

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

**Eightieth Session
March 14, 2019**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chairman Tyrone Thompson at 1:35 p.m. on Thursday, March 14, 2019, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Chairman
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:

Assemblywoman Shea Backus, Assembly District No. 37

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst
Sharon McCallen, Committee Secretary
Olivia Lloyd, Committee Assistant



OTHERS PRESENT:

Joi Holliday, Senior Policy Analyst, Government and Community Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education
Kelly Venci Gonzalez, Attorney, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada
Bailey Bortolin, Statewide Advocacy, Outreach and Policy Director, Nevada Coalition of Legal Service Providers
Michael Flores, Chief of Staff, Nevada System of Higher Education
Michael Maxwell, Manager, Youth Development and Social Innovation, City of Las Vegas
J'Myla Dixon, Member, Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring, Department of Education
TeQuia Barrett, Education Programs Professional, Office of Student and School Supports, Department of Education
Natha C. Anderson, President, Washoe Education Association; and representing Nevada State Education Association
Kelly Crompton, Government Affairs Manager, Office of Administrative Services, City of Las Vegas
Bradley Keating, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District
Lindsay Anderson, Government Affairs Director, Washoe County School District
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Cyrus Hojjaty, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Chair Thompson:

This is the last day of Children's Week. We appreciate those who have joined us this week. [Roll was called. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] Today we will have hearings on two bills. We will start with public comment. Is there anyone here for public comment? We will limit public comment to two minutes per person.

Joi Holliday, Senior Policy Analyst, Government and Community Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education:

We are thrilled to come on the record in support of Assembly Bill 235 as this bill continues to support mentorship throughout the state. As you know, the Nevada System of Higher Education has various mentorship programs, including the Nevada Promise Scholarship. We are thrilled to continue to work with you as changes to this commission are made so we can support mentorship statewide.

Chair Thompson:

Is there anyone else here for public comment? [There was no one.] We will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 180.

Assembly Bill 180: Revises provisions governing the transportation of certain children to school. (BDR 34-692)

Assemblywoman Shea Backus, Assembly District No. 37:

I am a pro bono attorney and mentor for the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's Children's Attorneys Project (CAP) ([Exhibit C](#)). For those who are not familiar with CAP, it provides counsel, advice, and legal representation to abused and neglected children. A majority of the children in foster care in Clark County are represented by attorneys who work for the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada. For various reasons, including legal conflicts of representation, attorneys not employed by the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada will serve as pro bono counsel to children in foster care. I have the privilege to do just that so I come before this hardworking Committee as an individual who actually represents children who are subject to abuse and neglect before the courts.

To assist me with the introduction of Assembly Bill 180, I am joined by Kelly Venci, Esquire. Not only was she my college roommate, but she is the team chief for the Education Advocacy Program for the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada. She will provide testimony from Las Vegas to further expand on studies pertinent to continuity of education and the impact of A.B. 180. I am also joined by Bailey Bortolin, Esquire, Statewide Advocacy, Outreach, and Policy Director for Nevada Coalition of Legal Service Providers, and Jennifer Jeans, who is with Washoe Legal Services as a CAP attorney. They will assist with any questions or add on where I may omit.

This bill has three distinct purposes:

- To ensure the privacy of children in foster care who reside in child care institutions as defined in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 432A.0245—such as Kids Kottage Child Abuse Shelter in Reno or Child Haven in Las Vegas—by having the school district providing transportation and making the childcare institution the first pick up and the last drop off;
- To ensure that children in foster care are permitted to stay in the school they would naturally matriculate from, their school of origin; and
- To ensure that children having a disability are entitled to the least restrictive environment for transportation.

First, I will talk about the privacy of children in child welfare services. When children are first removed from their parents, they are typically placed in emergency congregate care. Such congregate care facilities include Child Haven in Las Vegas and Kids Kottage in Reno. Due to our lack of foster homes in Nevada, some children, particularly school-aged children, can remain in congregate care for an extended amount of time.

One of my clients spent more time at Child Haven than other placements. She spent over 136 days at Child Haven. She started having problems at school after people realized she was in foster care as she was being picked up from Child Haven. Ultimately, she did not want to go to school. She woke up late and delayed going to school, requiring Child Haven

workers to drive her separately after the bus had come. She was extremely embarrassed by others knowing she was living at Child Haven.

Historically, in order to protect abused or neglected children's privacy, school buses have picked up at these locations first and dropped off at these locations last. With changes in bus schedules, this has become an issue, and the schools have failed to respect the privacy of these children. While the problem seems to have been resolved informally, this informal policy should be codified to ensure that these children remain protected in the future. Section 1, subsection 1 of A.B. 180 explicitly would provide this mandate.

Second, I will go into maintaining school of origin and matriculation for children in foster care. For those who served in the 79th Session, this may seem like déjà vu according to the legislative history. There is always a reason why we need to propose bills. I will go into why we are bringing this portion of A.B. 180. In 2017, the 79th Session enacted laws to comport with the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, a federal law codified in *United States Code*, Title 20, Section 6301, et. seq. This Act ensured that a child in foster care would remain enrolled in his or her school of origin, which is the public school in which he or she was enrolled before entering foster care. This Act requires each state to adopt a plan that describes the steps the state would take to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care. Accordingly, it seemed that the school of origin would include schools that the child would matriculate to.

Since the enactment of Nevada law to ensure that children in foster care continue to attend their school of origin as determined in his or her best interest, at least one court has not extended this law to permit children in foster care to continue on to the next school that they would naturally matriculate to from their school of origin. The case involved two siblings. Just prior to the removal of these children from their parents' care, the younger sibling had completed eighth grade and the other sibling was attending the high school which the younger sibling would have matriculated to. The Eighth Judicial District Court ruled the "school of origin" did not include the school that the child who finished eighth grade would matriculate to. Instead, the court concluded that since the younger sibling completed the highest-grade level in middle school, the child no longer had a school of origin for which there is a rebuttable presumption of enrollment. Thus, the Clark County School District (CCSD) was not required to enroll the younger sibling at the high school that the child would have been in according to the feeder pattern. Moreover, the court also concluded that the Clark County School District was not required to provide a zone variance or transportation to the feeder high school from the middle school.

Since NRS 388E.105 clearly sets forth that "there is a rebuttable presumption that it is in the best interests of the child to remain in his or her school of origin," we now bring this current bill, A.B. 180, on behalf of those children in foster care to make sure Nevada law clearly sets forth that a child in foster care is permitted to continue to his or her school after completion of the school of origin. It is also believed that such interpretation is consistent with the Every Student Succeeds Act. Further, and as stated before this Committee during the 79th Session,

"It has been found that educational stability, staying in the school of origin, contributes to the continued educational success of the child" [Assembly Committee on Education, April 12, 2017].

Section 4, subsection 2 of A.B. 180 would add language to NRS 388E.105 to make it abundantly clear that,

... the agency must determine whether it is also in the best interests of the child to enroll in the junior high school, middle school or high school in which pupils enrolled in his or her school of origin generally enroll. In making this determination, there is a rebuttable presumption that it is in the best interests of the child to enroll in such a junior high school, middle school or high school.

So there is no doubt about the continuity of education, sections 4 and 5 add to existing statutory language addressing "school of origin" to also include "junior high school, middle school or high school in which pupils enrolled in his or her school of origin generally enroll." Section 5 also adds language to NRS 388E.125 preventing an education agency from denying its duties to provide transportation premised upon it not providing transportation to the school at issue.

Last but not least, I will go into the least restrictive environment for transportation of children with disabilities. There are schools where a child with any disability is sorted onto the special education bus even when special assistance is not needed. These children are sorted onto the special education bus, dropped off, and picked up across the street from the students without disabilities who are riding nondesignated special education buses. At times the children who are required to ride the special education bus are told to leave class early at the end of the day to go line up, labeling them as different and requiring them to miss instruction. When children with disabilities are able to ride the nondesignated special education bus with students without any disability, they should be integrated with other students for purposes of transportation.

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [34 CFR §300.107 and 34 CFR §300.117] provides that the individualized education plan (IEP) team is responsible for determining if transportation is required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education and related services and how the transportation services should be implemented. The IEP should describe the transportation services to be provided, including transportation to enable a child with disabilities to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities in those services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that child.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act does not actually require education agencies to transport children with disabilities in separate vehicles, isolated from their peers. In fact, many children with disabilities can receive the same transportation provided to nondisabled children consistent with the least restrictive environment requirements as set forth in the regulations following the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. With that, we have

provided section 1, subsection 2, but in working with interested stakeholders on this portion of the bill, we have discussed a conceptual amendment to make it clear that unless otherwise articulated in an IEP that a child requires transportation assistance, it is presumed that the child is to be transported in a method consistent with the child's least restrictive environment.

We appreciate your time today in considering our testimony in the hope that the Committee will support A.B. 180.

Kelly Venci Gonzalez, Attorney, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada:

I am the team chief for the education advocacy program. I represent foster children and parents in special education proceedings. My team also runs the volunteer education advocate program for children in foster care who have no one to make education decisions for them.

I just came across an article in *The Nevada Independent* that covered the 2018 graduation statistics ["Graduation Rate Hits New High but Trouble Spots Remain Among Certain Student Groups," by Jackie Valley, December 14, 2018]. I want to emphasize there is a crisis for children in foster care. The graduation rate for the 2018 class was 46 percent—less than half of our students in foster care are graduating high school. It has also been shown that students lose four to six months of academic progress for every school change they experience. Most of our kids experience about ten placements during their stay in foster care. Education stability is a huge issue that affects our kids.

I want to speak from my time representing kids. I represented one family with four children. They were removed from their mother for her failure to protect them from sexual abuse. The mom decided to side with her boyfriend, not with her children. As you can imagine, they lost everything—their pets, their clothing, their home, their community, and their neighborhood. They were put in a new community, new neighborhood, new clothing—everything was new and different. All one of the girls wanted to do was start high school with her friends; it was really important to her. Her friends had been with her through the trauma she suffered; this was her one request. The school district denied it because she had finished eighth grade and was starting high school. We tried to work with the school district; we tried to work with the court system. We did not get anywhere. During this time of representing her, I met with her four or five times. The first things she asked each time was, "Am I going to be able to go to school with my friends?" I had to tell her no. That was one of the harder things I had to do because that was the one thing that was so important to her. We all know that as kids get older, their friends become really important to them. It was a huge issue to her. She wanted to go to school with her sister and with her friends, and she wanted to go to a particular school. As counsel for her, it was very frustrating, especially when a bus was going to pick up her sister who could continue in her school of origin. I would ask that you consider this from the perspective of the children—how this feels when they lose everything. If we can keep something stable for them, something consistent and familiar—consider how important that is for them.

Fifty-nine percent of children removed from their homes return home. That is why I think school of origin is so important. We have to keep our kids stable, in the same schools if at all possible. Right now, the protections do not exist for our kids.

I have also worked with kids at Child Haven. At the beginning of every year, it is chaotic when the bus comes to Child Haven with other kids on it. My kids have told me that the other kids will make fun of them by asking if they have parents. As a parent and an adult who wants to protect kids, that is horrifying to me. If we can codify that and make sure every year we start with protecting our kids' privacy rights, that only benefits and serves our kids' best interests.

As to the last component—the least restrictive environment issue—I think it is a violation of federal law to place kids on more restrictive buses when they do not need to be on them. Doing this protects the school district from liability because it is a fairly clear Individuals with Disabilities Education Act violation when you place a child in a more restrictive environment than they need to be in. It is an issue when we go to IEP meetings. We talk about bus transportation. The issue of which bus is the most appropriate for a specific child given his or her disability is thoughtfully considered by the school district and by all parties. It should be made based on what is needed, not what is convenient. I would ask that you support A.B. 180. I appreciate your time. [Written testimony was submitted ([Exhibit D](#)).]

Bailey Bortolin, Statewide Advocacy, Outreach and Policy Director, Nevada Coalition of Legal Service Providers:

I would like to add that I have spoken to all of the school districts. I believe the fiscal analysis will be reconsidered in light of the intent and presentation of the bill. I will let them speak directly to that. I know this is not a money committee, but I anticipate those changing.

Chairman Thompson:

Does that conclude the presentation?

Assemblywoman Backus:

That concludes the presentation.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there questions from the Committee?

Assemblywoman Torres:

Thank you for bringing forward this bill. This is something I have seen affect students. I had a student last year who was removed from my class and sent to a different school in the middle of his senior year. He was a varsity football player. He did not want to play football for a different team because his team was his family. It is important to note that the issue is not just what the student wants that makes the impact. It is not just removing them from a school; it has an effect on their social and emotional health, well-being, and the changing content. You stated students lose four months of content when they change schools. It is important to note it impacts children significantly and makes them less college- and

career-ready, which is ultimately our goal. What can be done for students who want to participate in extracurricular activities and athletics at the high school level? In my example, the young man would not have been able to continue to play football if he had moved.

Kelly Venci Gonzalez:

Part of normalcy is that children have the right to participate in extracurricular activities. If a child wants to play football and makes the team, we will work diligently with Nevada's Division of Child and Family Services within Health and Human Services and CCSD to make sure that child is able to participate, even if he or she has to take a late bus home or if alternative arrangements need to be made. That is allowed in the law and should be considered and promoted.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone wanting to speak in support of Assembly Bill 180? [There was no one.] Is there anyone opposed? [There was no one.] Is there anyone neutral? [There was no one.]

Assemblywoman Backus:

I do not have any closing remarks, but I want to thank Assemblywoman Torres for giving her example.

Chairman Thompson:

We will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 180.

[Assemblyman Flores assumed the Chair.]

Vice Chairman Flores:

We will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 235.

Assembly Bill 235: Revises provisions governing the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring. (BDR 34-149)

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17:

I represent a portion of the City of North Las Vegas, the city where I was born and raised. Today I am excited to present Assembly Bill 235, which revises provisions governing the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring. There is a slideshow running in a loop ([Exhibit E](#)). You can see former Governor Brian Sandoval signing Assembly Bill 144 of the 79th Session in Las Vegas [pages 2-5, ([Exhibit E](#))]. Many people came in for the signing [pages 6-7]. There is a picture of our Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring [page 8].

I will start with a quote from Frederick Douglass that frames the overall work being done in this hardworking Committee. "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." In my opinion, one of the ways we do that is through mentoring. If we each think about it, wherever we fit in the community, there is that trusting adult or peer in our lives that made a difference for us. Mentoring is important.

I will give you a journey of our Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring. Assembly Bill 205 of the 78th Session was the initial introduction. As a training tip for new legislators—your idea and your passion does not always come to fruition the first session. I learned that. I was appointed to complete the last 40 days of the 2013 Session. When I came in 2015, I thought my bill would be a slam dunk. I could not imagine anyone not wanting to value mentoring. It was not that this body did not value mentoring; it just was not our time yet. You come back stronger, so in 2017 we introduced A.B. 144 of the 79th Session. I get chills when I think about the hearing because we had the smaller hearing room in Las Vegas. I was told there were people flooding the hallways; we had a full room here in Carson City because people wanted to share and support the bill. We had our nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and our students participate. Former Governor Sandoval signed the bill in 2017. I received a text when I was on the Assembly floor that he had signed it, but we did the formal signing in Las Vegas later. We appointed people to the Mentoring Commission. I want to thank Nevada's Department of Education, specifically TeQuia Barrett, for the support provided. The chairman of the Mentoring Commission is Michael Flores; our vice chairman is Dr. Michael Maxwell, who works with the City of Las Vegas.

There is an organization called MENTOR that is the think tank or authority on mentoring ([Exhibit F](#)). If you go to their website, [www.mentoring.org], you can find everything you need to know about mentoring. Kasina Boone and I attended an affiliate breakfast for organizations that want to embrace mentoring and learn how to take it to the next level. Being that we have our Commission, we went to find out about it. Mr. Flores will talk about it more. In January, a few days before the 2019 Session started, 15 to 20 delegates from Nevada were in Washington, D.C. We put Nevada on the map because we had a workshop on collective impact showing how the community can come together around mentoring. We highlighted A.B. 144 of the 79th Session. Only a few other states have commissions on mentoring. Many wanted to know how Nevada did it.

In A.B. 144 of the 79th Session and in A.B. 235, there was need for a statewide mentoring coordinator. We passed the bill without a fiscal note by design. We felt the power and the resources were in our community. Knowing that state resources are limited, we were able to work closely with our community partners. I want to publicly thank the Department of Health and Human Services, specifically Director Richard Whitley and Ms. Julia Peek. I spoke with them about the Mentoring Commission and they were able to locate some resources for us, so we have a full-time mentoring coordinator onboard. The money will not go on forever, but it is a start for us.

Those of us on commissions, or who have passed legislation about commissions, know that everyone on a commission is busy, so you have to have someone who day to day pushes whatever your cause is. Eboni Caridine has taken the position. I would also like to acknowledge the Las Vegas My Brother's Keeper Alliance, established in 2012. They are tireless advocates, professionals, faith leaders, and students who are working toward

education equity with a subcommittee on this topic; law enforcement; and community engagement, under which the Mentoring Commission falls. This session you will see many bills about law enforcement.

I will walk you through the bill. It is a cleanup bill with only my name on it because I just wanted to get it through. I did not get signatures on it since everyone supported the previous bill. I hope you will do the same with this bill.

There is a conceptual amendment ([Exhibit G](#)). I will go back and forth between the bill and the amendment. We are going to increase the size of our Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring to 15 members. Section 1 ([Exhibit G](#)) adds a member of the Assembly, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, and a member of the Senate, appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate. We want to keep this moving. I am not saying the community cannot make this happen, but having legislators interested in the cause onboard keeps it flowing when we are not in session. To silence the legislators, they will be nonvoting members. It will be a community-led commission. We will have one member who is not a legislator who will be appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate, one by the Speaker of the Assembly, one by the Minority Leader of the Senate, and one by the Minority Leader of the Assembly.

We had some challenges regarding attendance and meeting quorum. Working with the Office of the Attorney General, we are putting into statute that failure to attend two consecutive meetings might result in a member being replaced.

Section 2, subsection 5 of the bill completely removes our Mentorship Advisory Council. They had a retreat and decided it was in their best interest to eliminate the Mentorship Advisory Council, members of which were mentoring organizations. When the Mentoring Commission looked at the grand scheme of things, they said there might be a conflict.

There are some appropriations in the bill. We wanted to be bold in what we were saying. We wanted to put this in with the things the Legislature funds. We wanted to be able to offer capacity-building grants for mentoring organizations. These grants would be small—perhaps \$500 to \$1,000, which would go a long way for a grassroots organization to build its board or to do proper mentor matching. One of the visions for the Mentoring Commission was to have a statewide mentoring conference.

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

I have had the honor of being chairman for this Commission. I want to thank Assemblyman Thompson for his leadership and vision on this. I have a nonprofit organization, the Nevada Youth Network, that does a lot of mentoring. We work with low-income students living in public housing. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of good role models in that community, so it is important to have other people come in and be there for these children. When I started the Nevada Youth Network, I did not have direction on how to start a nonprofit—what the mechanics were or how to do it.

The Mentoring Commission has heard consistently there is not a lot of capacity in the state to support the good work happening throughout the state. We are proud of the work we have been doing over the last two years. One thing we do at every meeting is hear from a mentoring group about the work they are doing. There is so much good work being done throughout the state. It is important that we have representatives from the Washoe County School District and the Clark County School District on the Mentoring Commission. We are all coordinating to find out what some of the needs are throughout the state when it comes to mentoring. As Assemblyman Thompson said, one of the most consistent things we hear from these organizations is they need some support—small grants or technical assistance. We want to figure out how we can be more supportive. One of the things I want to touch on is with becoming a MENTOR Network affiliate—they offer a lot of technical assistance and support, which we do not have. This Mentoring Commission is a first step in the right direction, but becoming an affiliate would help us get to the next level in supporting our organizations and institutions in the state. It is a big priority for us moving through the legislative session. Assemblyman Thompson also brought up having two legislators on the Mentoring Commission. It is important for you to hear what is happening on the ground with these organizations and to hear about the need that exists in our communities. Hopefully, we can make that happen this session.

Michael Maxwell, Manager, Youth Development and Social Innovation, City of Las Vegas:

I am the vice chair of the Mentoring Commission. I will talk to you about the Mentoring Commission. I am in support of Assembly Bill 235. We also have a youth member from the Mentoring Commission here with us. I would like to introduce her.

J'Myla Dixon, Member, Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring, Department of Education:

I am a senior at Legacy High School in Las Vegas, Nevada. I was excited to be voted to serve on the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring in February 2018. I am glad my voice, the youth voice, is being heard on the Commission. I must admit it was a bit intimidating at first because all of the adults were at the table. Through time, I have learned that my perspective and insight are valued.

I would like to share my experience as a Nevada delegate at this year's annual MENTOR conference in Washington, D.C. When we arrived, I was not expecting the cold; in spite of the weather, I had an amazing experience. I learned so much at the summit. The peer group mentoring workshop stood out to me the most because I believe that it would be very effective for youth to be able to mentor other youth. In the session, they talked about how they break up the ages. High schoolers mentor middle schoolers and elementary students; middle schoolers mentor elementary students. I believe that giving the youth a role in the mentorship field would not only be effective for the younger ones, but it would also be more effective for the older ones because they have someone who looks up to them and they may want to do better. I have shared this information with our Commission in hopes that we can incorporate it in our mentorship program in our city.

Michael Maxwell:

If we can reach youth like J'Myla by the work we do through the Mentoring Commission, we would look forward to your support to enable us to reach more youth and to meet the organizations that we support. On that note, I would like to highlight some of the things our chairman said. Throughout the state, we have a number of organizations that need support when they are looking at some of the things they want to do in mentoring. In January, we did a gap analysis in conjunction with the My Brother's Keeper Alliance to find out some of the needs of our organizations, such as capacity building and how to recruit members. Some of the organizations need help with starting up as 501(c)(3) organizations, with business licenses, and so forth. With your support of A.B. 235, we will be able to help many of the organizations doing the mentoring work around the state.

Assemblyman Thompson:

This concludes our presentation. I want to make it clear that this is not a program; this is a policy commission. We are looking for solid guidelines in working with mentors, as we want to make these safe spaces for our young people. We need to have background checks, learn how to properly match mentors with youth, figure out how many mentoring organizations we have in the state, and look at expanding into the rural communities. I must mention Christian Ward, our other student, who does great work. He is a senior at Legacy High School. I am very proud of him because he is putting peer mentoring in action through an organization at the school called Men of Promise, which is fully supported by Ken Sobaszek, the principal. He literally and intentionally is looking for students who are doing really well and some who are struggling. He has come to the adults and told them what he needed and asked for their help.

Vice Chairman Flores:

We will start with a question from Assemblywoman Miller.

Assemblywoman Miller:

We all know the value of having a mentoring peer or adult in our lives. I feel as if you almost knew what I was going to ask. Does the task force have an idea how many mentoring programs are in Clark County and in the school district? How many participants are receiving some form of mentoring?

TeQuia Barrett, Education Programs Professional, Office of Student and School Supports, Department of Education:

Currently, we have identified over 80 mentoring organizations. We are in the process of reaching out to those organizations to gather information on what types of services they provide to see if they align with the definition the Mentoring Commission has established for mentoring. In doing that, we will be able to gather information on the number of services and the number of students being served throughout the state and in each county.

Assemblywoman Tolles:

I am excited to be here two years later. I remember when this bill came before this Committee in the last legislative session. I have personally seen how mentorship can change

lives. The statistics and research are sound. Mentoring is incredibly important in being able to change the trajectory of individuals' lives. In addition, there are academic and social outcomes.

I have a question in the new language under section 1, subsection 5. I appreciate there is a process in place if a member of the Mentoring Commission fails to attend two consecutive meetings. Is there a way to add clarification that there could be an exemption in certain circumstances? For example, if someone missed meetings because of illness, rather than just not going to meetings, would there be a way to stay on the Mentoring Commission? The bill reads, "the Commission shall," and "the appointing authority shall." I want to make sure we have some sort of clarifying language.

Michael Flores:

We would have no issues with that. It could be added.

Assemblywoman Tolles:

On page 4, line 15 of the original language, it says, "The Commission shall, on or before February 1 of each year, prepare and submit a report outlining the activities and recommendations." Where can we access that report?

Assemblyman Thompson:

It is posted on the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS). The report shows the journey. We had a little bit of a late start. Any time you are dealing with a new commission and with legislation, it is hard to make sure you are meeting legislative intent. Now that they know where they are going, you will see a very different report the next time.

Assemblywoman Tolles:

Where on NELIS can we find it?

Assemblyman Thompson:

It is posted as an exhibit ([Exhibit H](#)).

Vice Chairman Flores:

Are there additional questions from members of the Committee? [There were none.] At this time, I will invite forward anyone wishing to speak in support of Assembly Bill 235.

Natha C. Anderson, President, Washoe Education Association; and representing Nevada State Education Association:

The Nevada State Education Association and the Washoe Education Association are proud to support this bill. We were very much in support of this last session and this session because it makes sense and it is giving power to our students. With the two students mentioned, you can see the empowering of the voices making a huge difference. It is such a wonderful idea to have our students be part of the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring. We believe

the clarifications make sense—the clarification about representation and working with the Department of Education to make sure it is copacetic. We ask you to support the bill because we believe it will make the Commission stronger.

Kelly Crompton, Government Affairs Manager, Office of Administrative Services, City of Las Vegas:

The City of Las Vegas is an active partner in the My Brother's Keeper Alliance and has worked with Assemblyman Thompson on a number of initiatives. We are in support of this bill because it is great for the children within our limits.

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

We appreciate Assemblyman Thompson bringing this bill forward. We were supporters of the bill in 2017 and are clearly supporters of the bill today. We appreciate the work the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring has done and the work of its chairman in making sure our students have mentors. Dr. Jesus F. Jara, Superintendent, Clark County School District has sent you his "Focus: 2024" strategic plan document in the past. It aligns very well with what the Mentoring Commission is doing. We are looking for new community mentors trained to support our students as well as looking for our schools to being adopted by partners and aligned to the strategic plan. This work falls right in line with what the Mentoring Commission does.

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

I am here in support. I am speaking on behalf of Traci Davis, Superintendent, Washoe County School District, who is a member of the Commission. She appreciates the work being done. She also appreciates being one of the few members in the north to bring the statewide message so we can ensure all of our students across the state are receiving this kind of support.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

You have heard from two of the biggest members of our organization. There is mentoring going on in the other 15 counties as well.

Vice Chairman Flores:

Is there anyone else in support of Assembly Bill 235? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to speak in opposition? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to speak as neutral? [There was no one.] Are there any closing comments?

Assemblyman Thompson:

I am really excited about this. I am trying to compose myself. The thing about it is sometimes people think this is just a touchy-feely type of thing, but what is important is that the Mentoring Commission is going to track outcomes. That is the ultimate goal. This is so important because mentoring is going to keep our kids in school and encourage kids who are on the fence that they should go into science, technology, engineering, or mathematics and that someone will go on the journey with them. Mentoring is going to reduce crime by

keeping our kids levelheaded and working with trusted mentors. It will also create the cycle—when you are mentored correctly, it is almost sure you will become a mentor.

[A letter from My Brother's Keep Alliance ([Exhibit I](#)) was presented and Chairman Thompson asked that it be included as part of the record of the hearing.]

Vice Chairman Flores:

At this time, I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 235.

[Assemblyman Thompson reassumed the Chair.]

Chairman Thompson:

At this time, we will go to public comment. Public comment will be limited to two minutes.

Cyrus Hojjaty, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am surprised very few bills have addressed the growing gap between the rich and the poor—income inequality. This country has the largest gap between rich and poor among the industrialized countries. It has been growing heavily since the early 1970s. The fact is we are approaching another Gilded Age. I believe that both parties are largely responsible for the problems we have today. Income inequality delivers a lot of vast problems in our society. It delivers depression and other health issues, and it explains the massive amounts of campaign contributions that we have in our elections. It certainly does not help when get massive third-world immigration. We have a tax system that allows the wealthy and the ultrarich to have havens while the middle class is heavily taxed. It does not help when you have a large number of women entering the workforce. It does not help when you have a lot of small businesses that are regulated and taxed to death. Certainly, I am in favor of stronger private sector unions. As you can see, in the 1940s when we had high private sector unions, wealth inequality had actually fallen. The Culinary Union is not helping. More importantly, one of the main causes of income inequality is our disastrous trade policy. We need to say no to products that are made in China and other overseas countries. Sewing could use a lot of factories here in Las Vegas. Many of you have talked about increasing the minimum wage. Believe it or not, that does not solve the heart of the problem. The fact is the real problem is that our cost of living is going up—rent, tuition, and health care.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone else here for public comment?

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

We are excited to present to you a prekindergarten to 20 years good news minute. We wanted to let you know of some great things happening in the Clark County School District. The Clark County School District was just certified with the second-highest total number of national board-certified teachers in the United States, second behind the Los Angeles Unified School District. That is huge news and a huge accomplishment by the Clark County School District. This made us No. 1 in the United States in our percentage gain of board-certified teachers. An important note is that more than half of our new board-certified teachers are

currently teaching in Title I schools. We appreciate the work the Clark County Education Association, Nevada State Teachers Association, and all of our partners do with national board-certified teachers to make sure our teachers are as great as they can be in our schools.

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

I am thrilled to join the good news minute. I have two pieces of good news. The William S. Boyd School of Law, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, recently received a ranking of 58 out of 192 accredited law programs, which is their highest ranking ever. We are very proud. And yesterday, the Mountain West Conference Men's Basketball Tournament started. We are going to be rooting for our University of Nevada, Las Vegas Rebels and University of Nevada, Reno Wolf Pack.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone else here for public comment? [There was no one.]

This meeting is adjourned [at 2:40 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sharon McCallen
Committee Secretary

Joan Waldock
Transcribing Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Chairman

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is written testimony presented by Assemblywoman Shea Backus, Assembly District No. 37, regarding Assembly Bill 180.

[Exhibit D](#) is written testimony presented by Kelly Venci Gonzalez, Attorney, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, regarding Assembly Bill 180.

[Exhibit E](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "A.B. 235: Nevada Commission on Mentoring," submitted by Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17.

[Exhibit F](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring: Potential Partnership with MENTOR," dated March 16, 2018, presented by Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17.

[Exhibit G](#) is proposed amendment to Assembly Bill 235 presented by Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17.

[Exhibit H](#) is a copy of a report titled "The Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring (NACOM) NRS 385.750 Report," dated January 2019, submitted by TeQuia Barrett, Education Programs Professional, Office of Student and School Supports, Department of Education.

[Exhibit I](#) is a letter dated March 13, 2019, to Chair Tyrone Thompson and members of the Assembly Committee on Education, authored by Lisa Morris Hibbler, Co-Chair Educational Equity Taskforce, Las Vegas My Brother's Keeper Alliance, in support of Assembly Bill 235.