

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

**Eightieth Session
May 7, 2019**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Vice Chairman Edgar Flores at 1:34 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 2019, 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/80th2019.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Vice Chairman
Assemblywoman Bea Duran
Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow
Assemblywoman Alexis Hansen
Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy
Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner
Assemblywoman Brittney Miller
Assemblywoman Connie Munk
Assemblywoman Sarah Peters
Assemblywoman Jill Tolles
Assemblywoman Selena Torres

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Senate District No. 2
Senator Ben Kieckhefer, Senate District No. 16

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst
Victoria Gonzalez, Committee Counsel
Sharon McCallen, Committee Secretary
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Denise Tanata, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance
Paige Barnes, representing Communities In Schools
Sarah M. Adler, representing Charter School Association of Nevada
Jennifer Jeans, Child Advocacy Attorney, Washoe Legal Services; and representing
Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Nikki Bailey-Lundahl, representing Nevada Association of School Boards
Lindsay E. Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District
Michael Flores, Chief of Staff, Nevada System of Higher Education
Bradley Keating, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District
Zach Conine, State Treasurer
J. Kyle Dalpe, Interim Executive Director of Legislative Affairs, Nevada System of
Higher Education
Spencer Stewart, Chancellor, Western Governors University Nevada
Jack Rovetti, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada

Vice Chairman Flores:

[Roll was called.] Members, what we are going to do before I continue with any other remarks is honor our colleague, our Chairman, Assemblyman Thompson, by giving him one minute of silence. Afterward, we will proceed with announcements and then to the bills. With that, if we could have one minute of silence, please.

[One minute of silence was observed.]

As you all know, Chairman Thompson was incredibly organized and hardworking, and he has made it a lot easier for us in this Committee, myself included, to continue his hard work. I intend to honor the work that he has put forth. Whatever work he was working on, I am working diligently to make sure we respect his intent and we do as good a job as we can. Our Chairman will continue to be our honorary Chairman as we continue with this session. Everyone who knows him, knows the only right way to honor him is by ensuring that we continue to serve and that we serve even when we are exhausted. I think we are all emotionally drained. It is going to take us a few days to kind of get out of this. It may take us the rest of the session, but we will continue to work. That is what we were summoned to do here and what we shall do in his honor.

We have two bills this afternoon and we will take them in the order they appear. [Committee protocol and rules were explained.]

I have one more announcement, and I apologize for not saying this earlier. We will not be having a work session today and will be rescheduling all bills on the work session to Thursday. Please reach out with any questions regarding the work session.

Senate Bill 100 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to the licensure and employment of veterans, military personnel and their spouses in the public schools of this State. (BDR 34-388)

[Senate Bill 100 (1st Reprint) was agendized but not discussed.]

Senate Bill 126: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-906)

[Senate Bill 126 was agendized but not discussed.]

Senate Bill 159: Requires each public school and private school to adopt a policy concerning safe exposure to the sun. (BDR 34-583)

[Senate Bill 159 was agendized but not discussed.]

I will open the hearing on Senate Bill 147 (1st Reprint).

Senate Bill 147 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to the education of pupils who are experiencing homelessness or who are in foster care. (BDR 34-394)

Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Senate District No. 2:

We are pleased to present Senate Bill 147 (1st Reprint). This bill is the result of a recommendation made by the Department of Education (NDE) which was thoroughly embraced by the members of the interim Legislative Committee on Education, a body on which we had the pleasure of serving.

The bill proposes to increase school districts' flexibility in awarding credits for diplomas while remaining in abidance with state standards in order to increase high school graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness and those in foster care. During a meeting of the Assembly Committee on Education earlier this session [February 12, 2019], NDE testified that our state student population includes roughly 17,000 homeless students and roughly 3,000 students in foster care. The Department indicated students experiencing homelessness and those in foster care face extreme challenges in completing high school and experience high levels of school mobility with more than one-third of youth in foster care changing schools more than five times.

The challenges of homelessness and foster care lead to disproportionately low rates of academic achievement and high school graduation rates. Homeless youth struggle to enroll in school, as they are likely to lack the necessary paperwork—birth certificates, academic records from previous schools, and immunization records. They may also struggle with access to transportation to and from school. As a result, many of these students never finish school, resulting in diminished economic opportunities, and continue the cycle of homelessness.

I would like to turn it over to my colleague to talk to you about the policy solution identified by NDE.

Assemblywoman Brittney Miller, Assembly District No. 5:

The Department of Education requested the creation of a new section in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) Chapter 389 to award partial credits and exemptions to minimum credits required in high schools for homeless youth and students in foster care.

Senate Bill 147 (1st Reprint) makes exemptions for minimum credits for enrollment in high school for homeless and foster youth. The bill requires schools to develop procedures to assess a student's competency through tests and other means rather than in a seat in a particular school—meaning rather than for specific attendance. It allows students to potentially utilize independent study, correspondence, or distance education in Nevada or another state to fulfill course requirements toward graduation.

At the work session during which the Committee considered NDE's recommendations, Karen Gordon, the state's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act coordinator, testified that Nevada law currently has a seat-time requirement—again, referring to attendance—which mandates that a student spend at least 120 hours of time in a particular class in order to obtain credit. Students who enrolled after the 120 hours required by NRS were told after finishing a semester of coursework, they could not earn credit for the course because of this requirement. The predicament for these students was brought to the Department's attention for possible resolution. Additionally, Ms. Gordon testified that the federal Every Student Succeeds Act has a new emphasis on removing barriers so there is a renewed focus on helping these particular students.

One of the major issues that we see with our students in foster care or homelessness is, of course, huge amounts of transiency, which leads to absenteeism. These are students who, through no fault of their own, have no control over the fact that they may be switching foster care homes multiple times throughout a school year. I have seen it myself at the grade levels that I have taught. I have seen students who have attended five, six, and sometimes even seven different schools in one school year. When we look at a younger student, we can imagine the academic and social gaps for that child.

The worst-case scenario that I have had in my class involved a student—and I believe it was his fourth or fifth school that year—who came in pretty rough and tough, as you can imagine a fifth grader would be who has been in multiple foster care situations. I was excited because I could see that kind of melt away as the day went on, and he started to learn and understand that he was in a safe school and in a safe class and that everybody accepted him, and we were there for him. He walked out at the end of the day a different student than when he walked in. I remember that night thinking how excited I was that he was in my class and I had the opportunity to be there for him, to support him, and make him feel safe and secure. I went

back to school the next day and I was told when I first walked in that he was gone. He had been withdrawn because he was placed in yet another foster care home. He was in my school for one day. He was in that foster care situation for less than 48 hours. When we look at high school students, we know that the older the children are, the more difficult it is to find placements for them.

What this bill does for homeless students or foster care students, eleventh- and twelfth-graders, is not hold absenteeism against them because they do not have control over these situations.

At this time I would like to turn it over to my colleague, Assemblywoman Tolles.

Assemblywoman Jill Tolles, Assembly District No. 25:

I know we have already heard some statistics, but I want to add just a few more for the benefit of this discussion. High school dropouts are nearly three times more likely to be unemployed than college graduates. Increasing Nevada's graduation rate to 90 percent would generate \$48.4 million in spending; \$110 million in home sales; \$470,000 in state and local tax revenue; \$80.6 million in savings for health care. In addition, when homeless youth in particular—which is what this bill addresses—do not complete high school, they are 4.5 times more likely to remain homeless.

In my region, we have some tremendous efforts to address homelessness among our youth. If we can address homelessness with our youth, address the needs of the children in our foster care systems, and help them get to graduation, it changes the entire trajectory of their lives, and it also has a tremendous impact on our community as a whole.

I want to take a moment to walk you through the sections of Senate Bill 147 (1st Reprint), which came from our interim Legislative Committee on Education and was passed unanimously as a recommendation with robust support.

Section 1 requires that each school identify whether a student is homeless, unaccompanied, or lives in foster care. Definitions for each of those terms are provided in federal law and also reinforced in this section. The school is required to review and adjust a student's academic plan to maximize the accrual of credits and progress toward graduation if he or she has been identified as being in one of those categories. Section 2 applies those provisions to charter schools.

I would encourage you to take a look at the list in section 4, which authorizes a school to award and accept full or partial credit for a course of study regardless of the student's attendance or hours of classroom instruction received by a homeless, unaccompanied, or foster student. Section 4, subsection 2, is the list that the board of trustees or the sponsor of a charter school may consider as evidence in determining whether coursework has been satisfactorily completed and the amount of credit to award for the coursework.

Section 5 requires a school district or a charter school to award the appropriate high school diploma to a homeless, unaccompanied, or foster student who transfers to a public school during the student's eleventh- or twelfth-grade year and satisfies the requirements established by the State Board of Education for a diploma regardless of other requirements prescribed by the school district or charter school sponsor. This section also stipulates that if the student transfers in during this time but will not be able to receive a diploma within five years from the day he or she enrolled in ninth grade, the school district or charter school sponsor is required to agree with the student and parent or legal guardian, if applicable, on a modified course of instruction that allows that student to obtain a diploma as quickly as possible.

That concludes our presentation of S.B. 147 (R1). We appreciate the Committee's consideration of this meritorious legislation. Representatives of the Department are also in the audience today to answer any technical questions you may have about the bill's provisions.

Vice Chairman Flores:

Are there any questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in support of the bill? I will remind you to keep your comments to no more than two minutes. There is one person in Las Vegas, so we will start in Las Vegas and then come back to Carson City.

Denise Tanata, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance:

We would like to offer our full support of S.B. 147 (R1). We have had the good fortune to work alongside the Department of Education, local school districts, and our national partner, SchoolHouse Connection, to offer input and support for this important piece of legislation. We appreciate the interim Committee's willingness to put this bill forward, and we hope this Committee will also support this proposal to support Nevada's most vulnerable youth.

As has been testified to, these youth experience unique challenges that can often impact their ability to do well in school and/or graduate from high school on time. The primary issue these youth share is the need to move often, which often means moving to new schools as well. This is an issue that is well beyond their control and can impact their ability to progress academically. This bill will provide flexibility to schools to offer partial credits and eliminate some of the barriers to high school completion that these youth face.

Education is the key to self-sufficiency for these youth. Helping them to achieve on-time graduation by offering this level of flexibility is a huge step in ensuring these youth have the opportunity to successfully transition into adulthood and change the trajectory of their lives.

In February, we had the opportunity to work with Chairman Thompson to present issues to this Committee impacting the educational success of homeless youth. You all had the opportunity to hear from numerous advocates, including a former homeless youth from Nye County, Sarah Robbins. It is youth like Sarah, including the thousands of current homeless and foster youth in Nevada, for whom we do the work we do. They are also the reason why we urge you to support this bill.

Paige Barnes, representing Communities In Schools:

We are here in support of S.B. 147 (R1). We believe this legislation will help students to move past the barriers. It will also provide them with tools for academic success. Some students are in schools with Communities In Schools facilities and supports. Communities In Schools help these students get to school every day. They provide support, such as providing alarm clocks, giving them calls when they are not attending classes, and doing regular check-ins with these students to help them through their academic process. We encourage you to support this bill.

Sarah M. Adler, representing Charter School Association of Nevada:

For one year of my life, I had the privilege of overseeing the McKinney-Vento Act for Carson City School District. These are heroic kids who are pursuing their education, and heroic teachers and administrators who support them.

Charter schools are happy to do the same. We appreciate S.B. 147 (R1). We think that the flexibility it offers will, at the same time, assure these students of educational attainment. We support the bill.

Jennifer Jeans, Child Advocacy Attorney, Washoe Legal Services; and representing Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada:

These organizations represent children in foster care who, as you have heard, have disproportionately low graduation rates. We are here to offer our full support of this bill for all the reasons you have heard. These changes will have a significant impact on these children, their ability to graduate, and the health of our state as a whole.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

The Nevada Association of School Superintendents is composed of all 17 school districts. We supported this bill in the Senate, and we are supporting it now. It is a very important bill, and these are students who need a lot of help. We think this bill will go a long way to getting diplomas for kids who have it pretty tough.

Nikki Bailey-Lundahl, representing Nevada Association of School Boards:

We are here in support, as we believe this bill will break down barriers for these students and provide them with the flexibility necessary for academic success.

Lindsay E. Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District:

We are in support of this legislation. I think this is a really important move as we consider pulling down these barriers for our foster and homeless students who are on competency-based education. I think depending on how that goes, ultimately we can see that expanded to other students who are also facing different kinds of barriers once we have the infrastructure in place around the partial credit and the competency-based education for our students. We are in support.

Michael Flores, Chief of Staff, Nevada System of Higher Education:

We are in full support of this piece of legislation. I know Chairman Thompson is watching us right now because this was an important issue for him and one he fought for. I am honored to be here to testify in support. We have had conversations about how we are going to work better with foster youth and homeless youth. We think this piece of legislation will make sure there are more college-ready students when they get to Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions.

I would like to acknowledge two of our regents who are here today. They recently passed a waiver so all former foster youth can go to any of our NSHE institutions for free and make sure they do not have those concerns. We are also working with K-12 to make sure we are also addressing the needs of homeless youth. We are in full support.

Bradley Keating, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District:

I would like to echo the sentiments made by Mr. Flores from NSHE. This is one of those bills that was near and dear to our incredible Chairman's heart. He spoke to us at length on a number of occasions about these students who need assistance and help. The thing that we can do for them is help them as much as we can. I appreciate your hearing this bill today. It is an appropriate day to hear it. I know the Chairman is watching down on us as we do this. The Clark County School District is honored to have worked on this to make sure our students across the state are successful in every way they can be.

Vice Chairman Flores:

Is there any further testimony in support? [There was none.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in opposition to the bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify as neutral to the bill? [There was no one.] Are there any closing remarks from the sponsors?

Assemblywoman Tolles:

I would like to end with a quote from a statement made by the executive director of the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY) in regard to our beloved colleague, Chairman Thompson:

Tyrone was my colleague, adviser, and a fellow advocate in the fight against youth homelessness. His radiant and positive energy cast a bright light on so many issues plaguing Nevada's youth. He embodied public service throughout his career, touching so many lives, and serving as a role model for so many, including myself and others at NPHY. We will help carry your torch forward in honor of your legacy and in spirit of what you were accomplishing.

I believe this bill does that, and in honor of that legacy, I would urge your support.

Assemblywoman Miller:

I also ask for your support because you know directly how many students in our state alone this will impact. I look forward to working with our school districts further to ensure that students are receiving the services and accommodations they need to be successful.

Vice Chairman Flores:

I will close the hearing on Senate Bill 147 (1st Reprint). I will open the hearing on Senate Bill 414 (1st Reprint).

Senate Bill 414 (1st Reprint): Makes various changes concerning the Kenny C. Guinn Memorial Millennium Scholarship. (BDR 34-884)

Senator Ben Kieckhefer, Senate District No. 16:

I am pleased to be joined at the table by our State Treasurer, Zach Conine, here to present Senate Bill 414 (1st Reprint). This is an expansion of a scholarship program that was started in 2011, which was the legislative session immediately following the death of Governor Kenny Guinn. Following the Governor's passing, the family was receiving significant donations and other financial assistance that were made in lieu of flowers that the family wanted to repurpose for the support of education in the state to continue the Governor's tremendous legacy of supporting education. What we created was the Kenny C. Guinn Memorial Millennium Scholarship, which is designed to support millennium scholars from both ends of the state who are going to become teachers in Nevada.

The bill allows for the provision of a \$4,500 grant to one student each from the north and the south who are studying to become teachers and dedicated to teaching in Nevada. It uses private donations, so there are no state dollars involved. It is administered by the Board of Trustees of the College Savings Plans of Nevada, which is run out of the Office of the State Treasurer.

The purpose of the bill is to expand the number of people who are eligible from one to two students at each end of the state. It expands the eligibility in terms of institutions at which the student can be studying to become a teacher. It also increases the award from \$4,500 to \$5,000.

I would like to turn it over to Mr. Conine for any additional comment.

Zach Conine, State Treasurer:

Before I begin, I would like to thank this Committee for continuing the work of Chairman Thompson. It is an honor to be here. I spoke to Dema Guinn, Governor Guinn's widow, earlier today and told her about the work we were doing on this bill. She wanted to pass along her thanks to the Committee and Senator Kieckhefer for making sure Governor Guinn's legacy continues.

This bill is a very simple way to expand eligibility, to expand the benefits, and to really focus on the purpose of the Memorial Scholarship, which is making sure we keep excellent teachers here in Nevada. I do not need to spend any more time than we need to talk about the fantastic nature of the bill and the changes it makes, but I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Vice Chairman Flores:

Are there any questions from the Committee?

Assemblywoman Torres:

How many applicants do we currently have?

Zach Conine:

It is a relatively small number. We had six eligible students this past year. We continue to try to expand the work. Like many other college savings programs, we believe we have an opportunity to increase awareness and, as such, utilization.

Assemblywoman Torres:

If there are six applicants and we already have more applicants than we do institutions receiving the scholarship, I am not sure of the purpose in opening it to more colleges and universities. They are all going to become teachers. It does not matter if they are attending a nonprofit university, the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), Great Basin College, Sierra Nevada College, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), or Nevada State College (NSC). They are all going to become teachers. It seems we are opening it to more people but we are not giving more money to this program and we are not increasing the number of scholarships.

Zach Conine:

As a point of clarification, we are increasing the number of scholarships from one in the north and one in the south to two in the north and two in the south. There will be more scholarships in addition to increasing the amount of money per scholarship. Because this is completely funded by donations, there is no State General Fund impact. We will be able to help more teachers, and as we continue to work with the Guinn family and donations continue to grow, I would love to be able to help all of them.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

I would like to clarify something you said, Treasurer Conine. Did you say there were six eligible applicants or six applicants?

Zach Conine:

There were six eligible applicants who met the base level of criteria. There were some applicants who were not eligible because they did not have the right grade point average or were not planning on becoming teachers and mistakenly applied for the scholarship.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Do we only have a small number applying because potential applicants do not know about it? Are we working on getting the word out through the high school counselors and such?

Zach Conine:

We think the limited number of applicants is really twofold. First, it is an intentionally specific scholarship from the family's original intentions and the Legislature's original intentions in 2011. Additionally, yes, I think we have opportunities across the board in utilizing resources and getting more resources to make sure the scholarships and the programs we have in place are being known and applied for by as many people as possible. That is a real focus of our office and something we have identified that we need to be better at.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

I am glad to hear that it does open up to other schools because some of the other schools may be a little less expensive. Credit costs vary from school to school and the scholarship can go a little further at another school. I appreciate the clarity.

Senator Kieckhefer:

The scholarship is only available for students entering their senior year. It is really not the high school counselors we need to be working with more, but the universities and institutions to make sure their education students are aware of this opportunity.

Assemblywoman Torres:

I still have more questions. I love the intent of this legislation. I think we should give more students scholarships. I have family members who are currently attending and receiving education degrees in these colleges. I definitely understand it and I am sympathetic, but I feel we have a number of students at our Nevada System of Higher Education institutions, so there may be a marketing issue with this scholarship if we only had six eligible applicants. I guarantee that the schools of education at UNR, NSC, and UNLV have more than six in each school who would be eligible. I am looking at the requirements and it is not as if those students do not qualify. That means there is something wrong with the way we are marketing the scholarship or the way the scholarship is being implemented.

I am an educator and this is the first time I have ever heard of this scholarship. I think that means we are doing something wrong. What is going to be done for us to target that issue instead of focusing on opening it to more students?

Senator Kieckhefer:

We are trying to increase the number of scholarships because the money is available. We want to make sure we provide greater access to more people. Because it is entirely privately funded and we have the money, the family's desire is to put it out.

To the second point, this is a program that was started in 2011 in a very limited form. There were two scholarships a year and that was it. The idea of now starting to grow based on the number of potential awards would provide greater opportunity to market it. To be honest with you, I cannot speak to any efforts that have been made to promote it directly to the students who are enrolled in these institutions. Obviously, more would certainly be eligible than are applying for the scholarship. We can certainly look at enhancing as we try to expand the number of eligible awards.

Vice Chairman Flores:

I would like to remind the Committee, this is going to be available for four students. If we are promoting it to 1,000 students and have 1,000 applicants, there are only four scholarships with this bill. It is difficult to waste a lot of resources and funding to promote four open slots. Give them a little break here.

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

In section 1, subsection 2, paragraph (c), the bill states, "if enrolled at an academic institution that does not use a grade point system to measure academic performance, present evidence acceptable to the Board." Could you explain what the acceptable evidence would look like?

Zach Conine:

This language is somewhat vague because we want to be able to evaluate the students based on what the students are able to present. It could be information from their professors regarding what an exceptional job they have done, comparing them to other students, or it could be essay information from the students. We are not sure, so we want to make sure the language was as broad as possible. To Assemblywoman Torres' point, we want more people to apply for this scholarship so we can make a case to the fund for more scholarships. In order to do that, we want to be as inclusive as possible.

Assemblywoman Miller:

I see in the bill that it is opening it up to more schools, and I know this is for Nevada students. Is there any type of consideration given to regions? Could there be a balance to make sure we have one from the north, one from the south, and two from the rurals?

Senator Kieckhefer:

It outlines specifically two from northern Nevada and two from southern Nevada. If you look at section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (a), it outlines the institutions that are eligible for those two recipients. In section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (b), it outlines the institutions that are eligible for two recipients. It includes UNR, Great Basin College, Sierra Nevada College, or a nonprofit serving northern Nevada, and then UNLV, NSC or a nonprofit serving southern Nevada. We tried to break it out to draw a line across the middle of the state.

Assemblywoman Miller:

My specific question is not so much where the universities are located but where the students originate. You could come from Reno and go to UNLV.

Senator Kieckhefer:

I suppose there would certainly be a way to do that, but if the student originates from one area, it does not necessarily mean they will return there to teach. There are different ways to cut the egg, and I do not know what end we are serving. I guess it serves different purposes depending on how we slice it.

One of the requirements for eligibility is to state a commitment to teach in Nevada. I do not think there is any requirement about where in Nevada they are planning on teaching. There are different ways to structure it, and it is certainly something we can consider. I just do not think it has been considered previously.

Assemblywoman Miller:

The intent is for Nevada students. Is that correct?

Senator Kieckhefer:

Yes. The students need to be eligible for the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship Program, which means they need to be a Nevada high school graduate.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

I do appreciate this bill and anyone who offers scholarships. Bless the Guinn family and the donors. It is very generous. Is this a one-time scholarship? As a parent who has had seniors and some who have gotten scholarships—and all of them received the Millennium Scholarship, which I am proud of and appreciate the state of Nevada for—I am wondering if there is some confusion with the name. We have the Millennium Scholarship and then there is this scholarship. Could it be that people think it is one and the same?

Senator Kieckhefer:

All blame for that probably lies with me since I was the sponsor of the original bill in 2011. I think it was designed to be a program that was truly a tribute to Governor Guinn. It focused on education, it supported millennium scholars, and it was everything he encapsulated as a leader for this state. The name may be somewhat confusing. We could consider changing it in the future. This bill does not contemplate that issue. You make a recognized point.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

I would not recommend taking the name Guinn out, but perhaps the millennium side of the name is throwing people off.

Vice Chairman Flores:

Are there any additional questions? [There were none.] I will open the hearing for those wishing to testify in support.

J. Kyle Dalpe, Interim Executive Director of Legislative Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education:

We support this legislation and this program. It is present on the websites of our universities and state colleges that offer the four-year degrees and would qualify for this scholarship. We are actively marketing it, as are our counselors and advisers, to get it out there. I would agree that maybe taking out the word "millennium" might actually separate it, although they do have to be millennium scholars to qualify. We do support the expansion to use the money for the intent of the donors.

Spencer Stewart, Chancellor, Western Governors University Nevada:

I am here in support of this particular bill. My remarks will be brief. I would certainly like to thank Senator Kieckhefer and Treasurer Conine for their work on this bill and for consideration of it by this Committee. As a private, nonprofit institution with a teacher's college, we are certainly supportive of the expansion of this particular bill. We view this bill as being a "Nevadans First" bill. What I mean by that is, this fiscal year, Western Governors University (WGU) Nevada will graduate over 900 individuals. Of that number, over 200 will be graduating with undergraduate and graduate degrees in teaching.

We applaud this bill for several reasons, one of which is it enhances and expands the pathway into the teaching profession. As someone who has been with the Nevada System of Higher Education and now with WGU Nevada, I think our commitment is to create pathways for individuals to enter the profession irrespective of the institution. I am here to urge your consideration. Not lost on me is the fact that this week is National Teacher Appreciation week.

Vice Chairman Flores:

Seeing no further testimony in support, is there anyone here wishing to testify in opposition to S.B. 414 (R1)?

Jack Rovetti, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I like the bill. I testified about the bill. I really want to save my money. I really like the bill and I like the one Zach [Conine] talked about.

Vice Chairman Flores:

Just so we get the record clear, you support the bill. Is that correct?

Jack Rovetti:

Yes.

Vice Chairman Flores:

The testimony for the record will reflect that you are in support of Senate Bill 414 (1st Reprint). Thank you for coming. I want to make sure I have not missed anyone else here for support. [There was no one.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in opposition to the bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify as neutral to the bill? [There was no one.] Are there any closing remarks? [There were none.] I will close the hearing on Senate Bill 414 (1st Reprint). Is there anyone here for public comment?

Bradley Keating, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District:

We are here to provide you with a fantastic pre-K to 20 good news minute. I just want to talk quickly about education in Nevada and mention the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, which is an award given throughout the United States to students for academic success. Of the 3.6 million students expected to graduate from high school this year, more than 5,200 candidates qualified for the 2019 award. That number was brought down to 161 high school seniors by SAT and ACT scores and a number of other things. The U.S. Department of Education just honored those 161 students, 3 of whom were Nevada students. We are incredibly proud of Arthur Acuna from Las Vegas at Bishop Gorman High School; Ananya Sahiba Dewan from North Las Vegas at Northwest Career and Technical Academy; and Crystal Giselle Vargas from Carson City at Carson High School. We just want to congratulate the three of them on their great success.

Lindsay E. Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District:

It seems right to end today with a good news minute. Today, the National Merit Scholarships for 2019 were announced. Out of 1.6 million high school juniors, 22,000 high schools entered this competition. We have 4 National Merit Scholars in the Washoe County School District this year: Matthew Cornell from Incline High School; Jacob Freed from McQueen High School; Yun Seung Kim from Reno High School; and Daniel Sorensen from Reno High School. We are proud of our Washoe County School District National Merit Scholars.

Michael Flores, Chief of Staff, Nevada System of Higher Education:

Last month we had a Closing the Achievement Gap Conference. The regents invited some national leaders to talk about how we are going to close the achievement gaps among students of color. They talked about real success stories happening around the country and what we need to do here in Nevada. We are proud to take the time to focus on those issues.

Today is Gear Up Day, so if you see students walking around with a Gear Up sign or button, make sure you say hello and welcome them, please.

Graduation season is upon us. Our first graduation is happening this Saturday in Pahrump for Great Basin College. We are going to be graduating more than 10,000 students this academic year, which we are extremely proud of. That is our good news minute.

Vice Chairman Flores:

Is there any further public comment?

Assemblywoman Torres:

I think we would be remiss if we did not take a moment to recognize all the great teachers we have. I am sure there are some teachers in our audience as well. I want to give a shout-out to my favorite teacher—my mom, a high school English teacher at Eldorado High School. She does a phenomenal job inspiring kids every year. After teaching in the district for well over 15 years, I think she has inspired thousands of students at this point. Make sure everyone takes some time to thank a teacher this week.

Vice Chairman Flores:

I would also like to thank your mom. I am a big fan of hers. For those of you who are in the audience, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Bella Fiore Wines will be having light appetizers for everyone. At 8 p.m. we will be starting the candlelight vigil for our Chairman at the front steps of the Legislative Building.

Mr. Chairman, we will miss you.

This meeting is adjourned [at 2:25 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sharon McCallen
Recording Secretary

Lori McCleary
Transcribing Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Vice Chairman

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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