

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

**Eightieth Session
April 2, 2019**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chairman Tyrone Thompson at 12:58 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2, 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 Lesley E. Cohen, Assembly District No. 29
Assemblyman Richard Carrillo, Assembly District No. 18
Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Assembly District No. 1
Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II, Assembly District No. 36



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bruno Moya, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Daniel Carranza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Alicia Padilla, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Tony Yarbrough, Senior Vice Commander, Department of Nevada, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and Vice-Chair, Nevada Veterans Legislative Council
J. Kyle Dalpe, Interim Executive Director, Legislative Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education
Katherine Miller, U.S. Army Colonel (Ret.), Director, Department of Veterans Services
Jason Lamberth, Private Citizen, Henderson, Nevada
Zanna Curry, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Paul, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Stephen Augspurger, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Rocky Finseth, President, Carrara Nevada
Peyton Barsel, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Natalia Jordan, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Johna Tichenor, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Robert Barsel, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Michael Flores, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Jennifer Jeans, representing Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada; and Washoe Legal Services
Natha C. Anderson, President, Washoe Education Association; and Member, Board of Directors, Nevada State Education Association
Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director, Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association
Bradley Keating, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District; and representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Carlos Fernandez, Policy Analyst, Government Affairs, Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce
Randi Thompson, Nevada State Director, National Federation of Independent Business
Paul McKenzie, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Building and Construction Trades Council of Northern Nevada, AFL-CIO

Ray Bacon, representing Nevada Manufacturers Association
Melissa Meetze, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Ana Belen, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Davari Banks, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Maria Gimenez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Ariel Herndon, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Ruth Garay, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Brittanie Rivoli, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
David Lorig, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Natalie Lopez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Christiana Williams, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Anthony Villanueva, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Alonso Aceves, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Jack Tittman, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Miss Abbott, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Rosa White, Private Citizen, Fernley, Nevada
Mike Smith, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Grant Safford, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Nora Blake, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Dylan Blake, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Charlotte Blake, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Sadie O'Flaherty, Private Citizen, Fallon, Nevada
Ellie O'Flaherty, Private Citizen, Fallon, Nevada
Berenice de Leon, Private Citizen, Fallon, Nevada
Rochelle Tisdale, Private Citizen, Fallon, Nevada

Chairman Thompson:

[Roll was called. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] We will begin with the work session and then we will be hearing the bills. Assembly Bill 284 is being pulled for today at the request of the bill sponsor.

Assembly Bill 284: Revises provisions governing the alternative route to licensure of certain teachers who teach pupils with certain disabilities. (BDR 34-1010)

[Agendized but not heard.]

Chairman Thompson:

The first bill we will hear after the work session will be Assembly Bill 429. I will open the hearing for our work session on Assembly Bill 78.

Assembly Bill 78: Revises provisions governing charter schools. (BDR 34-339)

Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst:

Assembly Bill 78 was heard in this Committee on February 28, 2019, and sponsored by the State Public Charter School Authority ([Exhibit C](#)). As drafted, the bill was an omnibus measure related to charter schools. Among its various provisions, the bill requires additional reporting of charter schools, changes references to "charter management organization" to "network of charter schools," and provides for charter schools to act as local educational agencies.

You will recall during the hearing on the bill that the State Public Charter School Authority submitted several amendments to the measure. Following that time, the Committee has received additional amendments which are outlined for you here today for your consideration:

1. Repeal provisions related to the Achievement School District (ASD) and require charter schools operating under contract with the ASD to apply for a charter from an approved sponsor.
2. Require Nevada's Department of Education (NDE) to conduct a comprehensive review of each approved charter school sponsor for compliance with reporting requirements, applicable statutes and regulations, and nationally recognized best practices at least once every three years.
3. Expand the authority of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) to adopt regulations.
4. Specify the SPCSA is deemed a local educational agency for all purposes, including providing a program of special education.
5. Increase the number of members of the SPCSA by adding two members appointed by the State Board of Education.
6. Revise requirements related to the annual report made by a sponsor to the NDE.
7. Clarify that applicable federal and state laws related to homelessness apply to a charter school's enrollment policies.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any questions regarding Assembly Bill 78? [There were none.] I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass Assembly Bill 78.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TOLLES MADE A MOTION TO AMEND AND DO
PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 78.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PETERS SECONDED THE MOTION.

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

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

I will give the floor statement to Assemblywoman Tolles. The next bill on work session is Assembly Bill 219.

Assembly Bill 219: Makes various changes relating to education. (BDR 34-673)

Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst:

Assembly Bill 219 was heard in this Committee on March 12, 2019, and sponsored by Assemblywoman Torres and Assemblyman Flores ([Exhibit D](#)). The bill relates to English learners. The bill requires each school district to provide a student who is an English learner transportation to another school if the school in which the student is enrolled does not employ a full-time teacher to instruct English learners or does not provide instruction or services specifically designed to address the first two years of learning English as a second language. As drafted, the bill also revises the programs of study that are eligible for the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program to include programs to obtain an endorsement to teach English as a second language or special education.

Assemblywoman Torres submitted the attached conceptual amendment [page 2, ([Exhibit D](#))]. This amendment proposes to:

1. Remove the bill's provisions related to transportation of certain students.
2. Require districts to adopt a plan to eliminate gaps in achievement between English learners and students who are proficient in English.
3. Require the plan to be monitored by Nevada's Department of Education (NDE).
4. Require schools that demonstrate a lack of proficiency to adopt a corrective action plan.
5. Implement reporting on the plans to the NDE and the Legislature.
6. Require disclosure by high schools under a corrective action plan, and authorize a zone variance to another school within a five-mile radius that does not have a corrective active plan.

7. Require data concerning the achievement and proficiency of students who are limited English proficient in comparison with those who are English proficient to be disaggregated by trend and subgroup, down to the school level.
8. Require the state examination and college and career readiness assessments to be available in other languages and provide language supports for those examinations and assessments.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any questions regarding Assembly Bill 219?

Assemblywoman Torres:

I just want to make it clear to the Committee that I have worked with the Clark County School District and the Washoe County School District extensively for this piece of legislation and as we wrote the amendments. At this time, it is my understanding both school districts are neutral.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any further questions? [There were none.] I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass Assembly Bill 219.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLORES MADE A MOTION TO AMEND AND DO
PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 219.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER SECONDED THE MOTION.

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

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblywoman Torres. The last bill on work session is Assembly Bill 276.

Assembly Bill 276: Creates the Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force. (BDR 34-1062)

Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst:

Assembly Bill 276 was heard in this Committee on March 28, 2019, and sponsored by Assemblywoman Miller ([Exhibit E](#)). The bill creates the Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force charged with evaluating the challenges of recruiting and retaining teachers, making recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education, and reporting its findings and recommendations to the Legislature on or before February 1 of each odd-numbered year. The Task Force will be comprised of 20 licensed teachers from among Nevada's 17 school districts who will be appointed by their respective board of county commissioners.

Assemblywoman Miller submitted the attached conceptual amendment [page 2, ([Exhibit E](#))] during the hearing on the bill. This amendment proposes to:

1. Require that a licensed teacher appointed to the Task Force must:
 - a) Be currently employed and actively teaching in a Nevada public school;
 - b) Remain employed as such during the duration of their service on the Task Force; and
 - c) Have taught for the last five consecutive years in a Nevada public school.
2. Change the date for the prescription of the application to serve on the Task Force from September 1, 2019, to December 1, 2019.
3. Change the appointing authority to the Legislative Committee on Education rather than the various boards of county commissioners.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any questions? [There were none.] I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass Assembly Bill 276.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PETERS MADE A MOTION TO AMEND AND DO
PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 276.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GORELOW SECONDED THE MOTION.

Are there any questions on the motion? [There were none.]

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblywoman Miller. I will close the work session and open the hearing for Assembly Bill 429.

Assembly Bill 429: Enacts provisions relating to veterans. (BDR 18-168)

Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Assembly District No. 29:

I will give you a brief overview of the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs. I will then turn it over to the presenters in Las Vegas to present Assembly Bill 429.

The Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs is comprised of six legislators; three from the Assembly and three from the Senate. The chair and vice chair are selected by the Legislative Commission. It was my honor in the last interim to be the chair of this committee. The committee held four meetings during the 2017-2018 Interim. The committee voted to forward all ten of its allocated bill draft requests (BDRs) to the 2019 Legislature that address the following topics: state employment, higher education, and dental programs for veterans; sick leave flexibility; provisions

related to out-of-home placements for adults with special needs; the study required by Assembly Bill 299 of the 79th Session which related to training of unlicensed employees and contractors who provide care in certain facilities or homes; and guardianship programs. In addition, the committee voted to send several letters expressing support for specific issues and encouraging specific actions.

Assembly Bill 429 came from one of those BDRs and was passed unanimously out of the committee. I believe I speak for everyone on the committee when I tell you it was an honor to support this BDR that will help our student veterans and also help our state in the long run getting more people into the important science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) fields. I will turn it over to those in Las Vegas and excuse myself.

Bruno Moya, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I served eight years in the United States Marine Corps, deployed to Iraq, and trained over 2,000 Marines for combat. I am here to support Assembly Bill 429. As a Marine, I witnessed the incredible sacrifices that men and women make every day, day in and day out. Our American military is, without a doubt, the best fighting force in the world. We have some new technology being developed by service members, a highly educated force, and a capable and diverse culture.

While an instructor at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, I often asked Marines questions related to joining the military. A large percentage would often answer that they joined primarily to serve their country and because of the robust education benefits. You see many service members join for the service to their country and for a way to become a productive member of society once they leave the ranks.

My experience is backed by research, such as the research completed by Syracuse University where they found top motivators for joining the military were to serve at 52 percent and for education benefits at 53 percent. Furthermore, these members are often first-generation students at 62 percent. That means they were the first in their families to enroll in school. Research in diversity also found that among enlisted recruits, 43 percent of men and 56 percent of women are Hispanic or a racial minority.

Given these statistics, we ask ourselves, Why Assembly Bill 429? I do not need to educate any member of this Committee on the needs of STEAM fields in our state and how we need to support the direction of our growing economy. Supporting a bill that would supply highly educated and capable Nevadans to fill in the current workforce is a win-win for our institutions of higher learning and the economy. The bill would allow veterans who have completed an undergraduate degree and are bona fide Nevada residents to apply for a fee waiver for graduate degrees in science, technology, engineering, arts, or mathematics. The waiver would cover less than half of registration fees and other fees, and the veteran would be responsible for covering the remaining fees.

This bill would work alongside the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) to identify workforce shortages in our state. Furthermore, the bill would allow the Board of Regents of the Nevada System for Higher Education to accept gifts, grants, and donations to fund these waivers.

Roughly 30 percent of veterans began taking college courses while on active duty. This Legislature passed and implemented Senate Bill 457 of the 79th Session, which allows veterans to receive college credit for training and experience acquired during military service. This means there are a large percentage of veterans who have completed an undergraduate degree but may fall short of having enough benefits remaining to complete a graduate degree. Assembly Bill 429 would, therefore, be critical in supporting these veterans in completing their degree and filling the gaps in the workforce shortages critical to Nevada.

While I understand that health sciences may fall under the science category of STEAM, I believe it is important to recognize there is a significant shortage of health care, mental health, and medical jobs in Nevada and would urge the Committee to add verbiage to the bill to avoid any further confusion. I thank the Chairman, the Committee, and especially Assemblywoman Cohen for this opportunity.

Chairman Thompson:

Do you have further statements, or would you like to walk us through the bill?

Bruno Moya:

We have statements from other student veterans.

Chairman Thompson:

Are you prepared to walk us through the bill?

Bruno Moya:

Yes. The bill would essentially allow for any student veteran who has an undergraduate degree and who has completed a bachelor's degree, and who is a Nevada resident, to be able to apply for a fee waiver of no less than 50 percent. The degrees that are covered would be determined by DETR. The Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation would identify workforce shortages in Nevada, primarily in STEAM fields and hopefully health sciences, medicine, and mental health. If this bill were to pass, veterans who graduate are able to apply for a graduate degree for one program determined by DETR and would have their fees waived by the state. It would also allow the Board of Regents to collect any funding through donations or grants, so it would not fall only on the state to cover the fee waivers. [Written testimony was also submitted ([Exhibit F](#)).]

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any questions from the Committee?

Assemblywoman Miller:

In section 4, subsection 1 of the bill it states, "who is a bona fide resident of this State." Do you know what the definition of "bona fide" is? Are we referring to service members who originated from Nevada or who were deployed to Nevada, worked in Nevada, stayed in Nevada, or veterans who eventually moved to Nevada?

Bruno Moya:

I believe "bona fide" resident is covered under *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 396.540. There is a list of criteria to be considered a resident, primarily if a person lives in the state for a certain amount of time. There is other legislation that has been passed previously that would consider persons to be "bone fide" residents. If you review NRS 396.540, it will give the definition. It is lengthy and detailed.

Assemblywoman Miller:

I am assuming for veterans who were living in Nevada before their service, the bill intends to cover them. Is residency different during active service?

Bruno Moya:

Yes, it can be. It would just depend on where individuals keep primary residence while on active duty. It can pose somewhat of an issue. However, with previous legislation, they are covered for any type of residency issues, so that covers them if they are just getting out of the service and transitioning back to Nevada. If veterans had 20 years in the service and were residents of another state then move back to Nevada, they are considered bona fide residents if they fall within the three-year mark of transitioning out of the service.

Assemblywoman Torres:

I think this is a great way to help veterans. My only concern with the legislation is in section 4, subsection 2. I believe the grade point average (GPA) is rather low for a scholarship of this sort. I am not familiar with any state scholarships that have a GPA requirement that low, but I will do some research. I think we might want to look at the GPA and perhaps increase it, rather substantially.

Bruno Moya:

I think that is a great point. The average GPA for veterans is at 3.34, so I do not believe the 2.0 would be an issue.

Chairman Thompson:

Seeing no further questions, I will open the hearing for testimony in support of A.B. 429, both in Las Vegas and Carson City. Please remember, you will have two minutes for comments.

Daniel Carranza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a Marine Corps veteran and served for 11 years. I am currently a political science major at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). I have the privilege of working with veterans day in and day out. I know we are highly competent and highly qualified in a multitude of ways. This bill would match critical occupational needs of the state with qualified individuals. That would be a win for the state.

Although I would have a year of benefits remaining, I would not benefit from this bill, but I do know hundreds of other veterans who will. I am here on their behalf. This bill would incentivize veterans who might not have thought to continue their education to pursue postsecondary studies. As Mr. Moya said, many of the students are first-generation students. This would be an investment not only in the state, but also in people.

There is a 30-year-old congressional report by the Subcommittee on Education and Health of the Joint Economic Committee in 1988 that estimated for every \$1 spent on the GI Bill [Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944], \$7 were returned to the nation's economy. It can be argued that A.B. 429 would have a similar effect at the state level.

Although this bill is on the right track, I do believe there are some shortfalls, not just sticking to STEAM, but also including some jobs in the medical field and mental health field. I believe putting these together would be critical for Nevada matching qualified individuals with Nevada's shortfalls.

Alicia Padilla, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I served in the U.S. Navy for seven years. I, too, currently get to work with student veterans at UNLV. This has really allowed me the opportunity to see our student veterans accomplish so much. I would not benefit from this bill, as I am about to graduate with my master's in social work. However, I am here to speak on behalf of one person I know it would benefit. I recently met with a widowed wife who is now raising her three children alone. She only has 12 months remaining on her educational benefits and only has one more semester left to finish her undergraduate degree. She is aware, though, that in order for her to be effective in her field, which is psychology, she needs to pursue postsecondary education. Financial aid at the graduate level is more of a burden than anything because it is a loan. She does not have that option right now. Passing this bill would allow her to continue her education to receive a master's degree in her field and hopefully be able to become a licensed mental health practitioner here in our state.

As was mentioned, student veterans overall do have higher GPAs and do graduate at a higher rate than nonveteran students. While this bill is good, it is definitely important to add the mental health aspect of these positions that need to be filled, especially here in Nevada.

Tony Yarbrough, Senior Vice Commander, Department of Nevada, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and Vice-Chair, Nevada Veterans Legislative Council:

I represent nearly 9,000 members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Nevada. I also represent close to 500,000 members of the United Veterans Legislative Council (UVLC) as the chairman. The UVLC is an organization for all of the veteran's organizations throughout the state, which includes all veterans, active duty military, National Guard, families, and advocates, those seated behind me and in Las Vegas.

I am sure many of you have veterans in your family history and may have direct experience of active duty military service. As we move forward, please remember them—the family sacrifices, the commitment to serve our country, and how proudly you support them. All we want to do is the best for them.

I am a U.S. Navy veteran and a chief petty officer. I would like to thank Assemblywoman Cohen for her participation and leadership in the interim legislative committee, and Bruno Moya for his contribution to this bill. I think this is a very good opportunity to bring the best and the brightest, education-wise, to our state and keep them here.

I believe we need to add the health sciences to this bill as well, in addition to STEAM. Section 4, subsection 1 of the bill states, "The Board of Regents may grant a waiver of less than. . . ." I would like to add the word "no" before "less than." I would like to have the reference of the NRS actually added to that section to define "bona fide." Lastly, I would like to comment that I think a student who is going to achieve a 2.0 GPA is certainly going to be one of the best and one of the brightest. Support this bill for the best possible method for our veterans.

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

I would like to thank all of the veterans for their service, as well as our active military. We look forward to helping support access into the pipeline of higher education as well as look at jobs that need people in them with graduate degrees as well as undergraduate degrees that fulfill that need going forward. We support A.B. 429, and we thank Assemblywoman Cohen for bringing it forward and the interim committee as well.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone else present who would like to testify in support of the bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in opposition to the bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify as neutral to the bill?

Katherine Miller, U.S. Army Colonel (Ret.), Director, Department of Veterans Services:

I want to mention that on March 24, 2018, during the Veterans Legislative Symposium in Las Vegas, the issue of waiving tuition and/or fees of veterans pursuing advanced degrees in the fields identified as critical Nevada workforce shortages was identified as priority 13 of 31 priorities by the veterans community in Las Vegas that they would want to see addressed by this Legislature.

Chairman Thompson:

Do you have any closing remarks, Mr. Moya?

Bruno Moya:

In closing, I thank the Committee, the Chairman, and Assemblywoman Cohen. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me. I have submitted my testimony with my contact information ([Exhibit F](#)). I would like to see this bill passed.

Chairman Thompson:

I would like to thank everyone who participated on this bill and anyone who might be in the audience or listening who has served. We appreciate you so much. I will close the hearing for Assembly Bill 429. I will open the hearing for Assembly Bill 238.

Assembly Bill 238: Revises provisions governing bullying and cyber-bullying of pupils. (BDR 34-105)

Assemblyman Richard Carrillo, Assembly District No. 18:

I want to thank Chairman Thompson and members of the Assembly Committee on Education for hearing Assembly Bill 238.

In 2017, I brought forward Assembly Bill 292 of the 79th Session, which targeted some issues that were brought to me by a constituent regarding bullying. The bill passed and now parents of both the student who is alleging a bullying complaint and the parents of the student who is being accused have to be notified before the school office closes for the day. We also allowed for students whose bullying complaint was substantiated to have the ability to move to another school. In addition, we required that school districts submit to the Department of Education the number of bullying complaints and how many of those were substantiated on a quarterly basis.

Assembly Bill 238 seeks to make those numbers available to the public on the Department of Education's website. The intent of the reporting requirement in A.B. 292 of the 79th Session was to see what school bullying incidents are happening. I stated in my testimony on A.B. 292 of the 79th Session [Assembly Committee on Education, April 3, 2017] that the reporting requirement was to give school districts another means to look more closely at those schools and either determine what the school is doing well and figure out ways to

replicate it at other schools, or whether they are simply underreporting or underinvestigating and develop a plan of action to ensure the complaints are being investigated and proper steps are being taken if a bullying complaint is substantiated. In A.B. 238, section 1, subsection 15, I am seeking to make those numbers transparent to the public.

Section 1, subsection 8, adds a requirement that meetings with students who are reported victims of bullying or cyberbullying, which is already required under *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 388.1351, also be documented. Section 1, subsection 9, requires the governing body to conduct regular monitoring to ensure those meetings are happening. I am working on an amendment for section 1, subsection 9, which requires the supervisor of each school's principal to conduct the monitoring and send a report to the school board of trustees regarding each school's compliance.

Section 1, subsection 12, paragraph (b), as written, requires that the school offer a mental health screening to the parents of both the victim and the aggressor in substantiated cases of bullying. I originally put this language in the bill because I am concerned that while we punish the aggressor through suspension, expulsion, et cetera, we are still missing an opportunity to potentially go deeper and prevent future bullying incidents and really make a difference in school culture. In my mind, it is equally important that the victims also be attended to.

I received an email yesterday that indicated in Clark County and Washoe County there were 4,816 substantiated cases of bullying in the 2018-2019 school year—and the school year is not over yet. The rural counties reported 228 substantiated cases. I want to make it clear that these numbers are too high in my opinion, and as a grandfather of a student attending school in the Clark County School District, I am concerned. I strongly believe that mental health screenings would be helpful, not only in the prevention of future bullying instances, but also for the students' own well-being.

Schools talk about social-emotional learning, and this is another part of it. We cannot allow bullying to continue unchecked without, at the very least, offering mental health screenings to families. Although we have numbers for bullying, we must assume that not every family will want a mental health screening for their child. This piece of the bill is the most important piece in my opinion. We have a problem in our schools, as the numbers I have provided attest to.

Experiences in schools today will affect society as a whole in the future. Schools not only teach our children reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also how to interact with each other in productive ways so they can be productive adults.

Another issue the school districts have brought to me is that there is no universal screening they are aware of at this time that would be appropriate for K-5. I do not believe this relieves the school district from finding one or more. I would be happy to take any questions the Committee may have.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any questions from the Committee?

Assemblywoman Miller:

I have a few questions when it comes to the reporting and the questions about gathering the information. All of that would be obtained through the Infinite Campus web portal, so that information is already there per the school site. What information are you specifically looking for to publish on the site? There is also very sensitive information to protect all the children involved and, of course, the situations. Are you looking for aggregate numbers or are you looking for numbers of reported cases? Are you looking for numbers of substantiated cases, investigated cases, or resolved cases?

Assemblyman Carrillo:

The number of reports and the substantiated number. That was already implemented in A.B. 292 of the 79th Session.

Assemblywoman Miller:

Regarding the part about the mental health screening for the student accused of being the bully, who do you envision administering that screening? The schools can already refer services and practitioners and, of course, a parent is always able to go on their own to have their child tested for something. Is this something you are envisioning that the school would administer?

Assemblyman Carrillo:

I am envisioning school social workers and school mental health clinics that are already in the schools to administer this. Depending on the necessity, the school could bring in the Mobile Crisis Response Team. Again, these are conversations that are in the infancy stage, and these are the conversations we are hoping to continue moving forward. I may not have all the answers, and we are hoping the stakeholders involved will assist in that process. It may be premature for me to talk about specifics, but again, I am working with the people behind me to ensure we can move forward. We at least want to have the conversations, and those are the options we currently have.

Assemblywoman Miller:

I am just trying to understand because with the language in the bill, it implies that it is not currently happening or available.

Assemblyman Carrillo:

It is in some cases. It depends on what is available through that particular school. Not every school is the same regarding the support they have. Of course, there is no mental health screening currently being used for K-5, but if it is available—not so much with the counselors because we know what purpose the counselors serve—I believe there is another bill going through the Senate [Senate Bill 372] that is going to be looking at the option of having those individuals at various schools.

Assemblywoman Miller:

In K-5 there are school psychologists. School psychologists are available throughout. I am not sure that it is not happening in K-5.

Assemblyman Carrillo:

Again, we want to highlight those individuals. Obviously, not every school has one. With the amount of bullying incidents that have been reported at this point, they would be overwhelmed. Not every parent is going to want to go forward with it. The number could be coming down quite a bit. At the end of the day, the parents may go to their own professional and keep it private. I am not saying there is no privacy in this. The parents may want to make sure it is done through different avenues instead of through the school.

Assemblywoman Peters:

I also have a question about the data. My question pertains to this idea of what we publish and what is out there in the social narrative of our schools. The language in this bill has me a little concerned about what is going to be subject to publishing on the Internet website. It will be quite negative regarding the number of bullying incidents for each school, how many were found to be substantiated and how many were not substantiated. I want to encourage that in addition to that information, we add positive input as well. I am not sure. I know Christy McGill [Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Department of Education] would likely be thinking about how we push the things we are actively doing to ensure our students are safe, taken care of, and their needs are being met in addition to addressing underlying issues of bullying and kids feeling comfortable in school. I guess it is more of a comment than a question, but I do hope we consider ensuring we are not just giving more fodder to this idea that our public schools are unsafe for our children. I think we really are working toward school safety.

In section 1, subsection 8, of the bill it states, "Not later than 10 school days after receiving a report required by subsection 1, the administrator or designee shall meet with each reported victim." Maybe I am wrong that there is another step between when the incident happens and when the students are addressed, but ten days seems like a long time in the scope of a fifth grader's life. It is over a week of not being touched by the person who is addressing this issue. It is not a part of your changes to the language here, but I do not know if there is a history there or maybe I am missing a step.

Assemblyman Carrillo:

The reason for the ten days is basically to allow for them to check in with the student. That is the extent of the ten days, to see how they are progressing, if they are feeling the effects of the incident, and to ensure they are being spoken to, not just being ignored but having that contact.

Assemblywoman Peters:

Is that a last administrative check on the state of the students to ensure their needs are being met since the time of the incident to the last mandated administrative check?

Assemblyman Carrillo:

I strongly believe that the schools are checking in with the students more often, but it is a hard stop to make sure these students do not fall through any of the cracks.

Assemblywoman Krasner:

Obviously, bullying is a very important issue in our schools. I do have a question about section 1, subsection 12, paragraph (b), "The administrator or designee shall request consent of a parent or guardian of the reported aggressor and the reported victim to allow a mental health screening to be conducted." Why the victim, and what repercussions are there if a parent or guardian does not consent to allowing a mental health screening on a child who was a victim? Is that going to go in a permanent record? I am just wondering what your thoughts are on that issue.

Assemblyman Carrillo:

There are no repercussions. It is just being offered to the parents. If the parents decide no, then that is their decision and it is final. It is the parents' choice. Ultimately, we are leaving that choice up to the parents to ensure they have a say as to how this is going to go forward and there would be no repercussions.

Assemblywoman Krasner:

A mental health screening is very different than offering a counselor to talk to the student who was a victim. Those are two very different things.

Assemblyman Carrillo:

We know the counselors serve a purpose. This would not fall under their purview of ensuring the screening was to take place. We do not want to put that responsibility on counselors. With the situations going on right now with all the bullying incidents, the intent is to do a screening to see if there were maybe some red flags. The family could then be referred to a community-based provider. It is only to have this available to them, and if they decide not to move forward with it, then it ends right there. What we are trying to do is offer it to them. There is nothing in the bill that would say what would happen if they did not move forward with it. There are no repercussions.

I am working with the stakeholders and trying to ensure we start having these conversations and not just having it fall on deaf ears. These are children's lives we are talking about, and we just need to have this conversation. I have made an effort to reach out to the individuals who would be opposing this bill because it is about the kids.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any further questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in support of the bill?

Jason Lamberth, Private Citizen, Henderson, Nevada:

In December 2013, my daughter, Hailey, died by suicide just two days after her thirteenth birthday. She was a victim of bullying. I sit before you drawing from my own personal experience in support of A.B. 238 and its intentions. Regarding the documentation required for the ten-day follow-up meeting, the initial investigation must be completed within two days. It can be extended to three days if necessary. Unfortunately, the ten-day follow-up meeting referenced in current NRS is not always happening. Parents reach out to me asking for advice and help in certain situations, but requiring documentation of this follow-up meeting is a good way to ensure accountability and also for the school safety teams to ensure that the safety plans that have been implemented are working as designed and that the remediation plans are working as designed as well.

I think the mental health screenings are sorely needed. As a state, Nevada has done quite a bit in its efforts toward suicide prevention when you look at all of the age groups as a whole. However, in the 10- to 17-year-old age range, we have seen a spike in the number of completed suicides. Additionally, multiple studies have shown a direct correlation between bullying and suicide. Even if it can save one life, these mental health screenings are worth it.

Chairman Thompson:

Thank you, Mr. Lamberth, for continuing to be an advocate on behalf of your daughter, Hailey. Is there anyone else in Las Vegas or in Carson City who would like to testify in support of the bill?

Zanna Curry, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I was here two years ago in support of Assembly Bill 292 of the 79th Session. I came here prepared to speak, and I am completely blown away by what I am hearing. I just have to shift course. My daughter was relentlessly bullied in eighth grade. She is now a sophomore at Nevada Connections Academy. I had to pull her out of a brick-and-mortar school. The 4,000 substantiated bullying incidents is a low number. I can assure you, I have had parents reach out to me consistently with case after case after case, just like my daughter's, where the bullying was not substantiated but it was, in fact, bullying.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates in 2019 that 20 percent of high school students were bullied, 16 percent were cyberbullied, and 25 percent of middle school children were bullied. I pulled up the number of enrolled students in the state of Nevada through the Department of Education for 2018-2019. We potentially have 72,000 bullying victims. That does not include the bullies. The bullies are often just addressed with consequences. They need mental health assistance also. Assemblywoman Peters mentioned that it will be on the website and it will all be negative. Unfortunately, it is negative. Children dying is negative, and we have to represent it as that. We have to be able to offer those mental health assessments.

I went into momma bear mode. I came here two years ago to speak. I was on the news and radio. I did everything I could to make the bullying stop because my daughter kept saying, "I'm okay, I'm okay." My own daughter was telling me she was okay. I was not okay. Her dad was not okay. In hindsight, she was not okay, but she is alive today. Hailey is not, and there are countless others who are not. If administrators had offered me mental health screening, I would have taken it. I did not think about it. Please save our children.

Paul, Private Citizen, Nevada:

My son was bullied in second grade. While he was walking from the front of the class to his seat, he was punched in the stomach by a student who had a previous record of doing things like that. The principal at the school did not even want us to make record of it. We ended up having to contact the superintendent to get that done. In addition to that, we had to move our child out of that classroom, and the bully got to stay. The bully got extra attention, plus he could leave anytime he wanted to and sit at the principal's office to play with toys and do all that kind of stuff. We ended up having to move my son out of there to Doral Academy of Northern Nevada to get him away from that situation. They did not even want a record of that. A week prior to my son getting punched, the bully slapped a little girl across the face on the playground. I cannot believe that they would not want to make record of that. They did not want the kid to have a record because that would be bad for him down the road. What about all the victims in between? There is no say.

Chairman Thompson:

Seeing no further testimony in support, I will open the hearing for testimony in opposition to A.B. 238.

Stephen Augspurger, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees:

I would like to say I appreciate Assemblyman Carrillo bringing this back, and I appreciate his constant focus on the problem of bullying. It is not ever going to go away, no matter how much legislation we have and no matter how good administrators and counselors become at dealing with it because when they deal with it generally, it is always after the fact. We had a good meeting with Assemblyman Carrillo, and we talked about a number of issues regarding this.

My primary concern would be section 1, subsection 12, paragraph (b), with the requirement that a school administrator contact a parent in an effort to convince them or ask them to have mental screening for their child. I know if I were a principal and I made that call, I would be very uncomfortable because the insinuation to the parent is the principal making the call believes mental health screening is necessary. What I suggested previously when we met with Assemblyman Carrillo is to make it an option for parents to request mental health screening. They always have that option. We need to find a way to post that so they know that is an opportunity they have. Having said that, however, schools and school staff, as they

are currently configured, are not equipped to do mental health screening with large numbers of students. I think that is why the unfunded mandate is on the front end of this bill. We are in opposition for that reason. I would like to find a way to work with Assemblyman Carrillo to get this language right where we can all be in support.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

We have also had the opportunity to talk with Assemblyman Carrillo and very much appreciate his time and his courtesy in listening to us and our concerns. Our big concern is the mental health screenings and being able to accomplish that throughout the state, rural areas, as well as urban areas. As Assemblywoman Krasner pointed out, a mental health screening is a bit different than just coming in and talking with a counselor or a social worker. That is a problem for us, and being able to carry out mental health screenings in a timely manner would be difficult for our school districts.

Chairman Thompson:

Seeing no further testimony in opposition, is there any testimony in neutral? [There was none.] Are there any closing remarks from the sponsor?

Assemblyman Carrillo:

I would like to close by thanking you once again, Chairman Thompson and Committee members, for hearing A.B. 238. There are many bills in this building aimed at reducing bullying, increasing access to mental health services, and improving school climate. In my mind, allowing access to mental health in school for both the bullying victim and the aggressor is a start. We have seen the "no tolerance" policies that many schools have adopted. I think we can all agree that these policies are not working. The odds are, every time we suspend or expel a student, we are increasing the odds that he or she will not graduate, which in turn increases the likelihood that that student will become just another number in the school-to-prison pipeline.

Chairman Thompson:

I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 238. I will open the hearing for Assembly Bill 343.

Assembly Bill 343: Establishes provisions relating to mental health. (BDR 34-866)

Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Assembly District No. 1:

Joining me at the table today are two students from Clark County: one is from the College of Southern Nevada, Natalia Jordon; and the other is a senior at The Meadows School, Peyton Barsel.

Assembly Bill 343, although it has my name on it, is not my bill. During the interim, I received a call from an educator at Shadow Ridge High School who asked me, at the request of his students, to come in and talk with them after the Florida school shooting. The students wanted to talk about some of the issues that they were personally dealing with.

Unfortunately, we were not able to do it at the school. I have what I call "coffee and conversation" in my communities, so I had one with the students. We did it on a Saturday, and I found out that this generation does not always RSVP. I reserved a room and ordered food, but I did not receive an RSVP for that Saturday. That afternoon 15 students showed up. They got themselves there and they picked up their friends because they wanted to talk. That conversation led to many other conversations, not just about gun safety or violence, but about behavioral health care issues within our community.

I feel my job as a legislator is to be the voice of my community, and that means my community no matter their age. I am also responsible for empowering the next generation of leaders. In those meetings, the students had said their voices are never heard. Their voices will be heard today.

Ms. Barsel and Ms. Jordan have worked on this bill and will be presenting it today. There may be some amendments to the bill. They were able to find a lobbyist to help them prepare for this hearing. I am going to step back and invite the lobbyist to the table. I will let these amazing young ladies present their bill.

Rocky Finseth, President, Carrara Nevada:

This is the first time in my legislative history that I have appeared before this Committee. It is my pleasure to present Assembly Bill 343 for you today. As Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno mentioned, this is not her bill. This is not my bill. On behalf of a client, I am the vessel to help shepherd this bill through the process. The students did all the research, they investigated, and they have had the conversations. The idea is to turn their ideas and concepts into a piece of legislation that is hopefully something that will pass this body and is signed into law by the Governor. For me, it is one of those unique opportunities that we all have in our lives to help the next generation of leaders—those who will one day be sitting in your seat and my seat as well. We appreciate the efforts of Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno to allow us to present the bill.

I will walk you through the bill, and then I will turn it over to the students. Section 1 of the bill provides for eight hours of training every two years on mental health development with some specific classification requirements, such as a trauma, suicide prevention, mental health stigma, depression, and anxiety, among other things.

The other aspect of the bill is contained in sections 4 through 7, which creates a task force on mental health with specific membership. Section 9 addresses the work of the task force itself. Dan Musgrove [Chair, Clark County Children's Mental Health Consortium] has met with the students and has discussed with them the potential of a friendly amendment to the bill ([Exhibit G](#)) that would use the mental health consortium in lieu of the task force. If the Committee moves this bill forward, we will request that those sections be removed and some transition language that Mr. Musgrove has presented be inserted.

I believe the students will tell you that they are open to further conversations and discussion about the hour requirements and other aspects of the bill. Joining me at the table, as Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno indicated, are Ms. Barsel and Ms. Jordan. They will talk to you about why they are here and why they got involved. I believe we also have some students in southern Nevada who want to participate in the conversation.

Peyton Barsel, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am 16 years old, and I am here in support of A.B. 343, which mandates teachers to receive training on how to identify and support children in the classroom who are dealing with trauma. When I was nine years old, I was living what would appear to be a very normal life. My brother and I attended a small school where I had been going since I was four. It felt like a second home to me.

Two weeks into fourth grade, my dad passed unexpectedly. I felt my normal, happy life come crashing down around me. My once-supportive mom became a shell of a human being. I had no support at home. I wanted to escape the horror at my house, so I went to school the very next day hoping to feel safe and cared for. When I returned to school, I was not greeted with hugs or words of support. Instead, most people withdrew from me, avoiding even making eye contact. Even my teachers avoided me. I could only make the assumption that my behavior was causing this reaction and that it was my fault.

Things only got worse from there. Whatever little acknowledgement of my situation I had initially received at school was over. Life was back to normal for everyone else, but the darkness in mine was expanding. My five-year-old brother became my responsibility, as my mom was now working. He was being bullied at school. Kids were chasing him on the playground chanting, "I have a dad and you don't." He was so little and confused by everything. I knew I had to protect him.

Just a week prior, I was a happy-go-lucky, popular girl with straight A's, and now I was thrown into this adult role with minimal support at home and no support at school. I became increasingly sad and distant. I could not focus in school, I never did my homework, and my grades dropped. I isolated myself rather than dealing with the hurt that came with my friends no longer wanting to spend time with me. My teachers must have seen what was going on, yet they did nothing to step in to help me or my brother. I know now that it was not because they did not care; it was because they did not know what to say or how to help either of us. That isolation went on for years.

I know I am not alone in my story. An estimated 1 out of 4 children in the United States will experience a traumatic event before the age of 16. Examples of this include child abuse and neglect, school and community violence, domestic violence, homelessness, bullying, traumatic loss, and medical trauma.

A traumatic event can seriously interrupt a child's school routine as well as their ability to learn. They may have increased difficulties concentrating and may engage in unusually reckless or aggressive behavior. Students usually experience high levels of emotional upset, have lower grade point averages (GPAs), and more reported absences from school than any other students. Additionally, recent research has established that children affected by traumatic events are significantly more likely to deal with chronic disease in adulthood as well as social and emotional problems.

The impact educators have on their students is not surprising, as students often spend more time at school than they do at home. Teachers are often the first line of defense when students are dealing with trauma. They are in a unique position to notice emotional and behavioral changes in their students.

This training will focus on imparting basic skills and knowledge regarding the impact of trauma and their learning, their likely reactions, strategies for providing psychological first aid, and identifying mental health services in the school and community. This is not the same as training teachers to provide mental health treatment or therapy. My teachers, for example, could have appreciated the impact of bereavement on my learning and development, acquired strategies to bolster my learning and adjustment within the classroom, and offered empathy and support, all without being expected to provide grief counseling.

Teachers and administrators can become capable of identifying children who may benefit from additional support and become knowledgeable about referral sources. Teachers may fear that what they say to a child who has experienced a trauma could make the student's problems worse. In my experience, saying nothing is significantly more detrimental. When a teacher asks, "How can I be helpful?" that is a powerful question. It conveys a recognition of pain and distress and a level of sympathy rather than judgment. It is an opening—even a lifeline to that kid. It is a way of saying, "I know you need help, and I want you to get it." It does not mean that teacher can fix whatever is wrong, but it does mean that teacher will help connect the child with the care he or she needs.

Some teachers may feel that they are already overwhelmed with training and the pressures of higher standardized test scores. Our educational system has prioritized children's cognitive development and emphasis on test scores at the expense of their social and emotional development. However, schools that have implemented the Collaborating Districts Initiative, a program that helps systematically integrate social and emotional learning into school curriculum, have seen higher standardized test scores, higher GPAs, and higher graduation rates. Providing this training will not only help students who are suffering feel supported, it will help reduce behavioral problems and distractions in the classroom, thereby making more time for academic lessons.

The idea that anybody, let alone a child, could witness something like his father beating his mother in the evening and then come to school the next day and function in the classroom, is simply unreasonable. Twenty-five percent of our students have experienced something classified as a trauma. What they need is to feel safe and supported. If they do not get that, it

seems likely that they will either withdraw, affecting their own ability to learn, or become a behavioral problem, affecting all the students' abilities to learn. If a school wants to get their test scores up, it seems prudent to address the issue of training teachers to support this part of the student population.

Traumatized children are vulnerable. Teachers are the critical link to intervene with sensitivity and awareness. If the teacher's job is to teach the whole child, mental well-being and support are certainly part of that description. This bill is meant to give training to teachers, thus making their jobs easier as well as helping children who are suffering in the classroom feel supported. Chairman Thompson, thank you very much for your time, and let me personally thank Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno for taking an interest in this very important topic and allowing the other children you will hear from today, and myself, an opportunity to shine a light on it.

Natalia Jordan, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Thank you, Chairman Thompson and Committee members, for taking the time to hear my testimony in support of A.B. 343. I suffered extreme emotional and verbal abuse from my mother, my sole caretaker, throughout my entire high school years. When I was 15, my mother became extremely distant and abusive in the way she spoke to me. Before this change in my mom, I had always been an outgoing girl full of personality, but I became fearful and insecure after many years of her abuse. Every morning she told me how disgusted she was in the way I looked and how I belonged to the devil because I was not good enough to be one of God's. She told me I was not deserving of love or an education. I was humiliated and hurt by her words, and it got to the point where I questioned my value as a human being.

I cried every morning of my sophomore year throughout first period. No one noticed. I began to lose focus in the classroom, and I was completely overwhelmed by my emotions. As the year progressed, my turmoil escalated and I began to miss school days completely, yet I remained silent as to not disobey my mother. Toward the end of the school year, a teacher finally noticed my overwhelming depression. She pulled me aside and asked me what was wrong. She assessed that my situation was far beyond her ability to handle and got me in touch with the appropriate people. I was assigned a social worker, and I began my journey in the healing process. If it were not for that teacher's ability to understand that something was wrong with me, I cannot tell you what path I would have taken in life. Her simple understanding of my behavior transformed my life. It only took one moment and one day for her to get me the help I needed to realize I had a life worth living. Today I stand in front of you in hopes to prevent any child from experiencing the isolation I once felt.

Since then, I graduated a year early with an advanced honors diploma and a 4.2 GPA. I am in my second semester at the College of Southern Nevada, and I am already scheduled to graduate this fall with an associate degree in political science. I strongly urge you to pass A.B. 343. As you can see from my story, all it takes is one teacher and one moment to

change a child's life forever. Providing teachers with the education they need to help identify and support kids like me will help so many. Thank you, Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee, for your time, and a special thanks to Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno for giving us the platform.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any questions from the Committee?

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Ms. Barsel, you mentioned the Collaborating Districts Initiative. Could you tell me a little more about that program?

Peyton Barsel:

The Collaborating Districts Initiative is a program that helps systematically integrate social and emotional learning into school curriculum, which comes from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). This would be part of the skills that would be incorporated in the training we are proposing.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Essentially, is it like a best practices that you are taking from other districts that are using it, or is it part of a program that is instituted in some other form of mental health or support services?

Peyton Barsel:

There are voluntary school districts, including Washoe County, that have implemented the CASEL program. They have seen rises in standardized test scores and graduation rates.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Thank you for being here. Your stories are touching and I see the strength you have developed. I appreciate your sharing your stories with us and advocating for this cause.

Assemblywoman Miller:

My first question is when I am looking at these items, these are items teachers do receive training on, including professional development, ongoing internal trainings from counselors and social workers and, of course, our counselors and social workers in the schools, in addition to college coursework that covers this. You mentioned something about a program that makes it sound as though there is a specific program that is already happening.

Peyton Barsel:

In Nevada, there is no set trauma training that everyone has to take. Some schools may be doing it, but it is not on a mandatory level. We are not proposing a specific training, but CASEL is something that is already in existence in Nevada and has been successful, and we could implement it into the other part of the training we are proposing.

Assemblywoman Miller:

Why is this not voluntary? When you say mandatory, are you saying all teachers in the state?

Peyton Barsel:

We are, as of right now.

Assemblywoman Miller:

When do you envision teachers taking this training?

Peyton Barsel:

It is being proposed right now as in-service training. Therefore, teachers would be compensated because it would be during the workday.

Assemblywoman Miller:

We have a challenge because in the Clark County School District, there are no longer in-service days. There are only two school days at the very beginning of the year that some would consider in-service.

Rocky Finseth:

Since we sat and chatted with you, which was a very enlightening conversation, we have been having some conversations with some of the school districts in the state about potentially reducing some of those hours, looking at a less-mandatory component but with at least some mandatory component—not as much as was contemplated in the bill—and some voluntary components as well that would be benchmarked and reviewed post legislative session.

Assemblywoman Torres:

I am definitely empathetic to our need to provide educators with the opportunity to receive trauma-enforced instruction. I know I have attended many workshops myself on how I provide quality trauma-enforcement instruction in my classroom, and how I develop lesson plans that can meet the needs of students who perhaps have nontraditional experiences outside of my classroom. I do take that all into consideration. Some of my concerns are along the lines of my colleague, Assemblywoman Miller. I fear this training will not create actual change, and I do not think there is any time for us to squeeze it into our current schedule. I am thinking about those three days before school. We get one day that we call "Don't Touch Teachers Day," which is the day they cannot touch us. We work on our classroom, create lesson plans, and perhaps meet with our team. That is it. For the two other days, I am thinking back to that training. We went from training to training to training. I do not think we had one break. We had to do our other mandatory training, we had to learn how to use the software and had an Infinite Campus refresher, and things like that. I think this type of training is necessary and we need to make it available. However, I think it might be

a better place for us to put it as curriculum units so educators have the opportunity to opt into it. They can continue to take the professional development because those are hours that as educators we are already looking at for trainings that would qualify. I am not seeing how this would fit into the current statute unless our expectation was that we pay teachers an hourly rate and we pay them for that training additionally.

Rocky Finseth:
Duly noted.

Chairman Thompson:
Are there any further questions from the Committee?

Assemblywoman Hansen:
This is more of a comment. This is how the process works, and I am sure you have been introduced to it. A bill is supposed to be hard to get through and it goes through a refiner's fire. You have come here with a great concept, wanting to address a problem that you have seen and experienced. It is our job to whittle it away, and sometimes there are other avenues to accomplish the goal. I appreciate your enlightening us. Do not get discouraged. This is how it works for all of us who get to that table. We just have to work it as part of networking. That was just a little pep talk. Keep at it.

Assemblywoman Tolles:
It is always amazing to have such articulate students who are willing to advocate, not only from your own experience and not just for yourselves, but for the next generation of students. We absolutely appreciate your coming here advocating for this. I want to reinforce that you are absolutely right. The social and emotional learning programs and the evidence of the impact they have on students' lives, school culture, as well as academic performance is indisputable. You definitely have support here for continuing to support and expand those programs.

Have you had a chance to speak to members in the Senate about the work being done through Senate Bill 89, which is the comprehensive bill essentially implementing many of the recommendations from the Statewide School Safety Task Force that came together over the interim, and if there are ways for your recommendations to help work in line with those efforts?

Rocky Finseth:
I think the students have been focused on today and on this bill. I think through the conversations that have occurred over the last 24 hours, there has certainly been some focus on S.B. 89. I do not want to speak for these two young ladies, but I think their focus is really on this bill. They put a lot of love, labor, and effort into it. I think they would like to see if they can continue to move this along. They are cognizant of the legislative process, and they are cognizant that compromise is one of the key components.

Assemblywoman Hardy:

I would like to commend you for coming here and sharing your personal experiences. It is so unfortunate that in the world we live in now, this is becoming more and more a part of our students' lives. I personally know of students for whom one of the main reasons they stayed in school and graduated was because of a teacher who put in the extra effort to care for them and to be there for them. I appreciate the teachers' comments that we do not want to overburden them. As you go through this process, I hope there is a way to find a balance—that the teachers will not feel it is too much for them and the students can be helped by that caring person who may be the only one they have in their lives. I, too, encourage you to keep going and keep working with those of us in the Legislature. There are a lot of bills we have heard about bullying and suicide and different kinds of trainings. Perhaps there is a way to incorporate those together because I think it is definitely something that is needed. Thank you for being here.

Assemblywoman Peters:

Thank you for bringing this bill and for being brave enough to participate in this process, which can be a little overwhelming sometimes. I am not in the education field at all, so it may be naïveté, but the bill talks about each school district and the governing body of each charter school. Ms. Barsel, your experience came from a private school. This may be a question for legal, but is there any way we can address private school educators as well, or can we, as a legislature, only address public and charter schools?

Victoria Gonzalez, Committee Counsel:

That is correct. In order for this to apply to private schools, that would need to be specified in the bill.

Assemblywoman Peters:

I think that is something to consider if we want to have this reach all the children in the state.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any further questions from the Committee? [There were none.] I will open the hearing for anyone present who would like to testify in support of A.B. 343. If you are in Las Vegas, please fill the two chairs. Those in Carson City, please fill the three chairs here.

Johna Tichenor, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I have been a teacher with the Clark County School District for the past ten years. I am here to support A.B. 343 because of my own personal experience as a parent and a teacher. On June 8, 2011, my family was devastated by the suicide of my husband. Our three children were 14, 11, and 7 at that time. We had the summer at home and then we returned to school. My daughter, who was beginning third grade, attended the school where I taught. At school her grief began to surface. It was a fortunate coincidence that I was there in the building and able to talk to her teachers on a regular basis. Her GATE [gifted and talented education] teacher told me about a local resource that facilitates grief support groups designed for

children and families. Luckily, she heard about this center from a friend. My sons did not have the same level of support at school. Some of their teachers knew they had recently experienced a traumatic loss, but they would not offer extra support. It was not because they did not care. As a teacher, I have never met another teacher who simply does not care. I have met teachers who are not trained on simple measures they can take to help.

In the years that followed my loss, I had students who had lost a parent. My personal experience helped me to support those students. However, when I had students who had endured other types of trauma, such as those who are in the foster care system, I did not always know the best ways to support them in my classroom. Later, I was part of the Operation Respect team at my school. I attended training designed to make school a welcoming place for all students. During one session, we learned about the effects of adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs. We did not become school counselors or social workers, but we did gain valuable insight that helped us understand our students. Later, I had a student who was in the foster care system and had endured severe trauma in his young life. I drew upon my ACEs training to help me better serve that student and collaborate with administrators and our school counselor.

Chairman Thompson:

We are at the two-minute mark. If you have a written statement, you can leave it with the clerk in Las Vegas.

Johna Tichenor:

Yes, I do. I will leave it for the Committee ([Exhibit H](#)).

Robert Barsel, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am 13 years old. When I was 5 years old, my dad died. I can remember how hard it was knowing I would never see him again. When I went back to school, my teachers told me I could come in from recess if I needed time to be alone, but beyond that, I felt very little support. I was no longer fun, but rather sad, withdrawn, and sometimes angry. Kids began to bully me. I told my mom and she informed the school. Nothing was done. Teachers and administrators simply did not know how to help me. That experience made me very distrustful of teachers and affected my social relationships with my peers for years.

I am lucky that my mom sent me to a peer support group, and I eventually learned how to cope with my loss. I attended that group for three years and can attest to how healing it was to have someone who makes me feel supported and understood. That service was free, but the teachers did not suggest that I go there. How difficult would it be to train teachers as to what services are in their communities to support kids like me?

I now volunteer at that support group, and I have learned through training some basic, nonjudgmental questions to ask children who are coping with a loss so they can feel comfortable to share their feelings. This way of speaking to a child is not difficult to learn.

I have also learned what the normal responses to loss are and how to identify kids who are struggling outside the normal realm of grief. I was 12 years old when I took the eight-hour training to be able to volunteer with grieving children and make a difference in their lives just by knowing how to speak to them.

The recent suicide of friends of the Parkland, Florida, shooting victims is a perfect example of how devastating trauma can be on a developing child and how it affects them long term. Passage of A.B. 343 will provide teachers the training they need in order to step in and help these students so that more senseless and preventable deaths do not occur. We simply cannot expect guidance counselors, who have responsibility for an average of 500 students, to be able to identify and support the 1 in 4 students who are currently suffering in our classrooms. Passing A.B. 343 would not only educate teachers on what to look for in students who are struggling, but how to speak to them.

Chairman Thompson:

We are at two minutes. It looks as if you have a written statement as well. Could you leave it with the clerk in Las Vegas?

Robert Barsel:

Yes ([Exhibit I](#)).

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone else in Las Vegas who would like to testify in support of A.B. 343? [There was no one.] We will take testimony in support from those here in Carson City.

Michael Flores, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here in support of A.B. 343. I would like to thank Ms. Barsel, her mother, Mr. Finseth, and the sponsor for bringing this bill forward. I truly believe this is one of the most important bills we are going to see this session. I am the founder of the Nevada Youth Network. We work with kids in one of the toughest neighborhoods in Nevada, in the 89106 area. In the nine years we have been there, I have seen a lot of the things these kids go through on a day-to-day basis, from substance abuse in their home, food insecurity, gang violence, and domestic violence in their home. I think as a community, we have done a good job to make sure kids have food in their stomachs so they can concentrate in school. We are falling behind in making sure kids can concentrate in school with everything they see in their home. I think this bill helps with this issue we are dealing with.

I am going to give one example of what this looks like. We are open four days a week, 5:30 to 7, to do homework with the kids. We had one particular kid we were working with who had a lot of issues. We figured out there was a lot going on in the home and there was some gang violence happening. There were five kids in the home. We brought in their father a number of times and told him the issues we were having with his kids and asked if he could help, and he did. He did what he could. I had flagged the police department that there were some issues happening in that house.

Over the weekend, there was a shooting at that house. I saw on the news that there was a murder in that house. I saw the address and I knew it was the house where those kids were. My heart dropped because I was hoping it was not one of our kids. I showed up but could not get any information from the police. I showed up at school thinking this would be where they would get some help because they had seen something really traumatic at their home. At the school, I found out no one knew it was at their house. I asked if I could see the kids. They let me see the kids because they knew I had been working with them for a long time. One of the girls came out of the classroom and I asked her if she was okay because I knew what happened. She broke down and started crying. No one had talked to her. I was under the impression they were going to be talking to her. I am hoping this bill will help us to do more for the kids seeing trauma at home.

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

We represent children in foster care, and we also have attorneys who work at the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center in Las Vegas that provides services and support to survivors of 1 October. We want to thank Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno and also these young ladies, Ms. Barsel and Ms. Jordan, and all the other students who participated in bringing this legislation.

It probably goes without saying that nearly all of our child clients have suffered sometimes unimaginable traumas and are much more likely to have mental health symptoms and challenges, including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, et cetera. Oftentimes, for our kids, the educational environment is the most stable and consistent part of their lives. This puts educators in a unique position to be able to identify, intervene, and provide services and support for these kids when they might be suffering or in crisis. What we have seen is similar to what these young ladies have represented. Our children's education suffers when their mental health declines. In order to adequately educate them, we do need to arm our educators with the tools to address these issues.

Mental Health America ranked Nevada as 51 in regard to the prevalence of youth mental illness and their access to care. I urge your support for A.B. 343, which recognizes this unfortunate reality and seeks to improve the provision of mental health services for our children generally in schools and through the task force. I also have a lot of faith that these young women are going to be able to do this in a way that is not going to put additional burdens on our educators, who do work very hard, and we appreciate that.

Chairman Thompson:

Seeing no further testimony in support, we will move to testimony in opposition.

Natha C. Anderson, President, Washoe Education Association; and Member, Board of Directors, Nevada State Education Association:

It is difficult for me to come up today to speak against this bill, especially after meeting with both of the very courageous and incredible students, Ms. Barsel and Ms. Jordan. I spoke with them last night and then I met again with them this morning. During our conversations, there is no question in my mind that this is coming from a place of empathy and trying to do what is needed and necessary in our education system.

As we discussed the training, especially the timing of the training and the purpose of the training, I think there is a need for a little more work, possibly working with Ms. McGill at the Department of Education, maybe utilizing some of the elements from S.B. 89, as well as some other areas. I do not want to lose track, however, of what the purpose is. I realize that, hopefully, in the next week we can continue to meet and find someplace where we could possibly have an opt-in training or a way to make this work. There is no question that this is an important item, but I do not want it to be just one more thing for us to check a box on. This is too important because it helps our students. I look forward to working with Ms. Barsel, Ms. Jordan, as well as Mr. Finseth, in finding the right amendments to make this a doable option for our educators and, more important, for our students. At this time, unfortunately, I have to be against this bill.

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

I will echo the comment of Ms. Anderson from the Washoe Education Association. The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) is, unfortunately, opposed to the bill in its current form. We do want to acknowledge the importance of the subject matter and mental health training.

Today, NSEA released the *NSEA 2018-19 Educator Economic Security Survey*. Buried deep in the survey—I think it was question 25—we asked educators across the state how many hours per week they spent on school-related work outside of contract time. Thirty-five percent spend 5 to 10 hours; another 22 percent spend 10 to 15 additional hours; and over 20 percent spend more than 15 hours per week over and above the contract time they are paid for. We think this type of training and most of the other required trainings the teachers are required to do are important. There is a good policy argument for it, but as a state, we need to figure out how we fit it all in and how we make sure our educators have the time they need to do the necessary prep work, the necessary training, and the classroom instruction in a way that is fair to them as well.

Bradley Keating, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District; and representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

For all 17 superintendents across the state, it pains us to come up in opposition of A.B. 343 today. As we move forward in this legislative session, I will warn you now, you will probably see all of us at the table many more times when it comes to an unfunded mandate.

We want our teachers and staff to go through these types of training, but we cannot continue to put more and more on their plate and take time away from their instructional practices and what they are doing in the classrooms. On top of that, with the unfunded mandate, as you will see in the next few weeks, every school district released its budget, and you will probably see pretty large deficits. We cannot make that any larger than it is today.

We look forward to working with the bill sponsor and the team here in trying to figure out a way we can do an opt-in model or incorporate it into some of the trainings we are already doing. However, for the reasons previously stated, we are opposed to the bill.

Chairman Thompson:

Seeing no further testimony in opposition, I will open the hearing for those wishing to testify as neutral. [There was no one.] Are there any closing remarks from the sponsors?

Natalia Jordan:

I definitely want to emphasize that we understand, and we are willing to work and compromise. We will not compromise on the fact that this is something that is important. We are moving into an era where mental health is extremely important. Whether we like it or not, whether it is our reality or not, it is the kids' reality. It is something they are going through every single day. It is something they are living through, and having to work and fight through. It should be something we can help with. That is not saying we are being counselors or anything like that. It is simply providing a phone number if a child needs someone to talk to, or providing an address where a child can go.

I understand teachers have a lot on their plates, but we are talking about the next generation—the people who will be replacing your seats one day, and the people who will be making and creating bills in the future. It is a preventative measure instead of always having to deal with the aftermath. It always seems we are one step behind. This is something we want to do to get one step in front of the problem.

Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno:

I would like to thank the Chairman and the Committee for hearing this bill and listening to these young ladies. What they have learned in the last few months working on this bill is the whole legislative process. In their meetings with legislators over the last two days, they are already in the process of working on amendments. The most important thing to remember is, as we watch the news and hear about another school shooting or another traumatic incident happening in our community, these young ladies want to be a part of the solution. They are willing to work with our educators. As the mother of an educator, I truly appreciate what our teachers do in the classroom. But I also know as a mother that our children spend a majority of their time in school. Oftentimes, things that may be missed at home are often problems within the home, and that is where a child should feel safe. In the next few days, they are willing to work to get this bill to where it needs to be so it accomplishes their goals. We appreciate your letting us have the opportunity.

Chairman Thompson:

I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 343. I will open the hearing for Assembly Bill 359.

**Assembly Bill 359: Revises provisions relating to work-based learning programs.
(BDR 34-853)**

Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II, Assembly District No. 36:

I do want to say that this Committee is probably the most important committee here because education is our future. Without a future, we would not have a Nevada any longer. I want to thank you for the time you put in. I am here to talk about Assembly Bill 359. I had some prepared statements, but I will shorten them for time.

Work-based learning is critical to the ability for Nevada to compete in today's competitive environment. While Nevada's economy is booming and diversifying, we are still seeing a number of jobs going unfilled. According to an article by the National Federation of Independent Business ["Small Businesses' Unfilled Job Openings Reaches Record High," August 2, 2018], they found that 37 percent of owners are reporting job openings they cannot fill. Education is career education, and that means all education is workforce development. This has been an education issue that many of you have actually worked on. I am proud to be here today to follow in those footsteps. Whether it is through a traditional degree, a professional certification, or some other training, education is a path to a better life.

In 2017 this body passed Senate Bill 66 of the 79th Session which expanded the educational opportunities for students in an effort to build a skilled and competitive workforce. Assembly Bill 359 is in that spirit. I have provided a conceptual amendment (Exhibit J) that should make this a straightforward bill that makes common sense.

In regard to the conceptual amendment, I had some feedback from different stakeholders and members that I wanted to incorporate into the bill. For the sake of time, you will like the fact that we are striking sections 2 through 4. We are eliminating most of the bill. That is because in meeting with the different stakeholders and the feedback we were receiving, there is already a program out there similar to what I was proposing. Therefore, we decided there was not a need to reinvent the wheel. I was talking to the NyE Communities Coalition that actually does the work-based learning, and they have been working with the Nye County School District to expand this. They are currently looking at getting additional grant funding. They are currently funded through the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act of the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, which is actually federal money. The program that is being expanded here under A.B. 359 is bringing federal dollars into the state to help with this work-based learning program.

I will go through some of the sections we are leaving in the bill. Section 5 directs the school districts and charter schools to develop and implement policies to promote the work-based learning programs that are already there. We want to get the word out to the parents and the students that these programs are available mainly because these are good-paying jobs, and

they are important jobs to our communities' success. We want to ensure that students have the ability to be exposed to these different trades and different fields. Section 5 also allows school districts and charter schools to consult with other government entities and organizations. We all know that cooperation is very important.

Section 6 of the bill allows school districts and charter schools to apply for and accept grants, gifts, and other donations to aid in the implementation of the program. We must do all we can to close our education gap. We need to give our students the tools they need to get ahead in life. That concludes my presentation. Assemblywoman Tolles is also here, and I believe she has a couple of comments. We will both be here for questions.

Assemblywoman Jill Tolles, Assembly District No. 25:

The genesis for Assemblyman Hafen and me to collaborate on this effort was because I saw he had put forward a bill to look at work-based programs and promoting them in the schools. I had a similar bill, and I realized sometimes great minds think alike and maybe we could put our heads together and bring forward this bill before you today. I want to take a couple of steps back to the background and history behind this bill and why I am excited about continuing to do this work and promote it in our schools.

The unemployment rate for the young adult population, usually defined as 16 to 24 years old, has risen over the last few decades. Labor force participation among young adults is lower than it was several decades ago. Data from the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation, Research and Analysis Bureau shows that the unemployment rate for young adults in the 12 months ending in August 2016 was 11.5 percent. The national youth unemployment rate in July 2018 was 9.2 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

I do not know about you, but perhaps if we could all harken back to our youth, many of us had jobs in addition to going to school. In fact, I will never forget on my sixteenth birthday, I did two things. At 9 a.m. I had an appointment to get my driver's license. That afternoon I walked up and down a strip mall and filled out 11 applications. Thankfully, one of them decided to hire me and I am proud to have been working since I was 16 years old. It was that on-the-job work experience where I learned how to punch a time clock, how to deal with impatient customers at the register, and how to help solve problems and work with others. It was so incredibly important to my enrichment as a student, starting in retail and then moving into food service. Still today, that is one of my favorite jobs ever. It is an important part of student development.

The Office of Workforce Innovation of the Office of the Governor conducted a series of focus groups and online surveys of 16- to 29-year-olds to ask them how they feel about their education and their work experience. Here are some of the things they found:

Young adults consistently express frustration with the lack of opportunities they have to gain professional work experience. I remember talking to some of the graduating seniors at the university level who had never filled out an application, who had never worked for an hourly wage, and had never had the experience of punching a time clock. That was a real gap for them and created a lot of fear for them entering into the workforce. They had all this education, but they did not have that practical work experience. We are hearing that from young adults, that they feel that intimidation.

Young adults were more likely to state soft skills as a barrier in focus groups or conversations in the survey. Teaching in the communication field, we have done studies of employers across the United States. The No. 1 thing employers look for beyond the degree or certification for a specific field is the soft skills. It is the communication skills, listening, and working with others. Those are the kinds of things our students often learn in these work-based programs.

Young adults believed that the most effective ways to share information about jobs and training opportunities were having a centralized website that can provide them with certain relevant reminders and notifications; social media; and career and technical education (CTE) and Jobs for America's Graduates. Students are more likely to be career-ready and engaged in their school learning than non-CTE students. We have had a lot of conversations about CTE, something that Assemblyman Hafen mentioned that he is very passionate about and has heard from his constituents as well.

The last statistic I will bore you with is one analysis by the Center for American Progress. It concluded that the young adult population will lose about \$20 billion in earnings over the next ten years due to their unemployment, which breaks down to approximately \$22,000 per individual. It goes on to explain the impact that has on tax revenues and social security contributions over the years and overall.

In the 2017 Session, this body passed Senate Bill 66 of the 79th Session, which established work-based programs and allowed for students to get extracurricular credit while working on the job. We have heard similar programs during this session as well, particularly from gaming, and how we can tie those to the work-based learning and apprenticeship programs, along with being able to get extracurricular credits. That program is already underway thanks to the work of this legislative body last session.

What we had talked about in preparing for this session was how we make sure we are really connecting the students and informing the parents about those available programs in their communities. How are we working with the trades to make sure that those apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship opportunities are being advertised and promoted and available to students? How are we working with the community to see what employers are willing to provide these kinds of work-based learning opportunities to our students?

This bill, as Assemblyman Hafen walked you through, really directs our school districts to implement a program to make sure they are engaging, advertising to the parents, advertising to the students, and letting them know they can take advantage of this program. It also sets up an additional fund for them to apply for grants or scholarships for the promotional material.

The bill, in and of itself, is actually very simple. We are not re-creating the program. That was already done by the 2017 Session and it is already underway. For example, Washoe County School District is working with JOIN Inc., to help place students in these positions and working with the trades to help get them into some of these positions. That is already in statute. This is really just making sure that we are directing the school boards to come up with a promotional plan and allowing them to be able to ask for donations, grants, and scholarships to help pay for it.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in support of the bill?

Carlos Fernandez, Policy Analyst, Government Affairs, Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce:

The Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce continues to be an advocate of career development programs for the state and ensuring that these resources are being advertised to both students and their parents. This bill not only helps students understand and access programs that will prepare them for the workforce post-high school, but also provides employers with a trained and competitive labor pool to meet the needs of our growing labor demands for today and the future.

A strong education system yields strong business which yields a strong Nevada. We continue to offer our support for A.B. 359.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

The Nevada Association of School Superintendents comprises all 17 school districts. We are in support of this bill for all the reasons stated in the presentation.

Randi Thompson, Nevada State Director, National Federation of Independent Business:

I love this bill. One of the other hats I wear in Reno is operating an association of chief executive officers (CEOs) of about 30 companies. I was literally emailing both Nate Mackinnon at Nevada System for Higher Education (NSHE) and Bob Potts at the Office of Economic Development (GOED) within the Office of the Governor. We are organizing a meeting, which is essentially what this bill is all about. I am trying to connect some human resources directors and CEOs with our Washoe County School District, NSHE, and GOED to see how we can fill the skills gap that is existing right now in Reno, let alone in the state.

Over 20,000 jobs are empty right now in Nevada because we cannot find the right skilled labor. I love the idea that this is going to push the school system a little bit. The private sector is also reaching out to all of these entities to try to find a fix for some of our workforce development issues we are having. I love the idea of being able to work in better concert with the school districts to help meet our needs.

Chairman Thompson:

Seeing no further testimony in support, is there anyone present who would like to testify in opposition to the bill?

Paul McKenzie, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Building and Construction Trades Council of Northern Nevada, AFL-CIO:

We are in opposition to the bill as written. We are very much in support of CTE within the schools. As the presenter of the bill said, last session this Committee reviewed and passed a bill that strengthened the ability of the school districts to do these work-based learning programs. They were supposed to give you a report before this legislative session. I am not sure whether you have received that report. If you have, could you let us know so we can look at it to see what accomplishments were made in the last two years on these work-based programs?

This is not CTE. This is taking high school kids and giving them to a business to employ. I would guess that Nye County, which has been utilizing this and has been getting a way of funding, is probably using that way of funding to give to the employers to pay the kids to work for them. This is not an education program that teaches the kids the basic skills. We would very much be in support of a program that was developed to teach kids industry skills for the different industries we need education in, and then to teach those skills and allow them the ability to work for an employer where they can apply those skills. Something like that would involve the industry councils that we have within the state to give us areas where we need CTE training and the State Apprenticeship Council to oversee any apprenticeships that may be created out of that program.

As this bill is written, we cannot support it. We support CTE training, and we support high school kids getting an education in career and technical activity and then being able to apply that education. We believe that could be very beneficial to the state and to the students, but this is nothing but indentured servitude.

Chairman Thompson:

We do have a quick question for you, Mr. McKenzie.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Mr. McKenzie, have you talked to the sponsor of the bill to work through some of the details?

Paul McKenzie:

We have had conversations with Assemblywoman Tolles about some issues we have with the bill. We were told there was an amendment that would probably address our main concerns ([Exhibit J](#)). We were not able to see that amendment until last night. I saw what was proposed to do to the bill, which does not alleviate the issues we have with the bill.

Chairman Thompson:

Seeing no further testimony in opposition, is there anyone present who would like to testify as neutral to the bill?

Ray Bacon, representing Nevada Manufacturers Association:

The amendment is about 90 percent of the reasons we are neutral. This appears to be duplicative of things already in place. As you are well aware, there is a growing need for employees, especially in northern Nevada at this stage of the game where we are extremely stressed.

The only comment I have on the bill that I think is still an issue and needs to be addressed is the CTE programs in this state are doing an amazing job. We are connecting students with employers, and we are getting actual definitions from employers as to the specific skills they need. We did not have that before we created the sector councils, and those are working reasonably well. They could always be improved.

The one thing we are not doing a great job of is getting that focus on the college-bound student as to what their career aspirations should be able to do. We are doing a great job with the noncollege-bound student, but we do not have a program that reaches out to catch the kid who wants to become a doctor to give him the time with someone in the medical profession for orientation.

We are doing a great job and we have made wonderful strides. We are not where we need to be long term yet.

Chairman Thompson:

Seeing no further neutral testimony, do the bill sponsors have any closing remarks?

Assemblywoman Tolles:

I would like to thank Assemblyman Hafen to allow me to copresent. We are happy to wordsmith any additional changes with Assemblyman Hafen's permission and work with the stakeholders. I do want to point out that in section 5, subsection 1, and section 6, subsections 1 and 2—in fact, I think in every section—it does mention apprenticeships. If we need to do more to specifically work with those apprenticeship programs to make sure they are 100 percent up and running and meeting the goals of the legislation that was passed in 2017, we are certainly in favor of that.

Assemblyman Hafen:

I would just like to say thank you again.

Chairman Thompson:

I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 359. I will open the hearing for public comment. We will start in southern Nevada because I understand we will lose the video feed at 4 p.m. Public comment will be limited to two minutes.

Melissa Meetze, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am here to talk about the charter schools. I would like to share my family's story regarding Nevada charter schools. When my husband was discharged from the U.S. Air Force, he accepted a job at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. We moved to Reno in 2013 with our girls. The public school system was overcrowded. We found Nevada charter schools offered a community more like the U.S. Department of Defense schools. My older daughter graduated in 2016 from Truckee Meadows Community College High School at age 17 with an associate of science and an associate of arts. She was able to attend the University of Nevada, Reno and graduated at age 19 with a bachelor's in English. My younger daughter is graduating with three other students with associate degrees from Truckee Meadows Community College. She currently attends Alpine Academy public charter school. The Jump Start Program for High School Students offered at Alpine Academy gave her the opportunity to earn that associate degree.

Alpine Academy is a community of students, teachers, and parents. Everyone works together to ensure a family atmosphere of learning and caring for our community. The special education room is not shunned as a "weird" place. Students tutor each other in subjects they excel in. The teachers know the names and needs of the students. I am proud to be an Alpine parent because we care about our students and teachers. That is why I am here today.

Ana Belen, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I teach at Mater Academy at Nevada Mountain Vista, a charter school. We made a promise to our students. Let me tell you a little bit more about why we cannot break that promise. We serve a diverse population of students, a Title I school, at least 80 percent Hispanic, 100 percent free lunch, and 100 percent not prepared for the stories we hear on a daily basis. Stories of abuse, neglect, hunger, crime, and trauma. We teach kids in survival mode and they grow.

Our system at Mater Academy is working. We are growing kids who are on an average of three to four grade levels behind, who begin kindergarten not knowing letter sounds. Many of our students do not even speak English, but we have an amazing English language learners (ELL) team, and we are such a family that in any given classroom you could see bilingual students helping other students without even being asked. It is working.

We celebrate the sixth grader at a second-grade reading level who grows two levels a year, but that still makes for an eighth grader graduating at a sixth-grade reading level. Then we suddenly throw them into a sea of 3,000 students in a Clark County School District high school with at least 45 kids per class. These students are accustomed to small classes, being part of a family, and they drown. I have watched it. And then the cycle of stories begins again.

We have promised them a safe place, a high school for years. I ask that you please reconsider passing Assembly Bill 462 because it does not just stop charter schools, it completely changes the paths of the students desperately waiting for Mater Academy.

Davari Banks, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am an eighth-grade student at Mater Academy. I was raised by a single mom. My mom has always looked to give me every opportunity to be successful. She wanted a school with a good family atmosphere to support me. When I arrived at Mater, I had this defensive shell around me and took out all my anger on my classmates. However, my principal, Mrs. "Momma Fairless," taught me how to become a gentleman. This would never have happened if I stayed in my other school because the school was so big.

I do not support Assembly Bill 462 because I believe public charter schools give students the chance to get a quality education that is completely free and supportive of all students. Being a single mom, my mom could never afford an expensive private school. There are many benefits to charter schools. Charter schools treat you like family. Charter schools thrive in sports because they allow students a better chance at making the team due to the smaller class sizes. My grades have improved a lot from my old school because I am able to get more support from the teachers. The teachers know my mom personally and will call her anytime I am not living up to their expectations. Another benefit of charter schools is they make me feel safe by acting fast to stop negativity. They take extra safety precautions to watch out for the students and staff.

I hope that this bill does not pass because I would like for other students like me to get the same opportunities for a quality and affordable education that is only possible from a charter school. Wealthy students have the opportunity to choose between public or private schools.

Chairman Thompson:

We are at the two-minute mark. Do you have written testimony?

Davari Banks:

Yes ([Exhibit K](#)).

Chairman Thompson:

Leave it with the clerk and we will make sure it is on the record. We appreciate your passion, and keep doing well in school.

Is there anyone else in southern Nevada wanting to testify in public comment?

Maria Gimenez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am currently an eighth grader at Mater Academy. I moved to the United States from Venezuela when I was in the third grade. I moved to Mater Academy when I was in the sixth grade. Because Mater is a smaller school, I feel more comfortable asking my teachers

and my friends questions. When I came to Mater, I was behind in English, but now I am reading on grade level. I am normally quiet, so being at a smaller school has helped me become comfortable to reach out for help.

When I came to Mater, I was shy, but Mater has helped me become more outgoing and talkative. This year I joined the student council where I learned to become a leader and work with my classmates. Because it is a small school, I have the opportunity to become really close with students at school. It almost feels like we have become a little family.

As an eighth-grade student, I am currently looking for a high school that will fit my personality. I am still worried about finding a high school that will work for me. I applied for a magnet program, but I did not get accepted because of the lottery system. The Sports Leadership and Management Academy Nevada is another charter school close to me; however, I am not really into sports. I am nervous about going to my zoned school because it is a really big school and I will not be able to get to know my teachers personally.

Because of this, I do not support Assembly Bill 462. I urge you to consider students like me who need individual support to learn a whole new language and students who are shy and need a smaller school to fit them. Charter schools like Mater Academy will help students who need the extra support.

Ariel Herndon, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I attend one of Nevada's charter schools in the area, Mater Academy. I am here today to say that I believe you guys should build more charter schools. I love Mater Academy because all the teachers are very nice and very supportive of everyone. I would like to have more charter schools built because we are able to have fun, educational, rewarding trips because we are a small school. We are given an amazing education using Springboard and i-Ready, which is preparing and predicting our SBAC [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium]. Our school also has a lot of diversity and has proven, for the Clark County School District (CCSD), that no matter what color you are or what race you are, you can work hard to achieve your goals. I do not support Assembly Bill 462. In conclusion, I believe we should build more charter schools.

Ruth Garay, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am one of the moms of students who attend Mater Academy. I come here to talk to you a little bit about why, as a parent, it is important to have at least the option of a charter school. I live on the east side, and the only school available for charter purposes is Mater Academy, or I have to travel an extended amount of time to go across the city to another school. The reason why I did not choose CCSD is because my kids require the attention the students before me mentioned. It is a family atmosphere and is just what they need at this point in time.

My kids have excelled two and three grade levels over in reading, math, and leadership skills. They have gotten to do things that CCSD is not able to do, such as sports. It has elevated their self-esteem and they are putting themselves out there. I want to let you know that, at least on the east side, do not stop that growth and let it continue. It is something that is needed, at least on the east side of the valley. [Written testimony was also submitted ([Exhibit L](#)).]

Brittanie Rivoli, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Regarding Assembly Bill 462, stopping or limiting the growth of charter schools, I want to take a moment to highlight some key points of why I love my charter so much. I am a teacher at Mater Academy.

Charters provide the teachers, staff, and students a family-oriented surrounding, a safe place, a place of love and encouragement, and peer happiness—a place where anything is possible. There are dreams, and aspirations are endless. At charter schools, we provide more accommodations for our ELL students because, I am sure we could agree, education is not one-size-fits-all.

At Mater Academy, we are very blended and diverse. What is the harm or foul in charters? My students are becoming brighter and brighter, and they need a high school to continue on their educational path, which has already become so successful. We are a family, and we care so much about our students and our success, but we also mentor them and love them like our own. I see the differences in a charter versus a district school. For my students, I feel as though they are little fish in a really big pond. The morale, climate, and community is so different at my school. I know firsthand how it feels to be a teacher at a big district school, and I personally had a rough experience.

At Mater Academy, we are provided with not only the support and training, but we are provided the love and belief that I am great and I could always be better for my students. Our kids feel that way too, as you heard from the students who have spoken before me. Limiting the growth of a charter school, especially on the east side, would hurt my kids and what they are accustomed to right now. Please do not pass this bill because my kids need to have the strength and dedication they have had at our school to continue on for the years to come. Their success is dependent upon the climate and surroundings we have. Passing this bill would really hurt our kids.

I do want to thank the Committee for passing Assembly Bill 219. I hope it continues because so many of my students are ELL, and they will benefit from it passing. The possibilities are endless. Thank you so much.

David Lorig, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am opposed to Assembly Bill 462. In 2015, my wife, Dr. Michele Lorig, received a job offer that ultimately changed our family's lives. After more than 20 years as a special educator, she was appointed as an assistant principal at Somerset Academy of Las Vegas, and

we chose to have our two sons attend with her. After the first year, I made the decision to teach within the academic network of charter schools as well. I am a kindergarten teacher at Mater Academy, and my wife is currently serving over 1,900 students as the interim principal at Somerset Academy Losee Campus.

Unlike others you may hear from today, our story is a little bit different because we are proud parents of two boys who happen to have Asperger's syndrome. Education is a game changer for parents of special-needs children. It is a make-or-break situation. We have to be completely confident that every day results in learning and growth, whether that be academically, socially, or emotionally.

Now here we are several years into our public charter school experience. I can stand here and say that my charter school has afforded me the blessing of positively impacting the lives of my students, both past and present. I can attest to the fact that being an educator in the charter system has allowed me to receive professional development, challenge myself to grow, and further hone my skills. The same can be said for my wife, but realistically, that is not the message I want to leave you with today.

What I want you to understand is that without the choice of a charter school, my oldest son would not have come in sixth place in the Nevada State Spelling Bee in 2017 or received an exemplary citizenship award from his entire seventh-grade team of teachers. My younger son would never have had the lifelong memory of scoring a touchdown for his flag football team or have built his confidence from completing the fourth-grade math curriculum in less than a school year. Our family as a whole would not be where it is today without having had the choice to select a charter school for our boys to grow academically and thrive socially. We would not see the future that we see on the horizon for our boys if it were not for the exemplary education and dedicated professionalism that our boys have experienced over the past four years. Please do not make the grave mistake of halting the progress of these charter schools that provide such an important choice for these families who need choice.

Natalie Lopez, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a scholar at Mater Academy. I am fortunate to say that I have attended public, private, and public charter schools. At my public school, I was just another number in an overcrowded class. At my private school, I was just a symbol of dollars from my parents' bank account. At my charter school, they see me as a person. I am not a number or a symbol. Finally, I would like to understand why you want to send me back to an overcrowded school or make me attend a school that determines who I am based on my parents' bank account. The public charter schools help us get a better education in a less-crowded environment. Thank you for your time, and I hope you will go against this bill for the well-being of today's scholars.

Chairman Thompson:

Ms. Lopez, is this your first time presenting to the Assembly?

Natalie Lopez:

Yeah.

Chairman Thompson:

You were amazing. You are tough and we appreciate that.

Christiana Williams, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I believe that charter schools should have the chance to continue expanding. First, I would like to share that being at a charter school has been a very good experience for me ever since my parents applied for me to attend here in the fourth grade.

I have always had an issue making friends and socializing with other people, so when I came to Mater Academy, I was shy. The teachers at Mater continued to support me. I started to break out of my shell and I was very comfortable. I have always wanted to try out for the cheer team, but I was too shy. I finally came out of my shell and decided to try out and I made the team. I am currently on the cheer team as a flyer. I believe if it were not for teachers at the charter school I attend, I do not think I would feel comfortable enough to join the cheer team.

The zoned school I came from was very large, and I did not feel comfortable with the people there. At Mater, I can honestly say that teachers care about my education. Many of the staff are welcoming and are very easy to talk to because they care about the students. There are many curriculums and activities that vary at Mater and allow every student to try new things. The only charter school I have attended is Mater Academy, but I can infer that others are the same. Also, my principal is continuously trying to support students at Mater, and she makes sure that they advocate for us. Without more charter schools, I do not believe that I would be able to get as much individualized education. I have one more year in middle school and when I look for a high school, I would like to have as many choices as possible so I can choose a school that fits best for my personality.

Anthony Villanueva, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a sixth grader from Mater Academy. I have been a student at Mater since the third grade. I do not remember a lot from second grade, but I do remember that I could not play any sports like I wanted to. Now that I moved into a charter school, I have many opportunities to play sports. At Mater, I play varsity football, soccer, cross country, and basketball. Having the opportunity to play sports means so much to me. Sports help me interact with my teammates, make friends, and motivate me to take school more seriously.

I know if I do not get good grades, my coaches and teammates will be disappointed in me. Because Mater is so much smaller, my coaches check on me to make sure my grades are good. Sports at charter schools provide student athletes like myself the opportunity to play a variety of sports.

I also like going to a charter school because teachers pay more attention to the things I am struggling with in class. The teachers help me with things I am working on. It has given me an opportunity to make a connection with my teachers.

If this bill passes, my opportunities for choice will go away. I will not have the opportunity to attend the Mater high school. It means that I may not receive the education that is best for me. These choices affect my future and if I will be successful and ready for college. I urge you, Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee, to consider if this bill does pass, many students will lose the opportunity to choose a school that is right for them. The opportunity for choice would be taken away from myself and other children as well. This will affect our education and the way we grow up and become adults.

Alonso Aceves, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a seventh-grade student from Mater Academy. I would like to share with you today what I enjoy about being at a charter school. It has honestly been a great experience. At Mater, I feel like it is a small family.

At the beginning of last year, I went to my zoned school. I struggled with many things: asking my teachers questions if I did not understand; focusing; and staying organized with my classwork. Once I moved to Mater, I enjoyed the smaller atmosphere. I was able to know my teachers on a more personal level. Going throughout the year, I would get help when I needed it because I felt more comfortable talking to my teachers. I feel confident to ask questions because I knew someone would help me. I also felt more comfortable raising my hand in class because I knew all the students.

I also feel safer at a charter school. I feel that they take all the precautions to stop any negativity that comes into the school and correct that negativity as soon as possible. They will do anything to take a student with negative behavior and turn them into a straight-A student with outstanding behavior.

I ask you today to consider students like me—students who want to attend charter schools because they feel more confident and comfortable in a smaller school where I personally know all my classmates and teachers.

Jack Tittman, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am a counselor at Mater Academy, and I work at both schools. My principal, Renee Fairless, has given me the assignment to help kids and to help teachers. I have been given these responsibilities based upon a 50-year career in education. I taught science for 10 years in California, then 30 years teaching in the Clark County School District. I taught science for 20 years and 10 years for CCSD. I retired in 2008, only to go back to work almost immediately. Now after 50 years in the field, I am trying to explain how important this high school is to our children.

I am acutely aware of the difference in the way our school treats and works with our students compared to many other schools I have worked at. We employ several counselors—I am one of them, a professional licensed social worker—to work with our kids. We work to correct behavior, develop intelligent, effective behavior, and help our kids achieve.

A charter high school would have an immensely positive effect on a large number of students. I urge you to vote against Assembly Bill 462. We have many students who need this high school, and the community needs it also. Please consider my request.

Miss Abbott, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I have lived on the east side since I was 14 years old. I went to Las Vegas High School and I had an opportunity to go to Advanced Technologies Academy. I graduated in the top of my class. You all know Advanced Technologies Academy is the No. 1 magnet school in Las Vegas.

Fast-forward 21 years, and I am a mother of three, including 15-year-old twins. We stumbled across Mater Academy when my girls were in fifth grade. We had nothing but an amazing opportunity and leadership. My girls are better for it. I was really hoping there would be a high school available for them. Of course, the high school is not ready and they had to apply to the magnet schools. They were blessed to get into a magnet school. I might add, they are in two separate magnet schools, which is a lot of fun for mom. Needless to say, they got in.

Most of our students do not have that opportunity. I live on the east side. I know what is available on the east side. Mater Academy is a breath of fresh air. There is a principal like no other. There are teachers and parents involved. I am a teacher and I believed in the movement so much, I left the CCSD and I am at Mater. I love that school. For this bill to pass, you guys are saying the hard work that is being done on the east side does not matter and these kids just have to go to their zoned school and just have to stay there.

We all know education is different for everyone. To close that opportunity would be heartbreaking. I know everyone takes their jobs seriously. Miss Abbott is challenging you. Figure it out. Look at Mater Academy. Come to Mater Academy. I would welcome any of you in my classroom. I want you to see what you would be doing if you passed this bill, and what you would be stopping for our students.

Chairman Thompson:

We will now move to Carson City for public comment.

Rosa White, Private Citizen, Fernley, Nevada:

I am here to speak as a concerned parent in support of public charter schools. Albert Einstein once said that if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid. This quote reminds us to think twice before measuring ourselves and

others against inappropriate standards. Everyone has a different ability or a particular genius. About five years ago, I found myself remembering this very quote as I did battle with Washoe County School District (WCSD) over the treatment of all four of my special-needs children.

My children were adopted through foster care and, through no fault of their own, came with developmental delays. Throughout their education within the WCSD, I had to aggressively advocate on their behalf because they were being left behind by an insensitive and indifferent school district. There were some teachers who were hidden jewels within the school district, but they, too, had to fight to get my children the appropriate accommodations. My children had started to hate school because it was not a place that embraced a love of learning. They were, as Einstein put it, fish being judged on their ability to climb a tree.

Along came The Honors Academy of Literature, a K-8 public charter school. This school was started by two brilliant educators who envisioned a school with a different approach—one that fostered a love of learning. Their approach included an inclusive curriculum that values the diversity of learners, their families, and the larger community; development of leadership for scholars learning community and wider community; data-driven, individualized, and differentiated instruction; as well as other progressive and innovative approaches to better engage and educate their scholars.

They also employ amazing, engaging, and creative teachers who have left a huge imprint on the lives of my children.

This charter school saved my children's academic careers. For the first time in a long time, they were eager to go to school, eager to share what they learned, and they were retaining their instruction. My two daughters actually served as president in their respective eighth-grade years. That never would have happened in the WCSD.

In public school they were just numbers, but in a charter school, they were scholars who loved to learn. Their interest was piqued. Their creativity was nurtured.

Chairman Thompson:

We are at the two-minute mark. If you would like to leave your written testimony, please do so.

Rosa White:

Can I just say one last thing? It will take ten seconds. Last year Nevada's Department of Education gave The Honors Academy of Literature a Nevada School Performance Framework rating, which all schools receive. They received a 5-star rating and were top ten in Nevada, which included all public schools in the state. They received this 5-star rating in both elementary and middle school.

Mike Smith, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am a Realtor in south Reno. When we have new clients, they very often ask about educational opportunities, and they also like to know the class size. That brings them to a discussion of whether there are new schools and whether there are charter school opportunities here also. Luckily, we have one new charter school in south Reno, the Doral Academy of Northern Nevada, which was built in one year. They built it for just \$19 million and it educates 1,000 students.

I would like to advocate for both new public schools, which are not charter schools, and the need for new charter schools, which are also public schools. We have Hug High School being repurposed into a training academy for the trades and skills, which is exciting. We also have the high school at Wildcreek where the Wildcreek Golf Course used to be, but that will not be built until 2024, and it is going to cost \$200 million. We are happy for that too.

I would like to encourage you to vote against Assembly Bill 462, because we need more and more schools. I live right next to Damonte Ranch High School, and they had added a new addition to that school that is about eight years old. That is already overcrowded. Brown Elementary School is already overcrowded. The more schools, the better. Thank you for the job you are doing today.

Grant Safford, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am a fourth-grade student at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada in Reno. Before I came to Doral, I was not engaged in my learning, and I was bored easily in class. I did not feel like my teachers challenged me to do my best work. At Doral, school is exciting and I feel like my teachers really care about me. I love learning about engineering and design at Doral. I have been able to learn about 3-D modeling and printing, as well as Lego robotics. Being at Doral makes me feel like I can do anything.

Please do not pass Assembly Bill 462 and take away the opportunity for thousands of students like me who attend public charter schools and where we are challenged, accepted, and do our best work.

Nora Blake, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am a student at Doral Academy, a charter school. I am here to stand against A.B. 462. I am lucky enough to be able to attend an esteemed public charter school. For homework every month we have to make a STEAM [science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics] project. One of the projects I made was a tray table for the car. I used a pulley system to raise and lower it. In class, we have PBL, which stands for project-based learning. One PBL we did in class this year was a play about Ellis Island. This was a fun way to learn about our history. I like my public charter school better than my other school because they have an allergy table I have to eat at every day. Please do not take this opportunity away from other students. That is why I want public charter schools to keep being made.

Chairman Thompson:

Did you write all of your testimony?

Nora Blake:

I added a little part.

Chairman Thompson:

You had some good words in there. I liked that.

Dylan Blake, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am here to oppose Assembly Bill 462. In my old school, I felt unsafe because they never had a proper system for managing kids with food allergies. It got to the point where I was nervous to go to school. In my new public charter school, I feel a lot safer because no nuts or seeds are allowed in the classrooms. We have a proper system for allergies in the cafeteria, and if your class eats a snack, then you go outside to eat your snack and wash your hands before returning to your classroom. This has allowed me to focus on learning instead of worrying about the kids around me.

Some examples of fun ways we are learning at our STEAM school is in history. Instead of memorizing names from a textbook, we get to reenact it with simulations, where we are a particular person in a historic time period. We have also been able to simulate being colonists traveling to a new land. We had to determine what supplies to bring and how much to bring, where we would land, and how we would survive on the new land. I have also been lucky enough to take Lego robotics. In this class, we get to plan, program, and build the path a robot would take to travel on the moon and complete as many missions as it can. Please vote no on A.B. 462 so other kids can have the same opportunities as me.

Chairman Thompson:

Thank you, you did a great job.

Charlotte Blake, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am here in opposition to Assembly Bill 462. I think it should be a student's right to have a choice as to where they go to school. If the public school they are zoned for does not meet their needs, they should be able to look for a school that does. In our case, we switched to a public charter school because our public school was not accommodating for food allergies. Having two kids who are anaphylactic to certain foods made our last year in the public school system very scary. I would send my children to school every day wondering if they would survive the day. A parent should never have to wonder that. Judging by the number of students with food allergies who have moved to our charter school from many different public schools, we were not the only ones struggling with this.

It is important that parents have the option of having other schools to choose from. In my opinion, competition is a good thing. Having public charter schools available to everyone should cause our public schools to get stronger. If a public school has students leaving, it will cause the school to look at why students are choosing to leave, and hopefully, they will rectify the problem.

In turn, with parents choosing to have their children attend charter schools, the charter schools have to constantly meet expectations or they will see attendance go down as well. I see this as a win-win, making every school in our area stronger.

Our experience at our public charter school has been positive. In particular, they have been very careful with food allergies, especially because we have so many students who fall into this category. As a mother, this is very comforting. We can focus on our children's education instead of worrying about their surroundings.

Our specific charter school is an arts-integrated school. We have been so pleased with the ways in which are children are learning. They are learning STEAM curriculum in fun ways through creative writing, theater, dance, movement, tableau, and reenactments. I love that my children have the option to learn in this way, something they would not get to do at the school we are zoned for. If you put a moratorium on public charter schools, many students and families will be missing out on wonderful opportunities.

Sadie O'Flaherty, Private Citizen, Fallon, Nevada:

I am here today advocating for charter schools. I am a sophomore at Oasis Academy college preparatory high school, a charter school in Fallon, Nevada. The biggest thing I would like to focus on today is how much my charter school has affected my life.

Oasis Academy, as a charter school, has presented me with activities that I would not have been presented with at any other school in Fallon. We The People, for example, sparked my interest in government this year, and I would never have been exposed to it if it were not for Oasis making it available. I started playing lacrosse when I was in the sixth grade at Oasis Academy, and I have grown more and more passionate about it with every season. This sport is only available at my charter school.

As I mentioned before, I am a sophomore in high school. I am only 15 years old, but my charter school is so invested in preparing its students for further education, I am enrolled in my first college class and earning my first college credit. Not only is this system, the Jump Start program, beneficial to those who want to further their education outside of high school, it is beneficial to those who want to join the workforce out of high school, and they will have that associate degree under their belt.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I attended four college tours in California with my school. I was able to tour the University of California, Davis; University of California, Berkeley; Sonoma State University; and California State University, Sacramento. I have never seen a district school offer that opportunity. Again, this is an example of an activity I would not have been a part of without my charter school.

Although I have been lucky enough to attend Oasis Academy for the last five years, not every Nevada student is so lucky. We have waiting lists of students waiting to fill someone's spot. We have students who need to be given the same opportunities, and this moratorium is only going to decrease those chances. Please do not take away the chance for other kids to have the same kind of opportunity that I have been presented with.

Ellie O'Flaherty, Private Citizen, Fallon, Nevada:

I am a student at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). I am from Fallon, Nevada, where I went to the district public high school. I am here to advocate for charter schools. Melissa Mackedon, the principal of Oasis Academy, is my aunt; therefore, I have witnessed the positive impact that charter schools are capable of making on all students in all areas of academia firsthand.

I have gone to district public schools all my life, including two in North Carolina, where I lived for four years. I do believe they are a necessity to an adequate education for all. However, having witnessed my younger sister's academic success at the charter school in Fallon, I can confidently say that the education offered at the charter school is superb and is more than capable of making a difference in all students' lives.

Oasis Academy offers an interactive learning environment capable of effectively helping each student in all areas of difficulties. Having been a student at a district public school, witnessing the education my peers had been receiving at the charter school, the differences in learning environments was abundantly clear. This includes the subject of a push from teachers to succeed in academics. According to Nevada's Department of Education, charter schools are factually set up by a committee with a desire to provide an educational situation that better meets the needs of students. I am here to wholeheartedly say that Oasis Academy has succeeded in that area. The charter school has been of great academic support to those who are natural students in the classroom and offers abundant help to those who wish to become more so, or may need more assistance.

Berenice de Leon, Private Citizen, Fallon, Nevada:

I am a teacher at Oasis Academy charter school, and I drove in from Fallon on spring break to express my opposition to A.B. 462. My own children attend Oasis Academy as well. They are ELL, as am I. Spanish is the primary language we speak at home. I am so grateful, as a parent, for the level of rigor, support, and just the personal rapport that everyone at the school tries to build with my children and all the kids at Oasis Academy. To see that taken away from families, especially families in rural communities like Fallon, would be very disheartening.

As a teacher, I am also appreciative of having the opportunity to work at a charter school and being challenged to take my expertise as a teacher to the next level. Being introduced to project-based learning has been very helpful to me as a teacher to raise the bar as to where I want to be as an educator. I encourage you to please not pass the bill. Give our families more options for education.

Rochelle Tisdale, Private Citizen, Fallon, Nevada:

I, too, drove in from Fallon on spring break, as did some others. We are very vested in this. We were very surprised to see this bill even come out. We had no idea it was coming. I designed and implemented the high school. We have been a 5-star high school since the first year. We have a 100 percent graduation rate. We are constantly trying to listen to our students and do innovative things to keep our education progressive. We are really hitting an underserved population in Fallon where our kids are getting to have a college experience in a small community. We get to teach them how to do that. Most of them get associate degrees. If they do not, we are getting them career and technical education certificates. We are lining them up with some dual enrollment and teaching them how to do college so when they leave us, they are very successful. The majority of our students transfer to UNR. We try to encourage them to stay in the state and take advantage of the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship. However, we want to grow. With A.B. 462, that will prevent growth. There is a need, and we are servicing that need. I really hope you consider this when this bill is finally heard and know there are a lot of students in rural communities, as well as urban communities, who are being served by high-quality, top-performing charter schools. We should be allowed to continue to grow and replicate if that is what we choose to do.

[Written testimony opposing Assembly Bill 462 was also submitted from Douglas Goodman ([Exhibit M](#)).]

Chairman Thompson:

I will close public comment. I thank everyone for their patience today. We will have our next meeting on Thursday, April 4, 2019, at 12:30 p.m.

The meeting is adjourned [at 3:55 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sharon McCallen
Recording Secretary

Lori McCleary
Transcribing Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Vice Chairman

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is the Work Session Document for [Assembly Bill 78](#), dated April 2, 2019, presented by Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau.

[Exhibit D](#) is the Work Session Document for [Assembly Bill 219](#), dated April 2, 2019, presented by Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau.

[Exhibit E](#) is the Work Session Document for [Assembly Bill 276](#), dated April 2, 2019, presented by Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau.

[Exhibit F](#) is written testimony, dated April 2, 2019, submitted by Bruno Moya, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada, in support of [Assembly Bill 429](#).

[Exhibit G](#) is a proposed amendment to [Assembly Bill 343](#), submitted by Dan Musgrove, Chair, Clark County Children's Mental Health Consortium.

[Exhibit H](#) is written testimony in support of [Assembly Bill 343](#), dated April 2, 2019, submitted by Johna Tichenor, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Exhibit I](#) is written testimony in support of [Assembly Bill 343](#), dated April 2, 2019, submitted by Robert Barsel, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Exhibit J](#) is a proposed amendment to [Assembly Bill 359](#), dated April 2, 2019, presented by Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II, Assembly District No. 36.

[Exhibit K](#) is written testimony in opposition to [Assembly Bill 462](#), submitted by Davari Banks, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Exhibit L](#) is written testimony, dated April 4, 2019, in opposition to [Assembly Bill 462](#), submitted by Ruth Garay, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Exhibit M](#) is written testimony, dated April 4, 2019, in opposition to [Assembly Bill 462](#), submitted by Douglas Goodman, Private Citizen.