

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

**Eightieth Session
May 28, 2019**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Edgar Flores at 3:41 p.m. on Tuesday, May 28, 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, Chair
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 Selena Torres

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Jill Tolles (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Pat Spearman, Senate District No. 1
Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Senate District No. 5

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Colyn Abron, Nevada Youth Legislator, Senate District No. 1
Stephanie Woodard, Senior Advisor on Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services
Dan Musgrove, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Stephan Page, Regional Organizing Lead, Human Rights Campaign
Brooke Maylath, President and Advocate, Transgender Allies Group
Donald G.T. Gallimore, Sr., Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Michael Hackett, representing Nevada Public Health Association; and Nevada Primary Care Association
Elisa Cafferata, representing Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada
Hawah Ahmad, representing Charter School Association of Nevada
Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director, Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association
Jorge Sanchez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Joel Pietza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Sara Urbina, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Andrea Carranza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Natalie Carranza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Jesus Faz, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Aly Sanchez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Sylvia Carranza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
May Jimenez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Leo Altan, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Eunice Urbina, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Elizabeth Povions, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Joshua Torres, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Katherine Vivas, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
David Foscus, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Jose, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Bobby Gibson, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Marta Urbina, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Rudy Hernandez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Celia Villalobos, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District
Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Department of Education
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents

Chair Flores:

[Roll was taken. Committee protocol and rules were explained.] We have three items on the agenda today. Senator Spearman and Senator Woodhouse, is there a preference on who would like to begin? As we are incredibly limited on time, testimony will be limited to two minutes. If we are having long, meaningful exchanges that are important between

members of the Committee and presenters, I would ask that you finish the conversation offline. Sometimes not moving things fast enough is how bills die. I would like to open the hearing on Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint).

**Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to the mental health of pupils.
(BDR 34-551)**

Senator Pat Spearman, Senate District No. 1:

I, along with my youth legislator and one of my constituents, will be presenting Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) for your consideration today.

The bill requires the elementary and secondary schools of Nevada to develop and implement policies for prevention of suicide. According to the Office for Suicide Prevention in Nevada's Department of Health and Human Services, suicide was the leading cause of death for 8- to 18-year-olds in Nevada in 2018. Most recently, in January and February of 2019, the Born This Way Foundation surveyed more than 2,000 young people nationally. As a result of their survey, the Foundation found the following: Nearly 90 percent of respondents said mental health is a priority; 40 percent considered themselves mentally healthy; one-third of the young people said they lack reliable access to resources, and they cite not knowing where to go. All of these are barriers for mental health assistance.

Closer to home, the Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey estimated 85,000 Nevada youths felt sad or hopeless for two weeks or more; nearly 44,000 youths seriously considered attempting suicide; 39,000 made a plan; and 24,000 Nevada youth actually made an attempt. Our purpose is not to recite a long list of statistics; instead, I hope that you have realized now that there is a huge problem with suicide among our young people here in Nevada. Clearly, we have disaffected young people who do not see any support from the system that is available to them. At this time, I would like to let Colyn Abron come in to share his story. He is the one who brought the idea to me and worked with me on trying to get this bill perfected so that it makes sense, not just to us as policy people, but he was also very instrumental in guiding me in terms of what people in his age group really need from the standpoint of suicide prevention.

Colyn Abron, Nevada Youth Legislator, Senate District No. 1:

February 20, 2018: Dear family, friends, or whoever reads this. I am so stressed and tired. I really want to die. Like I try to do the best in school, but I cannot because I am depressed. My parents expect everything to be perfect. I have an essay due tomorrow and I cannot focus because of my anxiety and my depression. I do not know why I feel like this. I feel like I am being overdramatic, but I really want to die. I just swallowed a few pills and I do not feel good.

Senator Spearman:

That was Colyn's experience just a little over a year ago. Fortunately, I think he said his mother found him in time. He could have been a statistic, but instead, we thank God that he is here today.

Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) has existing provisions in the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) that would require school governing bodies, public schools, private schools, and charter schools to develop a plan to be used to respond to a crisis, an emergency, or a suicide. Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) will be more specific. Instead of just having a plan, S.B. 204 (R1) requires action. The bill has been considered by both the Senate Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Finance and it has sustained one amendment to address projected costs and certain issues. Let me summarize the provisions of the bill.

It requires those schools and governing bodies to adopt a policy that includes procedures for suicide prevention and intervention; procedures for community outreach; and training for teachers and pupils. Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) also requires training in suicide prevention for all school personnel. Finally, it requires courses in health to include mental health.

In first reprint, because I am concerned about these vulnerable populations of young people, my initial intention with S.B. 204 (R1) was to require all schools to act. However, some of the private schools and the charter schools expressed concerns that some of the provisions would challenge their autonomy and challenge their religion.

I worked with representatives from the Department of Education, the charters schools, and the private schools to come to a compromise. Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) as amended provides that when private schools adopt their own policies to comply with the provisions of section 10 of S.B. 204 (R1), they will not be required to address the needs of certain identifiable groups of pupils at high risk. These private schools may choose to include the needs of pupils who are affected by suicide, who have disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse disorders who reside in settings other than a traditional home, who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ), or who are high risk for suicide based on scientific research.

While I understand the concerns of the private schools, I hope that most of them will go ahead and include in their policies the need for so many young people who are confused and feel as though they do not belong. One of the things that stands out to me is the statistics I read to you at the beginning of my testimony do not differentiate between religious affiliation or not. It does not differentiate between people who are Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or Baha'i. It does not differentiate between any of those. What we do know is that children in all categories can be susceptible to this. You will probably hear from some people that enacting S.B. 204 (R1) will infringe upon their religious beliefs, and I would direct you right now to section 10, subsection 1.

I am certainly hoping that after I was trying to be instructive in the Senate Committee on Finance, that the people who are against the bill understand the definition of "consultation." That is what section 10 does. Section 10 says you can do this "in consultation" with parents,

community members, with boards, whomever you want. It does not require people to use any specific language or any specific resource. They can do this as they see fit in consultation. I wanted to say that just in case there are some folks here who still do not understand the word "consultation."

I also want to note that there were a number of fiscal notes on S.B. 204 (R1) as introduced and the Department of Education indicated that it would be minimal expense. I do have a copy of an email where they rescinded their fiscal note. The public school districts said that there could be costs associated with developing the curriculum, but they indicated that they already have programs in place and noted that the model developed by the Department of Education will require some additional services, but it would not be at an additional cost.

I believe, and I hope that you all will read that these monetary costs, whatever they may be and however they may be used, are really an investment to assist our children and adolescents who desperately need our help.

I want to read to you some names and organizations who are supporting this idea and whom I have worked with over the course of the past seven to eight months as we try to perfect this bill. Some of them are:

- Rachel Martin, Deputy Executive Director for Born This Way Foundation, which you may all recognize as being the foundation Lady Gaga and her mother established a few years ago.
- Trista Miller, Community Outreach Coordinator for Tuck and Run Foundation, which is Chris McLemore's 501(c)(3) where he works with children.
- Sam Brinton, Head of Advocacy and Government Affairs for The Trevor Project, a national organization that has a lot of outreach to prevent suicide and offer intervention for suicide for some of the more vulnerable populations.
- United Citizens Foundation.
- Denisha Mingo, who has MHS Behavioral Services, Inc..
- Kristy Keller, Project Director for Moonridge Group, where they facilitate the work of Nevada Medical Center.

You may remember that the Moonridge Group was here a few weeks ago when we had Philanthropist Day at the Legislature. You may also recognize Julie Murray's name as associated with Three Square food bank and a number of other community organizations that help.

With that, I think that we are living in a paradox right now. We have more communication because of social media, but all of that communication still seems to isolate students and isolate people who desperately need to reach out and help folks. Technology has increased our means to communicate with each other, but the irony is that technology has also increased our sense of isolation. We have less face-to-face intervention and our children can

be hidden behind an emoji. Social media can be a means to impose cruelty. I am asking you to address this alarming trend among Nevada's young people. Imagine such hopelessness at such an early age, and then imagine that you could take steps to reach out to those lost individuals to ease their pain.

I received several letters from these organizations, and in one of the letters, the Born This Way Foundation went to a school in Las Vegas and spoke to a principal. They did not identify the school or the principal, but the principal was very anxious and seemed to be a little nervous. That was because they had recently lost a student who completed suicide.

Last week when I was reading the floor statement for this bill, I received an email from someone who was probably watching online and they said to me, Thank you, because they had worked with a youth group at one of the denominational churches and last year—and nobody saw it coming—they had a 16-year-old complete suicide. When you consider the fact that 13- to 24-year-olds here in Nevada are the most likely to die from suicide, what we have is a crisis; but it is a crisis that we can do something about.

I will end and let Colyn say some things if he needs to. However, I want to go back and say, again, that "consultation" means exactly that. I am a Christian by faith. I respect everyone's religion and there is nothing in this bill that tells me that I have to be Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, or anything else. Just know that in this bill, we are talking about helping youth. It does not matter whether they go to a private school or public school; all youth, right now, are vulnerable. Let me add this one thing: Lady Gaga's foundation is already preparing. She has a residence in Las Vegas right now—the Park MGM—and they are already preparing to go to several schools in Las Vegas to help with these types of programs and to answer questions that some of the people who are trying to put it together may have.

Colyn Abron:

As I read my letter, those were supposed to be the last words before I planned on leaving this earth on February 20 before I almost committed suicide. I was fortunate enough to have a supportive family who helped me reach out for help, and I am doing a lot better. However, everyone's story is not the same. Many students lack the resources and the support system to seek professional help. The question I was asked is why I or many other students did not reach out for help. Many people who have been suicidal or who are suicidal will testify to the fact that it is hard reaching out for help because there is still a stigma around mental health and you do not know what is going on. Mental health being taught in health classes is objective. Students with teachers who teach this information will get this information versus those who do not.

Although my speech at the beginning was very emotionally charged, there are statistics to prove that this is an epidemic growing in our society. Given that 44,193 Americans committed suicide in 2015 alone, do you think we should acknowledge our mental health? According the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 90 percent of those suicides were from a treatable mental health disorder. Nevada ranks as the fourth state with the most suicides. Our society literally focuses more on our oral hygiene than our mental

hygiene. We brush our teeth two times a day, we floss, but we do not acknowledge our mental health. If I were to ask you if you would rather lose your teeth or your mind, which would you choose? However, the World Health Organization recognizes the full spectrum of health as complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Our current schools' acknowledgement of mental health by not teaching mental health and the lack of mental health resources have left too many of our students undocumented, undiagnosed, and unaddressed.

When starting this bill in the Nevada Youth Legislature, one of my fellow legislators came up to me and recounted a story of when she, too, went to her counselor and spoke about how she was suicidal. Her counselor told her, unfortunately, there is nothing she can do. Later, my fellow legislator then attempted to commit suicide on numerous occasions and soon reached out for help and is doing a lot better.

The question I am going to ask you is, what are you going to do about it? You have the power right now, as a legislator for the state of Nevada, to vote for a bill that will save lives in Nevada. You have the power right now to make sure that our students are educated about the signs and the symptoms of mental health. Studies show that students who receive this type of education are more likely to seek help. Because mental health is a growing epidemic in our society and because when I see my peers turning to alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs—not for recreational purposes but to escape the feeling of being depressed—and not knowing how to deal with it, that is a problem. As someone who represents more than 30,000 constituents in Senate District No. 1, one in five will be diagnosed with a mental health disease. We can no longer turn a deaf ear or a blind eye because this aspect affects every aspect of our society. We must choose this bill; we must vote for S.B. 204 (R1). Make a change. Educate instead of medicate. By teaching students the truth about mental health, we provide ourselves with the resources and the tools needed to promote a more healthy student and society.

To conclude this testimony, I had the opportunity to participate in the Las Vegas Sun Youth Forum where more than 1,000 students in the Las Vegas community came together and talked about the things that are needed. There was an article written that I emailed to each member on the Assembly Committee on Education that shows how important this issue is. It is not just my story; it is the fact that there are many, many different students in Nevada and in our country dealing with this issue. I want to thank you for your time.

Chair Flores:

We want to thank you. We appreciate your sharing your story with us. I know that was not easy for you to do, but in doing so, you empowered a lot of people, so thank you for your words. With that, we will come back to Carson City. I do not know if you wanted to do anything in addition to the presentation?

Senator Spearman:

Yes, with your indulgence, I would like to read section 10, subsection 1, so we can make sure this is clear in case anyone still does not understand "consultation." "The governing body of each private school that provides instruction to pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, shall, in consultation with pupils, parents or guardians of pupils, school employees, persons who provide mental health services to pupils, persons and organizations with expertise in the prevention of suicide. . . ." These are some suggestions and any that they do not like, they can eliminate. Please, once again, I would say that there is nothing in this bill that requires anyone of any particular religious faith, faith community, to change their denominational affiliation or the way they think about God or not.

Stephanie Woodard, Senior Advisor on Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services:

I am also a licensed psychologist in the state of Nevada. I want to show my appreciation for the honest testimony provided by Colyn Abron. Unfortunately in Nevada, while his story is certainly unique to him, I do think that he really struck a chord when he said that we have many, many of our youth who are struggling with thoughts of suicide. It is important to understand that the Office for Suicide Prevention, Division of Public and Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services, strives to be available to provide the consultation necessary if this bill should pass, for our schools and school districts to reach out for additional information and guidance related to how they can shape this policy and to have as much evidence based in it as possible.

We also do quite a bit to promote training and education on suicide prevention statewide, and that is often through a partnership with the Department of Education and school districts.

Chair Flores:

Members, are there any questions?

Assemblywoman Miller:

My question comes from someone who works in a school and is fully aware of the suicide protocols and fully aware of the enormous amount that happens every year in our schools, including elementary school. I see this bill talks about Grade 7, but we do address suicide protocols in elementary school as well. We also know that technology such as SafeVoice has increased what we know. I always applaud the students because they are heroes when it comes to sharing information when a student is having suicidal ideation or even when it comes to certain school violence. Our kids are really the heroes in coming forward to staff with that. I also know that earlier in this session we had someone who reported—and I do not recall exactly who reported—that 51 percent of youth suicide is actually prevented or stopped at the school level. The way the bill is written, it seems as if nothing is happening at the schools. Yet, again, I know the full protocol, and when parents are involved, they sometimes do not follow through with what is suggested at the school.

I am wondering where the gaps are. Is this not happening somewhere? As I read the bill, it feels as if this would be a new invention, and yet I am trying to figure out where the gap is and where it is not happening. Is it geographical? Is it certain areas or school districts in the state? Again, that is not taking away from the need, the epidemic, and the tragedy that we are going through right now with our youth. I am just wondering where the real gaps are, where this is not being implemented.

Senator Spearman:

It is not that the schools are not doing anything. The Born This Way Foundation from December 2018 to the end of January 2019 did a survey of students in schools. That survey revealed some alarming information with respect to knowing where and to whom they can go for help, where they need to go for direction, how they can talk about it, how they can talk about their feelings, and some of the other resources. I do not want anyone to think this is a new invention. It is another way for us to solidify that safety net, considering the fact that 24,000 Nevada youth—not Wisconsin, California, Ohio, Indiana—24,000 Nevada youth attempted suicide. That says to me that we are doing some things, and we are probably doing a lot of things right. One of the things I hope will happen with this is that people will start looking at what they are doing and what someone else is doing, and we will begin to collaborate more. That is one of the reasons why the Born This Way Foundation and Mr. McLemore's foundation are moving out into the schools so they can make sure we are doing this in a coordinated effort. Schools are doing things right where we need to try to coordinate. As you heard from Colyn Abron, he was in school and I think he said in his testimony that he did not know whom he could talk to. This is just a way to shine a brighter light and to make sure that we are connecting all of the dots. Whatever we can do to save students' lives, I think we should.

Assemblywoman Miller:

With that, because I know you were also stressing the point about having parents involved, for me personally, we cannot legislate that. I know I am being very cautious as I say this, but I know there are times when parents are called at home and they do not follow through or accept what their child is going through. How do you envision bringing the parents more into the fold? I do not know if that is more with education or consultation, as you were saying. This is not just a stunt. It is not for attention. Kids need some care and support.

Senator Spearman:

If you look at section 10, subsection 1, there are some suggestions in terms of how to reach out and whom to reach out to. You cannot legislate for parents. Let me just say that often, especially in southern Nevada, parents get a bad rap. People say that because they are not involved with a parent-teacher association, or because they did not show up. Well, most of the parents in my district are working. Many of the parents I know are working more than one job. Another reason to have this is so that we can start connecting the dots. There are some parents who want to be involved in their children's lives. I know Colyn Abron's parents and I know his pastor, and all of them are concerned about him, and all of them want to be involved. However, somehow, in February 2018 he felt so alone that he actually acted upon a decision to take a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

Assemblywoman Miller:

We are so blessed that you are still here. That is the No. 1 thing.

Chair Flores:

Members, are there any additional questions? [There were none.] I would like to invite those wishing to speak in support of Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint).

Dan Musgrove, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am with Strategies 360, but today I am actually putting on my private citizen hat. One of the things I do in my spare time is I am chair of the Clark County Children's Mental Health Consortium. I want to say that May 9 was Children's Mental Health Awareness Day and we were lucky enough to have Governor Sisolak and his first lady present a proclamation. The theme of that day nationally is suicide prevention and what we can do in our communities to help prevent that. I am fully supportive of this bill because I think that is one of the tools that we need to help prevent what is happening in our schools and with our kids today, so I am very much in support.

Stephan Page, Regional Organizing Lead, Human Rights Campaign:

Suicide, as we have already established, is a very real and devastating problem all across the country. In fact, according to the CDC, suicide is the second-leading cause of death for 10- to 34-year-old age groups. Research also shows that certain communities, like the LGBTQ-plus community, have even worse mental health outcomes. The CDC has shown that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are almost five times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality, more than 40 percent of transgender adults have attempted suicide and 92 percent of those have attempted before the age of 25. The research clearly shows that LGBTQ-plus youth are at a dangerously high risk of ending their lives. Luckily, Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) specifically addresses mental health for these targeted communities, including students with disabilities, homeless youth, and the LGBTQ-plus community.

Lastly, I would like to say for anyone who opposes this bill, simply for the fact that it will help gay and transgender students, your lack of support shows that you are complicit in the innocent deaths of young children. No one deserves to be harassed, bullied, or discriminated against to the point of ending their lives. To members of this Committee, I urge you to support S.B. 204 (R1).

Brooke Maylath, President and Advocate, Transgender Allies Group:

Mr. Page has given a good overview of the numbers. Presently, I have no real interest in defending my life experiences as a transgender woman or to teach basics about transgender people today. I will say that I and others like me are an equal part of the human experience. LGBTQ people have existed since the dawn of humanity, long before any current religion began to demonize and denounce us. Stigma and isolation are the root causes of depression

and despair, which can lead to suicide, especially for young persons seeking their own path in the world. Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) is crafted to teach the adults in our educational institutions how to identify those in need, and require schools to identify community social resources that can provide support. That is a very simple ask, for our children are our future.

All one needs to do to have ample reason to support this bill is to review the past two hearings on this legislation where those in opposition made it a point to say that suicide prevention is great as long as it does not include LGBTQ kids. They have attempted to categorize those kids as an ideology, which is their way of dehumanizing children whom they do not understand. An ideology that preaches hate, even if wrapped as a religious belief, is one that does not respect the lives of children who are just trying to find their place in the world, an ideology worthy of nothing but contempt. The LGBTQ people are human. We are not perfect. We are doctors, lawyers, plumbers, and electricians. We are students, teachers, performers, and artists. We are stardust, we are golden, and we are billion-year-old carbon. We are Nevadans who deserve a chance to live. Please support this bill and reject the hate of others.

Donald G.T. Gallimore, Sr., Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am speaking for myself, although I am the third vice president, Reno-Sparks Branch 1112, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. I do not see any problems with this legislation. I appreciate Senator Spearman bringing this up. I used to coach youth sports for about 20 years. I have had to go through all of the stuff of parents and how their households are run. I have intervened in at least two potential situations—one with a mom and one with a kid—and I have had probably three or four kids who have actually succeeded in suicide. I have seen this in the past. This bill is simply stating that the creation of training, and then the identifying and implementation of a program that really does not need discussing. We have a page and a half of existing *Nevada Revised Statutes* that has almost everything that I have seen in it. From what I have seen, this should be covered. There should be training and suicide prevention in our school systems. The administration of it should be automatic. Our counselors have a tremendous job, but for them to only be taught the training—it should be the entire staff.

Michael Hackett, representing Nevada Public Health Association; and Nevada Primary Care Association:

I am here today on behalf of the Nevada Public Health Association and the Nevada Primary Care Association. Both organizations strongly support this bill, and we urge your support as well.

Elisa Cafferata, representing Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada:

We are here in support of our friends at the Transgender Allies Group as well as in support of this bill. Like Dan Musgrove, I would like to put my personal support on the record. I feel very strongly about this issue. I have lost two cousins to suicide in their twenties. I do not know if this bill would have helped, but I feel if there is anything we can do to help these families and help these young people, then we should do it. I would encourage your support.

Hawah Ahmad, representing Charter School Association of Nevada:

Today we are here in support of this bill. Clearly, there is nothing that I can see that will give you the message that the young man in Las Vegas has not given you. I urge your support, especially on a personal level. Growing up in northern Nevada, we did not have a lot of degrees of separation between knowing someone who did commit suicide when we were children. Legislation like this is very important to destigmatize mental health to ensure that we give minors the help they really need.

Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director, Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association:

We are also in support of Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). This is a proactive bill that requires school districts to prioritize prevention of suicide and provides training to educators, students, and other school staff, including school resource officers. Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) also outlines appropriate responses to suicide or attempted suicide and delineates counseling services be made available to the school communities. At a time when suicide is one of the leading causes of death among children and young adults, the supports present in S.B. 204 (R1) are especially critical for all Nevada students.

Chair Flores:

Is there anyone else wishing to speak in support of S.B. 204 (R1) in Las Vegas? Seeing no one, I would like to invite those wishing to speak in opposition to S.B. 204 (R1).

Jorge Sanchez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am the father of three young children. I am also with Nevada Family Alliance. Members of the Assembly Committee on Education, I have been present at each one of the hearings for Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint), and without fail, in each hearing parents have expressed their concern about sections 10, 11, and 13 of this bill. Our voices have not been heard. So far, only one word has been amended, which is the word "may" in section 10 of this bill. Despite there being much talk thereafter to amend the various problematic areas in this bill that infringe on private schools, there have been no actions from the legislators yet.

Members of the Assembly Committee on Education, each individual life matters. I, too, like Colyn Abron, wrote my last words, and thank God I did not go through with the process. I also lost my grandfather to suicide when I was 14 years old. That, however, does not give me the right to take away or to infringe upon the constitutional protection that private schools are granted in the name of suicide prevention. The fact that we have a clear problem with suicide in Nevada does not mean that S.B. 204 (R1) is that clear solution. Specifically, since current law already requires private schools to have suicide prevention plans, as Assemblywoman Miller stated, I believe we have a problem of enforcement, not necessarily that we have a problem in which we need to bring a new bill.

Sections 10, 11, and 13 all contain language that directly infringes upon a private school's ability to teach children according to their parents' beliefs. Part of those beliefs include, but are not limited to, suicide prevention. This is the reason why parents put their kids into private schools.

After each one of the hearings, we have been hammered by the bill's sponsor with the first part of section 10 which states that a private school can, "in consultation," make up their own suicide prevention plan which may include the Bible and any other belief system. This is true. It is in the bill. I would like to point out section 13, page 17, and lines 8 to 14. This excerpt of the bill gives the power to any individual to claim damages if the school suicide prevention does not satisfy the individual who is claiming those damages. This, in fact, puts into question, what good is "in consultation" if anyone can come and claim damages based on the policy?

I would also like to ask the sponsor of the bill to please address our other concerns.

Joel Pietza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

First of all, I would like to read the First Amendment of the *United States Constitution*: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

I agree that suicide is a horrible tragedy. I am in opposition to Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). Part of some of the language threatens the autonomy of private schools, particularly the schools that do not receive any type of government funding. The sponsor of the bill has chosen to ignore the first part of section 10 which states that a private school can "in consultation" make up their own suicide prevention policy. We already have prevention plans in place. The suicide prevention law is not about preventing suicide. Sections 10, 11, and 13 all contain language that contradicts what the sponsor of the bill has chosen to ignore. Sections 11 and 12 deny or revoke the license to operate as a private school if it violates or fails to comply with section 10, which means if the school fails to follow all of the language added to current law, they will revoke the license.

Question: We worry about the prevention of suicide, but we do not care about the babies that are killed in mothers' bellies. I am asking you to please amend section 13 and remove the newly added language to current law.

Sara Urbina, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a mother of four children. I do not have a degree, but I can read, and I certainly know when my children's education has been threatened. In the last financial meeting, I stated that my biggest concern as a parent was section 10, subsection 3. My heart hurts for those children who are going through such horrific situations. What concerns me is the fact that private schools are being imposed requirements from section 10. Private schools already have a suicide prevention plan in place, so why are they being asked for one that complies with section 10?

Never mind the words "in consultation" because that does not eliminate the requirement "must include, without limitation" in the rest of the section. Not only that, sections 12 and 13 are threatening private schools. If they do not comply with section 10, their licenses will be revoked.

On May 3, the sponsor of the bill stated some prejudgments, particularly with Christians, statements that make me feel discriminated against. After that day, I am more concerned than ever. Think about it. Are these prejudgments going to be used to generalize and attack religious private schools? Is the State Board of Education going to use the same personal opinions and viewpoints? That would be discrimination and violation of private schools' autonomy.

I know that not everybody thinks or believes like me, but that is okay. What is not okay is to disrespect me and infringe on my rights because of what I believe.

Andrea Carranza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

As a concerned citizen, I am in opposition to part of sections 10, 12, and 13 of Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). Despite the amendment already made, the bill still contains language that can be open to interpretation. My worry is that once the bill is passed and processed, those in charge of implementing it may infringe on the autonomy of the private school. For example, it has been hammered into our heads, quite aggressively, in these past few meetings that the words "in consultation" as stated in section 10 protect the private schools. However, even if that were true, the words "in consultation" are no good if the policy created can still be rejected. Section 13, page 17, lines 8 through 19 state that any person claiming damage can file a complaint against the policy that was created "in consultation" with the parents' and schools' desired source. The words in section 13 render the words in section 10 useless.

Finally, section 12 permits the Board to revoke a private school's license "if it reasonably believes that the holder of the license or permit has violated the Private Elementary and Secondary Education Authorization Act or any regulations adopted under it or has failed to comply with the requirements of section 10 of this act." My question here is, who is going to determine if a private school's policy written "in consultation" is in violation? How do you even determine that? I am asking you, members of the Assembly Committee on Education, not to vote for this bill unless the necessary amendments are made.

Natalie Carranza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here to express my opposition to Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). Like everyone present here today, I do not condone suicide. I believe that God made every life precious and they should be valued as such.

My concern with this bill is that there is language in it that may be interpreted in a way that can bring harm to a private school. Meeting after meeting we have been told that the term "in consultation" gives a private school the freedom to create its own policy with whatever source it chooses. However, throughout the bill there is clear language that states that any person claiming damage can make a complaint about said policy. This puts the license of private schools at risk.

I would also like to add that a suicide prevention policy is already in place in every school. I think we need to focus our time on reinforcing these bills rather than creating a new bill that can infringe on the rights of private schools. Please consider these points to make the appropriate amendments before voting.

Jesus Faz, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here as a parent. I did not actually know that opposing this bill—as I have been accused already before I even spoke—that meant I am a hater. Somebody said that I am an accomplice to suicide if I oppose this bill.

Senator Spearman thinks that I am illiterate. She does not believe that I know what the word "consultation" means. I find that pretty offensive. We have not even said anything and she is calling us out on that. I think that is very rude.

The reason we want section 10 out is because it specifically includes private schools. We do not want private schools to be included in this bill. The problem is that section 13 allows anybody an opportunity to claim damage. What does consultation mean if anybody can claim damage? Then sections 11 and 12 authorize the revoking and removing of a license. What is section 10 for? What is consultation for, if in section 13 anybody claims damage; sections 11 and 12, what does it matter?

As I was paying attention, every single time we are in opposition to this, we see Planned Parenthood come up, the LGBTQ community come up, and the ACLU come up. There is obviously a hidden agenda here. This bill is not about suicide prevention. That is what we would like to expose. It is not that we are against suicide prevention—nobody is against preventing suicide—we just have a problem with the way this bill is written and it has a hidden agenda.

Aly Sanchez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a mother of three and I am here to express my opposition and concerns about Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). I keep reading this bill and I have a hard time believing that this is about suicide prevention. Please do not misunderstand me; I am in complete support of suicide prevention. In fact, there is already a policy in place which I fully support. Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) infringes upon the autonomy of private schools.

The sponsor of this bill has stated several times that private schools "in consultation" can create their own policy, which means that if my kids' school is allowed to write its own policy based on its own beliefs—if that is so, they could perhaps use the Bible. However, section 13, subsection 1 allows anyone to file a complaint if they do not like it or they do not agree with such policy written by the school, meaning anyone can come and say they do not like the policy and do not agree with it. That alone can cause revocation of the school's license. So is the school allowed to write a policy or is it not? That is a huge contradiction.

It is clear to me that if the policy presented by the school does not comply with everything that the bill is requiring, then the school cannot function. This is an imposition. Also, as far as the required training, page 14, line 33, how do we know who is going to provide that training? Private schools should be allowed to provide the training according to their own beliefs. Are you allowing us to write our own policy or giving permission to the private schools? This is another contradiction. I am asking you to please amend this bill. In particular, sections 10, 11, and 13. By the way, I do know the definition and I understand what consultation means. I do not appreciate being called ignorant just because I am a mother.

Sylvia Carranza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I want to say that I am not against suicide prevention. I do believe that every life is very valuable. I am here because I am concerned about some of the language of Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). Even though the word "must" was changed to the word "may," a lot of the language still puts private schools in danger of losing their licenses. For example, page 17, lines 8 through 19 states any person claiming damages can make a complaint about the policy. This worries me a lot. For this reason, I ask that this bill be amended so that the private schools are not put in danger of losing their licenses.

May Jimenez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

As a concerned aunt of a niece and nephew who attend a private school, I am here to speak on Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). I totally agree that suicide is a big problem in today's society and it has been for a long time. But one of my concerns is the language in this bill. The language in these sections infringes on the autonomy of private schools, and once this bill goes on to the implementation process, it will leave room for interpretations.

Another concern that I have is on page 14, line 33. Teachers and students are required to be trained, but what kind of training will they be receiving, or who will give them the training? What good is it to have a consultation to create a policy if this bill will decide what kind of training the teachers and students will receive? Overall, this will decide what private schools need to follow. Every school is already required to have a suicide prevention policy and a plan on how to help every student. Private schools are private for a reason, and it is because they do not want anyone to control what they can teach and believe in. I am asking you to please amend sections 10, 12, and 13 from S.B. 204 (R1).

Leo Altan, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a concerned citizen. I would like to start by stating that I am opposed to Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint), which is also known as the suicide prevention bill. I am not in opposition of suicide prevention, but one of the things that has been brought up many times is the word "consultation." Consultation means a meeting with an expert or professional such as a medical doctor in order to seek advice. Key word here is "advice." As far as I know, advice means I am going to take information from someone, but that does not determine my final answer.

If the private school is made to break away from the operation of public schools, then I would expect that it would be respected. Obviously not. As Senator Spearman has stated time and time again, she has concentrated on the word "consultation" but has left out words that others have mentioned such as "revoke" and "may."

One thing that particularly concerns me is the word "may." It is optional, if you will. It is up to other people whether or not we get to keep a license of a private school. Do not pass this law as it is an infringement on the autonomy of a private school and an infringement on the rights of many.

Eunice Urbina, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here today because suicide is a topic very near to my heart. I know what it is because of the experiences I have had with my family and friends. I know that it is a horrible thing to go through. Time and time again I have come with my parents expressing the concerns that we have with this bill. We have spoken in every hearing, saying that even though we agree with suicide prevention, this bill would do much more than that. It will infringe on the private schools' rights.

We are aware the policy can be created "in consultation" with the people of the school's choice, and that it allows the schools to put their religion in the policy. We understand that clearly. However, our concerns are that in section 13, subsection 1, it allows any person to claim that it is in violation of section 10. In section 12, subsection 1, it states that the license of the private school will be revoked because of this. Therefore, even if we can create a policy that agrees with our religion, if anyone complains, the license will be revoked. I ask you today to please make the amendments necessary to make this safe for private schools before voting for this bill.

Elizabeth Povions, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here today to speak on Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). Although I am in favor of the intent of this bill, I do have issues with some of the language and what that language is requiring private schools to comply with. I have attended all of the hearings on this bill and in each one we have asked that section 10 be removed in order to protect private schools, but it has been to no avail.

After many hours of parents and concerned citizens asking for the removal of this section, only one word was amended. During the last hearing we were even accused by the sponsor of the bill of being ignorant of the Bible and the meaning of the word "consultation," which has come up many times today. It was also mentioned that private schools gladly accept money from the government, but are not willing to comply with its requirements.

Today, I would like to clarify that not all private schools accept financial help from the government. I have been the administrator of a private school for 26 years and not once have we accepted money from the government and not once had an attempted suicide at our school. We are compliant with the current law and have a suicide prevention plan in place that meets all of the needs of our students. I am asking you today to please amend section 10

to specify that nothing in this bill shall require a private school to go against its religious beliefs or practices. The requiring of pupils and teachers of a private school to receive training in something that goes against their beliefs is immoral and unconstitutional. Please amend section 10 and also listen to the rest of the people who have testified here today before you pass this bill.

Joshua Torres, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I would like to express my opposition to Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) in regards to certain aspects mentioned in sections 10, 12, and 13 of the bill, particularly section 13, subsection 1. They give an individual the right to denounce a school if the school suicide prevention policy does not comply with that specific individual's needs, whatever they may be.

I know that in the last meeting, Senator Spearman mentioned how any school can use whatever source they like to make their anti-suicide policy. But based on section 13, if the anti-suicide policy that the school made does not comply with what the individual deems as fit—maybe LGBTQ, Muslim, Christian, you fill in the blank—the private school may lose its license. Because of infringements like these on the rights, beliefs, and freedoms that are placed upon public schools, parents place their children in private schools so these rights will not be unconstitutionally infringed upon.

It depresses me and really discourages me to know that the bill will not cover and protect anyone, just those of us who will fit into the spectrum that you have placed as mentioned in section 10.

Katherine Vivas, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Suicide prevention is a topic that is very dear to my heart. I struggled with suicide for many years, and I think that it is an important issue that should be addressed. I think that each one of us here agrees with that. I did not prepare written notes because I was not planning on being here today due to some time constraint issues, but because of schedule changes, I was able to be here.

I would never want anyone to take away the rights of someone else for my sake. I am a firm believer that where someone else's rights begin, my rights end. That is what is happening here. I am 100 percent in favor of us taking care of those who are the most vulnerable among us, but it is not okay for us to say we are going take over everyone else's life for the sake of saving someone else. We can find a better way. We can find a more suitable way to help others and we can find a middle ground, giving private schools their autonomy, giving them their space, and giving them back their rule of themselves. That is the whole point of why parents put their kids in these schools—so they can be taught a certain way. If we make the amendments that are being proposed by so many people, in so many ways and so many words, we would be able to accomplish that. I hope you hear this and how everyone is speaking out to you about making those amendments and making the changes that are necessary.

David Foscus, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am against Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). Do not get me wrong. I am not against suicide prevention, but after the amendment, I still find certain language confusing to me. Although the amendment still says that you "may" follow section 10, it still threatens in section 11 and 12 to revoke or deny a license if a private school does not comply with section 10. Does that even make sense? There is a huge contradiction. It is like when I ask my dad if I can watch television, he says, Yes, you can watch it, but you cannot turn it on. It does not make sense to say you may follow it, but if you do not comply, I am taking your license away. That does not make sense. We cannot call ourselves a nation of freedom if the government will force us to believe what the government wants us to believe. That is only done by dictators. That is only something a communist government would do—force people to do what they want them to do. My question to you is, are you a dictator? Only you can answer that. Please vote no on S.B. 204 (R1) or remove private schools out of this bill completely.

Jose Jose, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I came to speak in opposition of section 10 of Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). I believe in laws that are made to protect each individual, but I am against when those laws have their own agendas already set. Every person in the world should have suicide prevention. I myself went through it as I went through high school. Now I am a college student and I see how in my private school the fact that they had some sort of a suicide prevention helped. But I believe that the term "private" in "private schools" means what it means. The government should not infringe on what the private school feels, thinks, believes, or what it stands for. Private schools are made private for a reason. For this reason, that is why these private schools are made. The *U.S. Constitution* has dictated very well what the freedoms of each individual are and if a private school wants to be what it is, let it be.

I am against section 10 because of the fact this is not only for suicide, but it is also promoting an agenda that has been promoted every time we have come here for the past two years, which is the LGBTQ community. I am against the fact that for so many years we have tried to stop. We have come and spoken up, but you only hear what you want to hear and do what you want to do. It is time for you to make a choice and start listening to us. Us as older brothers, us as people who actually care for their kids, not like the schools who do it for money. Thank you and please revoke section 10 of S.B. 204 (R1).

Bobby Gibson, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I would like to start off by saying that I am in opposition to Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). I am not opposed to any form of suicide prevention. I do not think anyone in their right mind is opposed to suicide prevention. I am opposed to the language used which threatens the autonomy or freedom of a private school. As you all know, a private school is made private because they want to teach what they want to teach. They do not want to teach what others tell them to teach.

I am concerned with this language because it is vague and may be open to interpretation as to how one may comply with the model plan for the management of suicide, crisis, or any other form of emergency that the suicide prevention bill may provide.

Another concern is what would happen to those who do not comply as to what is stated or interpreted. Would their private school license be revoked or denied if they do not comply? Who is to say what the correct interpretation is? Who is to say who has or has not complied with the regulations given for suicide prevention? All I am asking is for my concerns and the concerns of many others to be met and the language to be changed to something more understandable, something more firm. Something that is not vague or cannot be interpreted in any other way.

Marta Urbina, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am also a concerned Nevadan who wants to see Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) further amended in order to preserve the rights that private schools have to self-govern. Although I appreciate the effort that was done in amending S.B. 204 (R1) in the Senate, I am still troubled at the language found on—as many others have said—page 16, lines 37 through 43, which states that a private school's license can be denied or revoked if it fails to comply with section 10.

I find it very contradictory as to what was said by Senator Spearman, in which it was assured that private schools have the freedom to develop their suicide prevention plan "in consultation" with their community and various resources. Yet the plan must still be scrutinized and approved. By whom? Who will approve the plan? Who will ultimately approve the plan? There is no doubt in my mind, both at the local and state level, that officials and representatives should take the steps in dealing with, and finding the solution to, alarming rates of suicide. However, it should not be done at the expense of the liberties of private schools. Thank you for your consideration. I would like to see the legislation amended to ensure the autonomy of private schools.

Rudy Hernandez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here to express some concerns about Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). I understand that I am ignorant about the legislative process and accept having some difficulty understanding the language of S.B. 204 (R1). Two things are clear to me. The first is that this bill greatly benefits those who go through difficult emotional and physical problems, who feel they have no hope, and tragically decide to escape their reality by committing suicide. But I am confused as to why you are creating S.B. 204 (R1) when there is a current suicide prevention law known as *Nevada Revised Statutes* 388.253, which states that trustees of a school district or governing body, charter schools, or private schools need to establish a development committee to develop a plan to be used by public schools, charter, or private schools in response to crisis, emergency, or suicide. My only conclusion is that the proposed S.B. 204 (R1) has another agenda within the language of the bill that later on can be interpreted in any other way, as that has been the case in previous bills.

The second thing that is clear to me on this bill is that private schools can create their own policy for suicide prevention "in consultation" with, but the bill also states in subsection 1 of section 13 the following: "Any person claiming damage either individually or as a representative of a class of complainants as a result of any act by an elementary or secondary educational institution or its agent, or both, which is a violation of the Private

Elementary and Secondary Education Authorization Act or regulations promulgated under it . . . may file with the Superintendent a verified complaint against the institution, its agent or both." This could happen to private schools if someone does not agree with the prevention policy. This bill gives the same power to hurt private schools as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the health department, or fire department if we are not up to code. This type of language puts private schools' freedom in a precarious situation by allowing the government to interfere with our freedom to teach based on our religious beliefs, and one day we could possibly lose our sovereignty as private institutions. Please, I am asking you to amend section 13 and remove the newly added language to the current law.

Celia Villalobos, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here as a parent opposing Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint). I agree with everything everybody here has said regarding private schools. My kids have been in a private school since they started kindergarten. Five years ago, my husband was deported. I do not have any other means of support. The private school teachers have, in every way possible, been included my kids' lives in there. Anything that happens with my kids, they have mentioned to me and called me right away. I do not know why this bill wants to infringe on private schools. It is against the law. It is taking parents' rights, and I do not know why you would put "revoke" if you really want to protect kids' lives. Please take into consideration everybody's testimony. My kids would have gone through the cracks in a public school, I would think because of the class sizes with 30-plus children. Does the teacher have time for each child? Have you considered this? Is this something else you want to consider? I am just a mother. I am a concerned parent. I am here not only for my kids; I am speaking for all of the kids who have gone through this. As with the young man who was here, I, too, went through wanting to commit suicide at that young age, but I thank Jesus for not letting me go through the whole process, and I had people who supported me.

Chair Flores:

We will come back to Carson City. Is there anyone else in opposition in Carson City? Seeing none, is there anyone as neutral?

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

I am here today as neutral. We do have a suicide prevention plan in the Washoe County School District and I do believe that it would comply with most of the requirements. It does expand, so we would have to revisit it at the district level and grade levels. We are happy to revisit the plan if the legislation passes, but without any additional resources, we do have a fiscal note on the bill. We do expect there to be some cost associated with it. Otherwise we will just be sort of reshuffling the deck and using the resources that we currently have to meet the requirements of the law that is being proposed here. We are willing to do that; we just want to make it clear that without any additional resources, there is going to be some reshuffling. We are committed to suicide prevention. We have our partnership with The Children's Cabinet where we do a universal screening for signs of suicide for all of our seventh graders. That runs about \$100,000 for our district in partnership and that is grant-funded right now. We would be building off of the partnership that we have there and the resources that we provide within the district.

**Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment,
Department of Education:**

I just want to put on record that we will be removing the small fiscal note on this bill.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

We certainly appreciate Senator Spearman's understanding of the importance of suicide prevention. Our school districts have suicide prevention protocols, and as Ms. Lindsay Anderson said, we would have to go back and look at those to make sure that they are in compliance with this law.

Our main concern, of course, is further training and the time and money involved with that. Again, we are in the neutral position because we do understand the importance of this topic.

Chair Flores:

Is there anyone else as neutral? Seeing no one, Senator Spearman, if you could please give any closing remarks you may have. First, however, Assemblywoman Krasner has a question for legal counsel.

Assemblywoman Krasner:

I am looking at *Nevada Revised Statutes* 394.211, which talks about private elementary and secondary educational institutions exempted, and I am wondering if this already applies to the bill. Could you please comment?

Victoria Gonzalez, Committee Counsel:

That is correct. That section would apply here and in reading that together with section 11 of the bill, which is NRS 394.251, 394.301, 394.311, the exemptions would apply in that situation in terms of the licenses being applied or revoked. However, the way that section 10 has been drafted as part of the bill, adopting that policy would still apply to all private schools whether they are exempt or not. For exempt private schools, by reading NRS 394.211, those exempt private schools would not have consequences for not incorporating the policy.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

I want to put on the record that I apologize for not being here. I had a personal appointment I could not get out of, but I want to assure the sponsor and all of those who participated that I have listened. Thankfully, we have this technology. I appreciate all of those who have been involved and for the comments that I was able to listen to.

Senator Spearman:

I am glad that the question was asked so that it could put to rest any ideas that what we are trying to do is infringe upon the rights of private schools. The NRS that you see mentioned in the bill hark back to existing statute. For those who are religious—and there are several other exemptions in there—they can simply apply for an exemption.

One thing that section 10 does, and I heard several people come forward and say that they already have one, if they already have a policy, then that is good. Still go "in consultation" with some of the parents, the teachers, and some of the community organizations. I was very intentional about making sure that it was not structured in a very narrow way because I do understand that for some, that consultation will include community organizations, such as a church in the neighborhood. I know that Catholic Charities has some outreach, in addition to the Boys and Girls Club. "In consultation" with those groups—and those are suggestions.

Let me put to rest any misunderstanding that this bill will infringe upon private schools. You can look at the NRS and clearly see that it does not. I will go back to what I said. I am very passionate about this, and I am passionate about this because we are losing too many children to suicide.

We heard yesterday in one of the other committees someone who works here in the building who came to the witness table and talked about a friend of their 14-year-old niece who committed suicide. That is disturbing to me. As far as I am concerned, when you have 24,000 kids in Nevada, you do not know if they are black, white, Asian, or Latino. You do not know if they are Christian or atheist. You do not know who they are, but 24,000 attempted suicide. That is a "hair on fire" moment.

I will not apologize for my passion. What I will say is that I never said that anyone was ignorant or stupid. What I said was, please look at the word "consultation," because everything after that is what you are supposed to do. If you already have a plan in place, that is good. But everybody remember, 24,000 Nevada children attempted suicide. I believe those statistics are just for the past two years. God, how many others completed suicide? We do not know that because it is not necessarily written as a part of the cause of death. In many communities, even if it is suicide, for religious or parochial reasons they will not say that—24,000 students attempted suicide in Nevada. I think that is probably almost the population of Carson City. Please look at this and I encourage your passage. For those of you who are concerned about private schools, that is already taken care of in statute.

Chair Flores:

Thank you, Senator Spearman. To those specifically in Las Vegas who came in opposition, I want to thank you for coming together. This is obviously your building and we appreciate your coming out and being part of the process and making sure that your voices are heard. We appreciate lobbyists, but they are paid to be here. You are taking time out of your schedule to be here, so I just want to thank you for your time. I appreciate you all.

[Two additional private citizens testified in opposition to Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint) but declined to provide their full names for the record. Their testimony has been omitted.]

With that, I am going to close the hearing on Senate Bill 204 (1st Reprint).

Assemblywoman Miller:

For the sake of time, and I know we have abandoned certain rules, are we able to make a motion to move this bill right now?

Chair Flores:

All rules have been suspended for purposes of moving bills.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER MADE A MOTION TO DO PASS
SENATE BILL 204 (1ST REPRINT).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TORRES SECONDED THE MOTION.

Members, is there any discussion? [There was none.]

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYWOMAN TOLLES WAS ABSENT
FOR THE VOTE.)

Assemblywoman Torres will take the floor statement. Next on the agenda, we have Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint). Senator Woodhouse, welcome. We appreciate your patience. I know you sat there for some time.

Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint): Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-730)

Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Senate District No. 5:

Chair Flores, I am asking your advice at this moment. The bell has rung for the Senate to be back on our floor. I do not want to lose my two bills. What can we do?

Chair Flores:

This is what we can do. We are going to go ahead and recess for now and we will likely not come back, but we will recess in case we have an opportunity to do so. Otherwise, the Assembly Committee on Education will be meeting tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. Would that work for you? I do not know how your schedule in the Senate is looking.

Senator Woodhouse:

I chair the Senate Committee on Finance and we have bills all morning tomorrow starting at 8 a.m. until 11 a.m.

Chair Flores:

Is there a possibility of getting a stakeholder to potentially help with the presentation?

Senator Woodhouse:

Let me see if I can find someone. These two bills are bills I have worked my whole life on, so I will see what I can do and I will get back to you.

Chair Flores:

It would really be to your pleasure whether or not you would prefer that we schedule them for tomorrow morning, or if you would prefer, try to squeeze in an afternoon hearing on Thursday, which is typically when we meet. That is contingent on the reality that we know our schedules are slightly crazy right now. You tell me.

Senator Woodhouse:

My preference, Chair Flores, would be Thursday afternoon because we do have time after floor in the afternoon that I could make without a problem. I will check and see if I have some speakers who could cover them. I will let you know this evening if I have speakers for tomorrow morning. Otherwise, Thursday afternoon.

Chair Flores:

Perfect. This is what we are going to do. We are going to recess for now, and we will continue allowing the Committee to know where we are at. We will set them on the agenda for tomorrow morning. Should we find someone who can present them, we will do that. Worst-case scenario, we move to Thursday. We are really hoping we can get it done by tomorrow. I think it is in the best interest of the bills to try to do that.

With that, Senator, thank you. We will invite anyone wishing to come forward for public comment. [There was no one.]

Senate Bill 376: Revises provisions relating to the Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation. (BDR 34-732)

[Senate Bill 376 was agendaized but not heard.]

We are recessed [at 5:13 p.m.].

The meeting was adjourned [at 10:31 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sharon McCallen
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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