. I hear both sides of the argument. I hear citizens say, "You guys were great, I got my stuff back in a very short time." On the other side, I hear people say, "You guys are horrible; it took forever for me to get my stuff back." It is difficult to determine case by case how long it might take.

Assemblyman Watkins:

I want to follow up on my colleague's question in regard to the cost of the warehouse. I know we have a one-time cost of \$165,000. What would be the yearly maintenance cost?

Melisse Huffmaster:

It would depend on the cost of the lease based on the footage of the warehouse. One of our leases is estimated at \$55,000, another one is \$135,000 a month, plus the cost of utilities. I would estimate we would be in between those two figures for another lease.

Assemblyman Watkins:

Would opening another warehouse require extra staffing and hiring, or do we already have the people in place to operate that warehouse?

Melisse Huffmaster:

At this point, we have enough staff to support that warehouse. Any increase in staff would be a result of other operational needs in addition to that warehouse.

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:

My concern continues to lie around due process. We are getting rid of people's property; it is a weighty thing. I get that there have been attempts through certified letters up to that point. I do not really care that the treasurer is involved, but would you be amenable to keeping the requirement for the civil division to petition to the district court? What I see with the fiscal affairs committee is that it is simply an audit; they are not approving it, they are giving a report after the fact. In light of all the commentary about civil forfeiture, which I know is a different but related concept because we are talking about divesting someone of their property, it would make me feel better about those due process concerns to have another branch of government involved.

Chuck Callaway:

I fully understand your concern. From my perspective, the purpose of this bill is to revise the process so that it is more efficient. On the front end, the checks and balances you have expressed are there through the courts and the district attorney's office saying they no longer need that property. There is also the issue that, with most of this property, we do not have any idea who the owner is and if we did, we have already notified them, waited the six months required by law, and they have not responded. Keeping the courts involved and shifting it from having the county treasurer to the sheriff's civil bureau does not meet the intent of the bill. The bill is trying to remove a process that is no longer valid. Based on my conversations with the folks involved in this process, if you are across town from the warehouse and receive a stack of documents to be approved, when you have a busy day with a lot of other things to be done, I am not convinced that provides a high level of check and balance that cannot be provided through an open fiscal affairs process. I do not mean to imply that no one is doing their due diligence.

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:

I am not concerned about releasing the property from criminal jurisdiction; I am talking about an auction. There is a big power imbalance when you are dealing with the police. That is why there is extra process involved. It is speculation to say that we might not need another warehouse anyway. This bill is not necessarily a cost saver. It could delay the inevitable, but if we have population or crime growth or we are taking extra property, I do

not think this is going to put that off. In light of all the concerns related to civil forfeiture, I have a problem with loosening the process too much. The way I look at it, even cutting out the county treasurer would still shorten the process. I do not think it adds that much time by going to the district court, considering there is electronic filing and the courts are well able to handle this.

Chuck Callaway:

I just want to clarify that none of this property was subject to asset forfeiture. That is a different issue and not what we are talking about here. I am not aware of any case where we have gone through all these steps: sending certified mail, waiting the six months required by statute, gone to the county treasurer, gone to the courts, and gone through the auction process, just to have someone come forward and say we have gotten rid of property they intended to claim. If that were to happen, we would reimburse the cost of the property. If it were golf clubs or a TV set, we would write them a check for the cost of their property. I want to make those two clarifications: This is not asset forfeiture property, and there has been a multitude of steps to make every attempt to get the items back to the rightful owner.

Chairman Yeager:

You talked about how section 1 currently only applies to stolen or embezzled property, but we are expanding that definition. As the law exists now, how is property that is not stolen or embezzled treated in terms of this process? Is there a different process in the law or is it the same?

Chuck Callaway:

We are treating all property the same right now. That is why we want to strike that language, because it was irrelevant. Whether it is stolen, embezzled, found, or dropped off, we are treating it all the same.

Chairman Yeager:

In section 1, subsection 3, the certified or registered mail requirement, you had indicated that in this particular bill that requirement would be limited to the stolen or embezzled property, but you stated you would do that with all property anyway. If the intent is to do it with all property, why have the language that limits it? Would you be okay with just making it a requirement for all property?

Chuck Callaway:

I would check with the director to ensure that is not an issue, but that is my intent.

Melisse Huffmaster:

No, it is not an issue for LVMPD; however, it may be an issue for other agencies. We certainly have processes in place and follow the same process either way. What those processes are for other agencies, I do not know. This would allow those agencies to have the same maneuverability as they previously did if the statute were to be revised.

Chairman Yeager:

Mr. Callaway, in your initial testimony you mentioned the fact that you hold on to property related to a criminal case, sometimes forever, but other times you would hold on to that property until the case was closed or adjudicated in some way. How does LVMPD learn that property is ready to be disposed of? Is there an internal analysis to determine whether the case is closed or does that information come from another source?

Melisse Huffmaster:

We research every case we have, going through different court systems to verify that the case is indeed adjudicated, and verify that there were no court orders that may affect the disposition of that property.

Chairman Yeager:

If anyone from the south would like to add any additional testimony, now is the time to do so.

Laura B. Fitzpatrick, Clark County Treasurer:

I became county treasurer in 1998. Since before then, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Evidence Vault has maintained the unclaimed personal property. It was voluminous when I came in and has been increasing since. Our office has worked with LVMPD to do our best to ensure the provisions of NRS 179.165 are carried out. We have done site visits over the years, we have observed their processes and procedures of inventorying, segregating things eligible for disposition, and going over the processes of what will go to auction, what items need to be properly disposed of or destroyed (such as medical waste, narcotics paraphernalia, and social security cards or other items that have personal identification information), or other items that can be donated. I have contacted both the airport and the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada for items left at the airport, on a plane, or on a bus, and have asked how they handled their donations, how they generated a list. They both gave me their list of charitable organizations to which they donate items. The evidence vault gets so many bicycles in. There was previously a local live auction. Because of the volume, there are not a lot of local auctioneers in years past who wanted to take on the volume. It requires a lot of sorting. Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and our office worked to contract with PropertyRoom.com, an online auction service that specializes in police auctions. Items that are turned over to PropertyRoom.com are reinventoried, and both our office and LVMPD evidence are able to track those items at PropertyRoom.com. It is a very impressive audit trail. There are some items that can be thrown away in secured trash. We have been there and observed the processes. When items are eligible for disposition, LVMPD prepares the inventory list of those items and they come over. They then go to our civil district attorney's office and they prepare the petition to the district court. Those documents then go through that legal process. I certainly understand the concern of oversight and the intent, and I support that. It seems that an internal audit function might be able to do some of the same things that we do. Although we are not physically there all the time, we have made site visits. We have been to both the main evidence vault and some of the other warehouses. I understand what they are saying from having the visual—it is an amazing amount of inventory in their facilities.

Matthew Christian, Assistant General Counsel, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:

My only additional comment would be to dovetail on the concern for due process. I have studied this bill draft, and in my opinion, it actually provides additional due process not being provided right now. The process that exists now, with LVMPD going to the treasurer, the treasurer going to the district attorney, and the district attorney going to the district court, does not trigger any public hearing. The petition that goes to the district judge is heard in chambers. The problem with that is the district judge is not in a position to go through these thousands of items of property to make any sort of check and balance. The proposal submitted in this bill draft actually provides additional process because the audit that will be conducted will ensure that proper research was done into making sure any potential claimant is contacted. This bill would make that a statutory requirement. The fiscal affairs process is more open compared to submitting a petition to a district court judge and it being heard in chambers.

Chairman Yeager:

Is there anyone who would like to testify in support?

John J. Piro, Deputy Public Defender, Clark County Public Defender's Office:

We are in support of this bill. We offered the friendly amendment ([Exhibit D](#)) further defining "property." We thought the definition of property in the original bill draft was too broad, so we cabined it with proposed amendment 1, and we are going to withdraw proposed amendment 2. The proposed amendment definition language cabins it to things unrelated to active criminal cases, which is what we were most concerned about.

Sean B. Sullivan, Deputy Public Defender, Washoe County Public Defender's Office:

I echo the sentiment and comments of my colleague, Mr. John Piro. Our chief concern was the definition of property. With the friendly amendment that has been proffered by Mr. Piro and me, that has alleviated our concerns. I understand the definition of property within this bill will apply to all law enforcement agencies, including Washoe County.

John T. Jones, Jr., Chief Deputy District Attorney, Clark County District Attorney's Office:

I also want to express our support for A.B. 147. In conversations with my administration, I asked if we have ever had a criminal case where property was destroyed by the current version of this statute. My administration could not come up with any. In terms of impact on criminal cases, this change would be slim to none.

Assemblyman Fumo:

My question is directed to the public defender's office. You took out the requirement to take photographs that fairly and accurately depict the evidence. I liked that. Why did you agree to take that out? Does LVMPD already do that?

John Piro:

It is our understanding that LVMPD does not do that. Mr. Callaway has explained to us that it would increase the cost to their agency as far as staffing, picture taking, and maintenance of cloud storage fees. He was concerned about that moving forward. We wanted to ensure we at least got the definition of property moved forward. That is why we made that compromise.

Chuck Callaway:

On the forensics side, if something is evidence in a case, it may be photographed at that time. In the evidence vault process, they do not go through and photograph each item in that vault. There are literally hundreds of thousands of items in there, so a requirement to photograph each item, upload that photograph into a database or information technology system, and then retain it for an indefinite period would make the process further cumbersome and not meet the intent of the bill.

Assemblyman Fumo:

You do document for criminal cases; whereas if there were a civil case, there is notice given to them where they can come in and document the evidence themselves. In criminal matters, you bring in photographs for court. This would be more of the abandoned property you are talking about?

Chuck Callaway:

That is correct.

Assemblyman Pickard:

Have you talked to the bill sponsor and Mr. Callaway regarding your amendment?

John Piro:

Yes, we have.

Sean Sullivan:

Yes.

Chairman Yeager:

Is there anyone who would like to testify in opposition? [There was no one.] Is there anyone who would like to testify in the neutral position?

Andres Moses, Staff Attorney, Eighth Judicial District Court:

Mr. Callaway mentioned a conversation he had with Judge Gonzalez; I cannot confirm that. We have no objections to the change in the procedure. The problems that were identified by Mr. Christian are echoing what I heard from one of the judges who has dealt with these orders for four years. He states that correctly.

Chairman Yeager:

Are there any questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Mr. Callaway, if you would like to make any concluding remarks, now would be the time.

Chuck Callaway:

I encourage anyone to visit our evidence vault if you get the chance. You might be surprised at what you can see when you are there in person.

[A letter in opposition ([Exhibit E](#)) to Assembly Bill 147 was submitted by the Nevada Attorneys for Criminal Justice.]

Chairman Yeager:

That concludes the hearing on Assembly Bill 147. We will now hear a presentation from Sierra Sage Academy.

Ernest E. Adler, Corporate Counsel, Rite of Passage:

I have been asked, "What happens to girls who have been sex-trafficked in the western states? Is there a treatment program for them or are they just throwaway kids? What is the overall result of being sex-trafficked?" Sierra Sage Academy is set up in Yerington, Nevada, as a full-time residential academy that provides treatment for girls who have been sex-trafficked.

Rebekah Graham, Program Director, Sierra Sage Academy, Rite of Passage:

We would like to present a brief overview of our program and the treatment model [slide 2, ([Exhibit F](#))]. We are going to go through our population, their needs, and the treatment model. We call it trauma treatment in a normative environment [slide 3]. Not only do we focus on addressing the trauma that brought the girls there through commercial exploitation and other forms of abuse, neglect, and trauma, but we also focus on letting the girls experience normal adolescent things. Rates of trauma exposure in the juvenile justice system and the foster care system are higher for girls [slide 4]. Girls are more frequently victims of sexual abuse, and the abuse is more frequently perpetrated by known subjects. Our program is trauma focused, gender responsive, and addresses the needs of the "commercially sexually exploited children," also called CSEC [slide 4]. We accept female students only, ages 14-17, with a history of prior trauma [slide 5]. They do need to be responsive to the therapeutic model, which means certain packets are assessed fully by our clinical team to ensure they will be responsive to the model.

We have numerous accreditations and compliance reports. We are accredited [slide 6] by the Council for Accreditation of Residential Facilities (CARF). It is a three-year national accreditation, which is the highest form you can receive. We received it in August 2016. We were fully audited, and we exceeded the standards for the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). We applied it to our program, not because it is required, but because it is the safest practice in keeping kids safe from sexual abuse and harassment. With our population, we felt it was essential. We are licensed as a Medicaid Residential Treatment Center (RTC); we received that license in November 2016. We have been fully

compliant in all of our licensing audits. All students have the right to feel and be safe [slide 7, ([Exhibit F](#))] on campus. That is especially important with our population. Licensing and PREA audits in June 2016 revealed that 100 percent of our students, in anonymous interviews with those auditors, said they felt safe at our campus. I will now let Ms. Waldmann talk about the treatment planning and the specific needs of the CSEC youth.

Alexa Waldmann, Clinical Director, Rite of Passage:

When the girls come to us, phase one is they undergo an assessment. They do a psychosocial with our psychologist and me. We do them together so that we do not keep asking them the same questions. They also get a number of tests assessing risk. We assess for suicidality, AWOL, and substance abuse issues, among other things. We go over the findings with the girls and help them understand how the community sees them and what things people want them to work on. They meet with their treatment manager, and together they form a treatment plan. They come up with three main goals they want to work on while they are there. That is all during phase one. They also start some individual therapy. They work on building skills around emotional regulation, stress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness. They work on stabilizing their behavior and getting used to the program.

After that, they go to phase two, where they are able to attend groups. We have a number of psychotherapeutic groups, including anger management which is called "anger replacement therapy," "seeking safety," "I empathize," and "thinking for change." We are starting some new groups as well and are always working on improving and building on those. They also do individual therapy where they are able to address their trauma as appropriate. We use a cognitive behavioral model among others. They then start family therapy as needed.

At last, they move to phase three, where they increase their family therapy and work on generalizing their skills to the community. They are able to go on home passes. They are able to work on reunification and those types of things. We also do multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings [slide 8]. We have the therapist, one of their teachers, their social worker, parole officer, treatment manager, and somebody from group living. They all get together and the girls are able to add people to their phone list, use their skills to monitor their progress, see where they need to keep working on, and things of that nature.

Rebekah Graham:

[Slide 9, ([Exhibit F](#))] One of the questions we are often asked is why we focus on trauma versus CSEC only. About 70 percent of our population is identified as CSEC. About 50 percent are CSEC-identified when coming into the program. We have several courts that refer to us specifically for CSEC treatment. What happens with female youth in systems of care is the flags of CSEC are frequently present without confirmation, and disclosure of CSEC frequently occurs in program. We do not want to eliminate girls we know we can help by saying, "We are only a CSEC program." It is a question that commonly occurs. The CSEC population does present unique treatment challenges. You have to take a whole-child and holistic approach. Girls frequently have been victims of other forms of abuse and trauma, leading them to be vulnerable to being trafficked. There is a higher rate of mental health diagnosis in the trafficked population in comparison to the general public.

There are undiagnosed and untreated issues that lead them to be vulnerable to the trafficker or pimp. It is frequently a brainwashing experience with trauma bonding. It is not dissimilar to a domestic violence relationship. They are sometimes reticent to care. They are in a precontemplative state and do not believe they need help. They do not necessarily see anything wrong with the life they have been living, even though they are 14- or 15-year-olds. We definitely have to work with them to develop concern about their situation in the first place. There is a risk of girls trying to recruit others from within the treatment program to join that lifestyle. This commonly happens in child welfare shelters, group homes, and juvenile halls. We have significant precautions around that as well as reentry planning. If a girl is going back to the same community, how successful can she be? We try to encourage community and family support along the way.

Slide 10 is "Student Culture." We have a lot of initiatives to allow our kids to find their voices again. Girls who have been through trauma or trafficking struggle to advocate for themselves. It is a critical component of their success because they have been trained into compliance. Here are some pictures: slide 11 shows student council fun day. Our student council is very active on campus. Every cottage on campus has its own representative and they have a student body president. It is a way of teaching the girls to advocate for themselves as well as to design their own activities and emphasize their autonomy. Slide 12: We celebrate the holidays and try to make them as home like as possible. Given that so many of our kids are from the foster care system, they have not always experienced a normalized holiday.

Slides 13 through 16 show that we participate in the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA) and high school athletics. Girls who have never been on a basketball team are not only going to be playing on the team but also completing an entire season. We are just starting softball season. Of the 40 girls on campus, about 20 are actively trying out for our team. We have participated in volleyball, and Governor Sandoval came to one of our volleyball pep rallies. He was so kind, taking pictures with each girl, and they really enjoyed it. We do cadet corps [slide 17, ([Exhibit F](#))], which is a form of Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). We have been doing a puppy-training program [slide 18] since July. The girls are working to train two golden retrievers to be therapy dogs.

We do a lot of community service [slide 19]. Our community in Lyon County and the Mason Valley [slide 20] is very engaged in our campus. It has been essential for the girls to have normal exposure to activities, adults, mentors, 4-H, and the sheriff's department. Sheriff McNeil has been incredibly supportive of our program, even inviting girls to do a ride along with his Mobile Outreach Safety Team (MOST) program. The owners of Wild West Chevrolet have offered internships. Boys and Girls Club of Mason Valley, Rotary, Lions Club, and Yerington Vineyard Fellowship church have all embraced our girls and our project and it has led to them being even more successful in the program. Our school is fully accredited [slide 21] by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and licensed as a Nevada private school.

Because of how infrequently the girls had attended school, we use a curriculum called "road to success" [slide 22, ([Exhibit F](#))], which builds the idea of a project that they will learn and engage in school. Some of our girls have not been in school for a number of years; we had one girl who had not been at school since fifth grade. It is frequently a lot of catch-up. We do welding certifications [slide 23] and have a weekly campus assembly [slide 24] to encourage team building. We bring the families to us [slide 25]. Even though we are remote in Yerington, we bring the families to us. Whether it is Los Angeles, California, or closer, we get our van and pick them up and bring them back on a cycle of every six weeks or so. We make sure that the families are included and participating and physically seeing their child.

We do team building [slide 26]. Our environmental design [slides 27-34] is evidence-based. We build in emotional self-management spaces to encourage kids to utilize coping skills. We designed the program to be welcoming and homelike to encourage kids to feel safe and feel like they are at a regular high school. Slides 33 and 34 ([Exhibit F](#)) show the student dorms. These are their bedrooms. They decorate them just as a teenager would. If you look in some of them, they are not that neat anymore; they have billions of artwork, posters, and pictures of their favorite boy bands. It is a normal experience. That is what we want for our girls. They have been through so much, and some of them just have not had the chance to be kids. The video on slide 35 shows one of our girls who graduated from our program and from high school. She is currently in community college. She got a scholarship from Rite of Passage as well as a scholarship from Rotary. This is us being a little silly at her graduation ceremony.

Assemblywoman Jauregui:

What is the capacity at your facility, and are you full to capacity?

Rebekah Graham:

We are licensed for 48 girls. We currently maintain a baseline of about 40. We like to be able to have that flexibility to work with them more closely. It is not necessarily our target to be full.

Assemblywoman Jauregui:

How is progress measured through the program?

Rebekah Graham:

That is frequently a topic of discussion. We are not in control of where they go later, so we compare ourselves like-for-like on the number of incidents in the program as far as concerns such as self-harm or aggression. We have low incidents compared to other programs of our size and type. We have not had any girls run away from campus. We try to measure it in those means, whether it is comparing apples to apples on how our program fares versus others.

Assemblywoman Jauregui:

Specifically referring to the progress of each girl, how do you know when she is ready to move on to the next phase or is ready to graduate?

Rebekah Graham:

It is a clinical process. Our psychologist will reassess them. Ms. Waldmann, our clinical director, will reassess them. We monitor them behaviorally, and keep detailed daily progress notes on each girl, which are reviewed by her treatment team. We look at their behavior, stability, and their participation in treatment. Their aftercare plan is about their family and community being ready to support them when they leave.

Assemblywoman Jauregui:

Is there a time limit to how long the girls can stay in your facility?

Rebekah Graham:

We designed the program to be six to nine months depending on our aftercare plan. We try to keep it a prescriptive length, so some girls can actually finish sooner or, if need-based, they can stay longer. It was designed to be a short-term residential stay.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

Is your facility a lockdown facility or open campus?

Rebekah Graham:

We are a staff-secured facility, so that means we can use safe physical management when appropriate to hold them still until they calm down. It is not a locked facility.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

Are most of the girls there from Nevada or out of state?

Rebekah Graham:

For CSEC services, it is common to place girls far away, so most of our girls are from California. We have had referrals from Nevada, but no Nevada kids have been placed there yet.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

You mentioned a lot of the girls at the facility have mental health or substance abuse issues. Do you know what the success rate is in terms of dealing with that with the treatment they receive there?

Rebekah Graham:

In regard to substance abuse, mental health, and those types of behavioral issues, the best you can do in a residential treatment program is use the evidence-based practices when providing the right care for the girl. All of the practices we use are evidence-based. Some of them are best practices or promising practices—for example, the emotional self-management spaces. Girls in substance abuse programs get individual mental health therapy with an individual

mental health therapist. They get individual substance abuse therapy with a substance abuse counselor. They get an evidence-based substance abuse curriculum, including group therapy which is a 12-week curriculum. Then they follow up with "seeking safety," which is a combined posttraumatic stress disorder and substance abuse curriculum. This is a group therapy model they go through as another form of treatment.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

Have you ever had any issues with a trafficker trying to visit or help someone get out?

Rebekah Graham:

That is a serious and real concern. Our sheriff, Al McNeil, has been incredibly supportive since even before we opened the program, knowing that was a realistic possibility. We are on the Yerington Paiute Reservation and Trust Lands, so the Yerington Paiute Tribe (YPT) police chief is also very supportive of the program model and that real risk. Twice since we have opened, we have had a suspicious car drive by, and we have immediately notified law enforcement. The best thing we can do is build the safety precautions into their treatment plans, where they are only allowed to call the people whom they are specifically allowed to call. They use laptops in school, but they are very securely firewalled. Their letters, per their treatment plan, are screened for safety. Yes, you will have a pimp write pretending he is the grandpa and the letter starts with "Hey, Babe." Sometimes you will have family try to three-way-call with a pimp. As soon as we hear that rumor, we will notify their social worker, probation officer, or parent and encourage them to have supervised phone calls. What happens is the pimp tries to arrange a time to come get them. We try to be proactive to prevent that contact with the pimp.

Assemblywoman Tolles:

I want to highlight a specific area you touched on. Did I hear you say you do not currently serve any Nevada residents, it is all California? You have never served a Nevada resident? Have they all been out of state?

Rebekah Graham:

That is a legitimate question. We opened very slowly a year and a half ago. We opened in July 2015 with this new program model that had not been done. We encourage slow growth and very meaningful accomplishment of different benchmarks like our PREA audit and the CARF accreditation. With our national accreditation came our ability to apply for a Nevada RTC. We felt that was important, given the level of services we were seeking to provide. We did just become eligible for Nevada kids in November 2016 with our RTC license.

Ernest Adler:

The Governor and the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services, Richard Whitley, have both toured the facility and are very supportive of the program. They are investigating various funding formats to place Nevada kids at the facility.

Assemblywoman Tolles:

So there is a funding piece that has not yet bridged the gap in order to be able to service these kids? We are No. 1 in the nation in calls to the human trafficking hotline per capita. This is a major issue in our state and particularly among our youth. I have our social services people in my county coming to me and saying, We do not have a place for these girls to go. Often they are placed back in the high schools and foster care systems and they are recruiting and continuing to be in danger. This is a very immediate need and it concerns me. How do we bridge the gap for the victims in Nevada to get to the facility for treatment? Could you clarify the steps required to get us there?

Rebekah Graham:

The Medicaid RTC will clear the way for girls to be placed via that route. They have to have the identified treatment needs, which victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation do have as well as significant substance abuse and mental health. Many of our girls come in with prior psychiatric hospitalization—they have attempted suicide or made significant and serious suicidal gestures. The Medicaid RTC route is right now the clearest path for entry for a Nevada kid.

Assemblywoman Miller:

What you people are doing is amazing, such a labor of love. I know it is challenging at times, but so rewarding. I saw that it is girls 14-17. What about girls under 14? Is there a treatment center right now for those girls?

Rebekah Graham:

We do not currently provide treatment for girls under 14 because we are a high school campus and younger kids are particularly vulnerable to some of the machinations of attempting to recruit or traffic. We do not want to put them in the same spot as the older girls.

Assemblywoman Miller:

Is there a treatment center for girls under 14 in the state that you know of?

Rebekah Graham:

Not that I am aware of.

Assemblywoman Miller:

What about boys? Do we have treatment programs for boys?

Rebekah Graham:

I am not aware of any programs for trafficked boys in Nevada.

Assemblywoman Miller:

I know your facility has been open a year and a half, so it is still new. With the reentry after a girl graduates, do we have any numbers on the success rate yet? Also, what if a girl does not have a family to return to after graduating the program?

Rebekah Graham:

There has been only one girl who returned to us in our time. She ran away from a court date and, when found, was returned. She ended up successfully reunifying with family in Texas. She was an example of a girl who had nowhere to go, but through the family finding program, they were able to locate her family. We flew the family out and participated in family therapy with them. We were able to try to make that connection for her with family whom she had not previously lived with. However, there are girls who have nowhere to go at the end. They do not have a viable family. Sometimes it is a failed adoption, sometimes they have been in the foster care system since they were four years old. What we designed in our program is a down-step service that we call the "qualifying houses," where they live in a more house-like setting and prepare for either independent living or going into foster care. We try to gear those girls up. We have girls in those qualifying houses right now, and three of them are attending Truckee Meadows Community College and have jobs. They are gearing toward independence versus a kid who might be gearing toward reunification.

Assemblyman Thompson:

On the slide discussing admissions [slide 5, ([Exhibit F](#))], it talks about referrals from social services and probation. Are you using any of your trending to determine who your main referrals are coming from and the areas where a lot of the trafficking has occurred, so there could be some preventive care or interventions that can occur so the girls do not even have to come to you?

Rebekah Graham:

That is definitely a focus in California. It is almost evenly split between social services and probation. We have also had some private placements through adoption assistance funding and things like that. California changed its regulations surrounding who can enter the foster care system to specifically include commercially sexually exploited children, meaning they do not have to go through the juvenile justice system if they are caught being trafficked. They specifically amended their welfare and institutions code to capture those kids differently. Our highest-placing areas from California are San Joaquin County, Stockton, Monterey, and Los Angeles. In Los Angeles, each girl has an advocate on her behalf. They have a specialized court, the Succeeding Through Achievement and Resilience (STAR) Court, that is specific and unique for them and is aware of their needs. All of the workers associated with that court, from the attorneys, to the judge, to the officers involved, are trained in dealing with those youth and their specific needs.

Assemblyman Thompson:

I like to use the term aftercare instead of reentry because I do not want them to feel like they necessarily did anything wrong. Being that they are coming from California, what is there aftercare like? How many remain in Nevada and if so, how many go into our foster care system or any of our social service systems?

Rebekah Graham:

So far, most of our girls have returned to California. Through our multidisciplinary team process, we involve their supports very early on in the treatment, whether it is an aunt,

a grandmother, a family friend, or a coach—someone who is going to support them as they leave. The principle behind that is we are artificial supports. We want to encourage and enhance their natural support system so that they do not have to remain in contact with systems of care in order to be supported throughout their life. When you are 19, you still need somebody to call and say, My car broke, what do I do? We try to build that model of encouraging and educating their natural supports. We have only had one girl stay in Nevada and, while she is still under the jurisdiction of California, she lives in a foster home in Yerington. She had been so in touch with the community she wanted to stay in that community.

Assemblywoman Cohen:

Can you give some examples of the family involvement you are encouraging? Where the children came out of family homes and were not in a foster care system, how are the families able to attend therapy with the children? Are they able to visit?

Rebekah Graham:

We encourage families to participate in many ways. We encourage the youth to call their parents and write letters regularly. While the child is participating in individual therapy, we begin family therapy via phone. We also have videoconference, Skype, or FaceTime capability if the families choose to take advantage of it. They are welcome to visit campus, and we encourage it. We have scheduled van loops where we pick up the families, bring them back, put them in a hotel, have them visit their child on campus, and then drive them back. We incur all of the associated costs, including their meals, to remove barriers to participation. We really encourage that. Families may not have money for gas or may not even be able to afford food outside the scope of their home. We take pictures regularly of kids participating in events and provide them to the children so they can mail pictures of themselves home. "This is me and my basketball team. This is me participating in community service." We do this to continue to connect with them. We do provide a lot of engagement and interaction with the families.

Assemblywoman Cohen:

You mentioned that sometimes the pimps do try to get in touch with the girls. Are you in contact with the pimps' parole or probation officers to report these incidents?

Rebekah Graham:

What is most insidious about the pimps is the level to which the girls protect them because of the trauma bond and brainwashing. Often their full names are not known. They are called "Magic," which is just creepy. Whenever they are known, yes we do. Whenever we suspect a pimp is trying to get in touch with them, we report it to law enforcement or probation

officers. We have had it happen at least three times when a girl is ready and prepared to testify and give full information, local law enforcement cooperate in getting her full statement. That is passed along to the jurisdictions through the normal law enforcement chain of command.

Assemblywoman Krasner:

You were talking about placement of the girls once they leave the facility. You said that you do take into consideration factors such as whether they have a family and the family relationship. What are the other factors you take into consideration? Do you allow the girls to have input as to placement after they leave your facility?

Rebekah Graham:

One of the things our psychologist, Dr. Jack Araza, really focuses on with the girls in our program is their voice as an essential component to their treatment plan. From Day One of the treatment plan formation, we want to hear what they have to say because they know themselves best. Their buy-in is essential to their actual progress. Progress versus compliance is so different. Without their voice in the process, they may be doing what you say, but they are not making a meaningful change. We absolutely listen to them. Some of the factors when reunifying with family include their overall goals, whether they are going to go to college, and their risk back home. If they have testified against a pimp, it is not necessarily safe for them to go back to that exact same neighborhood. One of the things we are looking at is identifying the core areas where they need more intensive care. Right now, we have the step-down houses located in Minden. We have already purchased a home in Orange County to allow kids to reunify and develop independence closer to their family, but not necessarily in Compton, California. We have been speculating on homes in Las Vegas for that same reason: to get them a little farther from the neighborhood where they might run into the pimp or someone who is going to target them, but still be close enough to be connected to their family.

Assemblyman Pickard:

Could you go a little deeper into how girls find you? I know you get referrals from the juvenile justice system, but what are the other means by which girls can find you?

Rebekah Graham:

People can find us. Initially we wanted to focus solely on the program model. As we have grown to a point where we feel comfortable taking in a wider variety of kids, we are going out and presenting more and more. We now have a website. We are trying to reach out more, like what we are doing here today, to encourage more people to know about the program and the model. We really encourage the kids' voice. When we interview a girl to see if she wants to come to our program, her feelings on the matter are considered in whether she is welcome to come here. The best practice surrounding the commercially sexually

exploited children, like specialty courts, is to only send girls to programs they want to go to. All of the girls whom we have received from the specialty court in Los Angeles have indicated that they want to come to us.

[A brochure ([Exhibit G](#)) titled "Sierra Sage Academy" and a flyer ([Exhibit H](#)) titled "Rite of Passage, Sierra Sage Academy" were submitted by Rebekah Graham.]

Chairman Yeager:

With that, we will open the meeting to public comment. [There was none.]

The meeting is adjourned [at 9:37 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Erin McHam
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Steve Yeager, Chairman

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

[Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster.

[Exhibit C](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "[A.B. 147](#)," dated February 22, 2017, presented by Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams, Assembly District No. 42.

[Exhibit D](#) is proposed amendments to [Assembly Bill 147](#) submitted by John J. Piro, Deputy Public Defender, Clark County Public Defender's Office and Sean B. Sullivan, Deputy Public Defender, Washoe County Public Defender's Office.

[Exhibit E](#) is a letter dated February 21, 2017, in opposition to [Assembly Bill 147](#) to the Assembly Committee on Judiciary, authored and submitted by the Nevada Attorneys for Criminal Justice.

[Exhibit F](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Sierra Sage Academy," dated February 22, 2017, presented by Rebekah Graham, Program Director, Sierra Sage Academy, Rite of Passage.

[Exhibit G](#) is a brochure titled "Sierra Sage Academy," submitted by Rebekah Graham, Program Director, Sierra Sage Academy, Rite of Passage.

[Exhibit H](#) is a flyer titled "Rite of Passage, Sierra Sage Academy," submitted by Rebekah Graham, Program Director, Sierra Sage Academy, Rite of Passage.