

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eighty-first Session
May 12, 2021**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Moises Denis at 1:16 p.m. on Wednesday, May 12, 2021, Online and in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Vice Chair
Senator Roberta Lange
Senator Fabian Donate
Senator Joseph P. Hardy
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Carrie A. Buck

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod, Assembly District No. 34
Assemblywoman Lesley Cohen, Assembly District No. 29
Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner, Assembly District No. 26
Assemblyman Glen Leavitt, Assembly District No. 23
Assemblywoman Selena Torres, Assembly District No. 3

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jen Sturm, Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Counsel
Ian Gahner, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Hawah Ahmad, Clark County Education Association
Brad Keating, Clark County School District
Anthony Ruiz, Nevada State College
Christy McGill, Director, Office of a Safe and Respectful Learning

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Felicia Gonzales, Deputy Superintendent, Department of Education
Karl Wilson, Director of English Learners Service, Department of Education
Elliot Malin, Anti-Defamation League
Maggie O'Flaherty
Alexander Marks, Nevada State Education Association
Jacob Coneh, Student, Adelson Educational Campus
Dillon Hosier, Israeli-American Civic Action Network
Lenna Hovanessian, Armenian National Committee
Robyn Weber
Ben Lesser
Lydia Costantian
Seda Sargsyan
Nicole Datastanyan
Jolie Brislin, Nevada Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League
Eden Gal
Kellie Pryor, Nevada Freedman Association

CHAIR DENIS:

I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 167.

ASSEMBLY BILL 167 (1st Reprint): Establishes provisions relating to education.
(BDR 34-749)

ASSEMBLYMAN GLEN LEAVITT (Assembly District No. 23):

Assembly Bill 167 amends existing law to provide additional information to students concerning mental health resources. This information will be included on the back of school-issued identification (ID) cards of pupils in public schools and public higher education institutions.

The topic of student mental health and suicide prevention has gained increasing attention during the Covid-19 pandemic. As many of you have read or heard, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report alerting the Nation about the mental health crisis among students. According to the CDC, between April and October 2020 hospital emergency departments saw a rise in visits from kids with mental health needs. Compared to 2019, these visits for children 12- to 17-years old increased by 31 percent. In the report, the CDC stated that expanding access to services that support children's mental health is critical during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Here in Nevada, Superintendent Jesus Jara of the Clark County School District (CCSD) has also expressed his concern about student mental health and especially about recent increases in the number of student suicides. This has been a problem even before the pandemic; it is clear more needs to be done to address this issue.

Assembly Bill 167 builds upon previous legislation and what has already been provided to our student population. Under this bill, student ID cards will now include contact information concerning suicide prevention. My intent with A.B. 167 is to provide students with free, confidential support in times of suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

Sections of A.B. 167 include new language. The bill requires newly printed or reprinted ID cards for pupils in public school. It will now include the telephone number for the Crisis Support Suicide Prevention hotline, listing the telephone number as 1-800-273-8255 and providing an option to text "care" to 839863. Section 3 of A.B. 167 is a parallel section, applying the same requirements to ID cards of students attending public college and universities. We realized when going through this process it is not just children who are struggling, but the higher education institutions are also seeing a rise. We did not want to leave them out of this legislation.

I urge the committee to read the support testimony ([Exhibit B](#)) by Lauren Porter. She helped me present A.B. 167 in the Assembly but was unable to attend today. She has been a great resource.

CHAIR DENIS:

Assembly Bill 167 is specific as far as what information is put on the ID card?

ASSEMBLYMAN LEAVITT:

Yes, we worked closely with the school districts and the crisis support center. When you are talking about student IDs of K-12, they already have a hotline number on there, which is SafeVoice. SafeVoice has a different purpose, it is not dedicated specifically for suicide prevention. It is more of a peer-to-peer help hotline. Since that number was on the back of ID cards already, we had to be concise on what additional information was added. There is limited room on the back of these cards. As a result, we worked closely to draw in what we wanted to put on the back of these cards. We thought it was important to have a

texting option as well. These two hotline numbers will simultaneously be put on the IDs.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Does this process work in the smaller counties of Nevada?

ASSEMBLYMAN LEAVITT:

Are you referring to the phone number itself?

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I mean the information that will be on the back of the ID card.

ASSEMBLYMAN LEAVITT:

Yes, it is State and national specific.

HAWAH AHMAD (Clark County Education Association):

We support A.B. 167 and we ask this bill be merged with Senate Bill 249 to provide specificity for the type of resources required on a student ID card.

SENATE BILL 249: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-81)

Additionally, the Clark County Education Association (CCEA) supports section 1, subsection 2 of A.B. 167 in which a successor organization may be placed on the ID card should the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline change, and allows for this data to be shared with SafeVoice to provide follow-up and wrap-around services if needed to our students.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the mental health crisis our students face every day. As Nevadans it is about time we stand together and give our students the resources they need should they require crisis support in times of suicidal ideation. By ensuring that information to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline calling number and text messaging option are readily accessible on the back of every student ID card, students will be given one more resource that will help promote the destigmatization of mental illness and stimulate discussion on the subject matter. Of the most crucial clauses of this bill is the availability of this information for texting. Many of our students in the digital age are more comfortable with texting than phone calls. If the difference between saving a child's life is a text or a phone call, then why not make sure every option is available?

As we return to the new normal, we must invest in our student's mental and behavioral health. Students who are experiencing suicidal ideation do not necessarily need to be alone in their time of need. Instead they need a direct connection to their school-based program to prevent the substantial steps to suicide. If there is anything we have learned over the past year, it is every policy created by this Legislature must aggressively address the issue and must be equitable across every racial and ethnic group. We feel that A.B. 167 is the first step in destigmatizing suicide, provides immediate resources and links that provides data into existing programs to provide comprehensive intervention. The Clark County Education Association respectfully asks this Committee to help our educators by ensuring this specific resource is available to students.

BRAD KEATING (Clark County School District):

We support A.B. 167. It will be an additional needed resource for our students most in need. Students need to know that no matter what they are going through in life, someone is there to listen to them. Providing the number of the Crisis Support Center on the back of student ID cards keeps the important information at the tip of their fingers available for whenever they need it.

ANTHONY RUIZ (Nevada State College):

We support A.B. 167. Mental health is a top priority for our campus. Adding the Lifeline number on the backs of ID cards is something we recently have started doing, and we applaud the efforts of this bill to expand this important initiative Statewide.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Assemblyman Leavitt, did I hear you say this is a peer-to-peer hotline?

ASSEMBLYMAN LEAVITT:

The SafeVoice hotline is a peer-to-peer hotline.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I do not understand SafeVoice in that way. I did not know it was peer-to-peer.

ASSEMBLYMAN LEAVITT:

SafeVoice told me they are peer-to-peer.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I want to make sure we are on the record clearly. I do not believe SafeVoice is a peer-to-peer service. Can the Department of Education (NDE) clarify this point?

CHRISTY MCGILL (Director, Office of a Safe and Respectful Learning):

While peer-to-peer is a component of SafeVoice, it is a 24/7 text and hotline that is manned by the Department of Public Safety. If students or the community have any school safety or personal safety concerns, they can call and get help. SafeVoice is also connected to every one of our public schools and every law enforcement entity in Nevada.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Would it be accurate to say SafeVoice is peer-to-peer?

Ms. MCGILL:

SafeVoice is not a peer-to-peer hotline.

ASSEMBLYMAN LEAVITT:

I apologize for my misunderstanding. For the record, I have no opposition to amending A.B. 167 or merging it into S.B. 249. We may have duplicated efforts in A.B. 167, and I do not want to do that.

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the hearing on A.B. 167 and will open the work session on A.B. 67.

ASSEMBLY BILL 67 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to education.
(BDR 34-293)

JEN STURM (Policy Analyst):

The work session document ([Exhibit C](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 67. This bill was presented to the Committee by the NDE on April 26. In addition to the amendments listed, the NDE has submitted an additional amendment.

FELICIA GONZALES (Deputy Superintendent, Department of Education):

The NDE will submit a clarifying amendment that would allow a pupil who is expelled or permanently expelled to continue to enroll in alternative education programs or schools offered by the district other than public schools.

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SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

If a student is excluded from a public school, would that include the alternative schools within the school district?

MS. GONZALEZ:

This amendment further clarifies that a student who is expelled may attend an alternative program that is provided by the school district.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Groups contact me concerned if distance education was not working for a student and there was no other alternative, so thank you for the clarification.

SENATOR DONATE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
A.B. 67.

SENATOR BUCK SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

The same groups that reached out to Senator Dondero Loop spoke with me. The amendments proposed, especially the oral amendment today probably satisfies the worry. I will support the measure today because it is what is needed, but I will reserve my right to change my vote on the floor just in case.

CHAIR DENIS:

I appreciate others keeping an eye on this issue. The intent was never to prevent a kid kicked out of a school from learning. We still want them to learn and have opportunity.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 67 and open the work session on A.B. 88.

ASSEMBLY BILL 88 (1st Reprint): Makes various changes relating to governmental entities. (BDR 34-147)

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Ms. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit D](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 88. This bill was presented to the Committee by Assemblyman Howard Watts on April 28.

SENATOR HARDY:

If A.B. 88 was not diluted in one way or the other, it would be an interesting discussion. I have misgivings about putting those two things together and will vote no.

CHAIR DENIS:

Do you want to put on the record what those two things are?

SENATOR HARDY:

There is no need.

SENATOR DONATE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
A.B. 88.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATORS BUCK, HAMMOND AND HARDY
VOTED NO.)

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 88 and open the work session on
A.B. 105.

ASSEMBLY BILL 105 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing interscholastic
activities. (BDR 34-517)

Ms. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit E](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 105. This bill was presented to the Committee by Assemblyman Tom Roberts on May 3.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS
AMENDED A.B. 105.

SENATOR DONATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 105 and open the work session on A.B. 109.

ASSEMBLY BILL 109 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to charter schools. (BDR 34-529)

MS. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit F](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 109. This bill was presented to the Committee by Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow on April 30.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I spoke with the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Education and several other people. This came out of the Committee at 100 percent and we backed it off to 80 percent. It is a good starting place, but as a teacher I would remind the public we have licenses for a reason. We do not hire firemen who are uncertified. We do not hire electricians and plumbers without a license so it is important for us to keep that in mind. We are teaching the future with our children. I am willing to vote for A.B. 109 at 80 percent, but I want to keep the percentage in mind as we work on this legislation in the Interim.

SENATOR LANGE:

I say ditto on Senator Dondero Loop's comments. As a teacher who had to go to school to become a teacher, it is troublesome to me we are making different decisions for charter schools than we do for our public schools. Any job that a person takes requires training so they can perform their duties to the best of their abilities. It is troubling to me we are going to 80 percent. I too will vote yes on A.B. 109, but this is something we need to keep in mind as we deal with education issues in the future.

SENATOR HARDY:

It is nice to have a certificate and a license. Over the years that I have been in this Body, we have talked at great length about the reality of people having experiences in the real world and are recruited to come into schools and share their experiences. We have done all sorts of things with various subjects in this regard. If we put hard numbers on this topic, the reality is sometimes there are people who have a license who are not as good a teacher as someone who does not. I will be voting no on A.B. 109.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I appreciate my colleague's comments, but I am not going to a doctor who does not have a license. I know for a fact we have extremely flexible teaching license capabilities in this State. We have a lot of opportunities and different avenues.

SENATOR BUCK:

We are facing a national teacher shortage. We need to make sure we have an avenue to bring teachers to our classrooms. Until we give charter schools appropriate funding, sometimes you have to get by with an unlicensed teacher. Also, I have not seen any data that links an unlicensed charter school teacher to lowering student achievement. I will be voting no on A.B. 109.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP MOVED DO PASS A.B. 109.

SENATOR LANGE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATORS BUCK, HAMMOND AND HARDY VOTED NO.)

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 109 and open the work session on A.B. 136.

ASSEMBLY BILL 136: Adopts changes to the Revised Uniform Athlete Agents Act (2015). (BDR 34-766)

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Ms. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit G](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 136. This bill was presented by Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod and Assemblywoman Lesley Cohen to the Committee on April 21.

SENATOR LANGE MOVED DO PASS A.B. 136.

SENATOR HAMMOND SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 136 and open the work session on A.B. 169.

ASSEMBLY BILL 169 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing higher education. (BDR 34-745)

Ms. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit H](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 169. This bill was presented to the Committee by Assemblywoman Venicia Considine on April 28.

SENATOR DONATE:

I remember being harassed by colleges when I was a senior in high school. They were colleges I had never heard of and you could tell they target certain students over others, especially if you do not score as high on the Scholastic Assessment Test or the American College Testing. They try to hide how much it would cost to go to college. If I had fallen for that, I would have been thousands of dollars in debt. Assembly Bill 169 is definitely needed.

SENATOR DONATE MOVED DO PASS A.B. 169.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP SECONDED THE MOTION.

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CHAIR DENIS:

Thank you for bringing A.B. 169 forward. There are good schools out there and there are others we need to keep an eye on. This bill will help us do that and make it safer for others.

SENATOR LANGE:

I want to echo these comments. My daughter was conned into attending Everest College, which is no longer around. She did not get to finish her education and is sitting on a \$40,000 loan. It is scary what these colleges can do and A.B. 169 will be helpful.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 169 and open the hearing on A.B. 194.

ASSEMBLY BILL 194 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing the suspension and expulsion of pupils. (BDR 34-176)

MS. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit I](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 194. This bill was presented to the Committee by Assemblywoman Selena Torres on May 10.

SENATOR LANGE MOVED DO PASS A.B. 194.

SENATOR DONATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 194 and open the work session on A.B. 195.

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ASSEMBLY BILL 195 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to pupils who are English learners. (BDR 34-174)

Ms. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit J](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 195. This bill was presented to the Committee by Assemblywoman Selena Torres on May 5.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Do these amendments delete the fiscal notes?

ASHER KILLIAN (Counsel):

Assembly Bill 195 did receive a notice of eligibility for exemption in the other House but was not referred to the other money Committee in the other House, so that exemption did not become effective. Assembly Bill 195 has not gone to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means. This bill would become exempt if re-referred to the Senate Committee on Finance, but it is not exempt at this time. I do not want to step on the fiscal staffs' toes, but it is my understanding these amendments do not affect the fiscal notes.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Does that mean A.B. 195 will go to the Senate Committee on Finance?

MR. KILLIAN:

The fiscal impacts of this bill are mostly on the local level. It would be up to the discretion of the Finance Committee Chair to pull A.B. 195 or not.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SELENA TORRES (Assembly District No. 3):

I have worked out the fiscal notes with the school districts and there should be no fiscal note on A.B. 195. I have also worked with the NDE and they agree there is no fiscal note.

SENATOR HARDY:

I suspect some of the fiscal notes are done away with when we removed wraparound services in section 4. That inclusion would have been quite substantial.

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN TORRES:

Much of the fiscal note was removed after working on the amendment in the First House committee passage. You will note the fiscal notes were placed on A.B. 195 before the amendments were made. After the first revision, those fiscal notes were removed, which is why A.B. 195 was not referred to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I noticed on some of the fiscal notes it talks about productions of documents. It also talks about language service providers which are not necessarily wraparound services.

KARL WILSON (Director of English Learners Service, Department of Education):
In the negotiations with Assemblywoman Torres, the fiscal notes on the part of NDE has been removed.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

What about the school districts?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TORRES:

I cannot speak for the school districts, but I have worked diligently with them and they said the fiscal notes have been removed. In the original first draft of A.B. 195, it does say the school districts need to provide translating services for interactions with the school district. There was a clarification made in the amendment with the First House. This change was made to help accommodate the school districts. They are already providing translation services under Title III.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I am looking at CCSD, and it says they will need to hire translators and interpreters and purchase a language service provider. Are you suggesting that is part of Title III and they are already doing that?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TORRES:

That part of A.B. 195 was amended in the First House. This piece of legislation you are looking at no longer has fiscal notes because it was amended.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I do not see it, which is why I ask. I see fiscal notes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TORRES:

That piece of the legislation was significantly amended. You will note, the fiscal notes were put into place before the hearing on the Assembly side. We are now two months out and due to the work done since then, I have managed to get these fiscal notes removed.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

The reason why I ask these questions is because Title III does not pay for translation services, and I was concerned.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TORRES:

I will ask the school districts to reach out to the Committee to ensure there are no fiscal notes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SHANNON BILBRAY-AXELROD (Assembly District No. 34):

As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Education, I can confirm those fiscal notes were removed during the Assembly hearings.

SENATOR DONATE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
A.B. 195.

SENATOR HARDY SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR DONATE:

As a former English Language Learning student, A.B. 195 is needed.

CHAIR DENIS:

The important thing is getting the information on these students so we can make decisions and see how things are working. Assembly Bill 195 moves us forward in that respect.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 195 and open the work session on A.B. 215.

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ASSEMBLY BILL 215 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing the eligibility requirements for participation in courses for an adult to earn a high school diploma. (BDR 34-653)

MS. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit K](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 215. This bill was presented to the Committee by Assemblywoman Venicia Considine on April 28.

SENATOR LANGE MOVED DO PASS A.B. 215.

SENATOR BUCK SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 215 and open the work session on A.B. 235.

ASSEMBLY BILL 235 (1st Reprint): Enacts provisions governing financial education for pupils and their parents and guardians. (BDR 34-42)

MS. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit L](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 235. This bill was presented to the Committee by Assemblywoman Brittney Miller on May 5.

CHAIR DENIS:

Assembly Bill 235 will help us get more kids to realize they can go to college. Sometimes they need a little help to get the paperwork done and that can slow down kids when they do not have support.

SENATOR BUCK MOVED DO PASS A.B. 235.

SENATOR LANGE SECONDED THE MOTION.

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SENATOR DONATE:

My original concerns were on language access and ensuring parents and students have the information they need. We have to start somewhere, and this is a good bill to have for the core foundation to start on. I hope the districts watching right now realize even if it is not a mandate to have information accessible beyond Spanish and other languages; it is the right thing to do.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 235 and open the work session on A.B. 254.

ASSEMBLY BILL 254 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing collegiate athletics. (BDR 34-879)

MS. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit M](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 254. This bill was presented to the Committee by Assemblyman Jason Frierson on April 28.

SENATOR HAMMOND MOVED DO PASS A.B. 254.

SENATOR LANGE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 254 and open the work session on A.B. 258.

ASSEMBLY BILL 258: Revises provisions governing consolidated library districts. (BDR 33-167)

Ms. STURM:

The work session document ([Exhibit N](#)) has been submitted for A.B. 258. This bill was presented by Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod to the Committee on April 21.

SENATOR LANGE:

I will vote yes for A.B. 258, but I want to put on the record I had board members contact me who were not in agreement with this bill. In testimony during our hearing of A.B. 258, it was said the board members agreed unanimously. I want to make it clear there was a difference of opinion.

CHAIR DENIS:

I did research on this and looked up the minutes. There were two separate votes, one for the auditor piece and the other regarding the qualifications. The vote was split, but the measure did pass. Additionally, I had questions about using an internal auditor. Previously, I served on this board and I am familiar with how library boards function. Being that we have one of the largest library districts in the Country, it is a huge undertaking. I can see why you would want to have additional qualifications.

Regarding the internal auditor, that is something city government uses to keep an eye on processes. While I do not know if any other library board has done something like this, this might be a good opportunity to see if it would work. I do support the measure.

SENATOR LANGE:

The board oversees the process, there is a checks and balances process.

CHAIR DENIS:

In addition, the internal auditor could be helpful to the Director and make sure processes are followed through.

SENATOR LANGE MOVED DO PASS A.B. 258.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the work session on A.B. 258 and open the hearing on A.B. 231.

ASSEMBLY BILL 231 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing education on the Holocaust and other genocides. (BDR 34-97)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LESLEY COHEN (Assembly District No. 29):

In 1989, the Legislature created the Governor's Advisory Council on Education Relating to the Holocaust. However, when you review the legislation you see there is little guidance set in statute. Over the years, it has not been a problem; there was not much detail because Nevada had hundreds of Holocaust survivors who live in the State and would tell their stories. They would share with their students how hundreds of years of antisemitism and the loss of democratic principles in Nazi Germany culminated in horror, the likes of which the world never saw before and thankfully has not seen since.

There is something amazing that happens when students of any age meet with survivors. A bond is formed, and students see how racism and xenophobia impact communities, and they have a duty to stand up for what is right in the world. These meetings change students in a good way.

For instance, a 2020 survey from Echoes and Reflections—which is a partnership program of the Anti-Defamation League, the USC Shoah Foundation and Yad Vashem—shows that education is the key to combating hate. In this survey, college students who reported having Holocaust education in high school were more likely to recognize the dangers of anti-Semitism, stand up for those who are being discriminated against and stop something similar from happening again to anyone.

Not everyone gets this education. A recent survey of Holocaust knowledge among American millennials reported, among other significant findings, that almost half of millennials believe that fewer than 2 million Jewish people were killed during the Holocaust. That misunderstanding of the Holocaust is particularly disturbing when considering how anti-Semitism is impacting our communities. In 2019, the FBI reported that Jews and Jewish institutions were the overwhelming target of religion-based hate crimes in 2018. That has been the case every year since 1991, according to the FBI. As stated before, better understanding of the Holocaust is not only important for fighting anti-Semitism, it is also important for fighting hate against all marginalized communities.

Today, hate crimes and anti-Semitic incidents are at a historically high level. Unfortunately, as time goes on we are losing Holocaust survivors and our teachers do not have guidance on how to teach this overwhelming and emotional subject. We must teach it because the world is starting to forget. Today most of the evidence we have about the horrors of the Holocaust is because General Dwight D. Eisenhower feared if he did not save the evidence, the later generations would not understand and believe the extent of the depravity. According to General Eisenhower:

But the most interesting, although horrible sight that I encountered during the trip was a visit to a German internment camp near Gotha. The things I saw beggar description. ... The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were overpowering I made the visit deliberately in order to be in a position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to propaganda.

In that same letter, General Eisenhower noted that General George Patton was overwhelmed by what they saw. According to General Eisenhower "In one room, there were piled up 20 or 30 naked men killed by starvation. George Patton would not even enter. He said he would get sick if he did so."

General Eisenhower was correct. We do see denial happening and that is even happening from teachers who are supposed to be teaching about the Holocaust. So we have a definition, what exactly is the Holocaust? The Holocaust, also known as the Shoah, was the genocide of European Jews during World War II. Between 1941 and 1945, Nazi Germany, and its collaborators systematically murdered some six million Jews across German-occupied Europe, two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population and 90 percent of Polish Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. The murders were carried out in pogroms and mass shootings by a policy of extermination through work and concentration camps, and in gas chambers and vans in the German extermination camps. There were also five million others who were victims of the Nazis because of who they were, where they lived, what they thought, their religion or for having disabilities.

According to Yad Vashem, which is the world Holocaust Remembrance Center, numerous people fell victim to the Nazi regime for political, social or racial reasons. Germans were among the first victims persecuted because of their

political activities. Many died in concentration camp, but most were released after their spirit was broken and Germans with mental or physical handicaps were killed under a euthanasia program. Other Germans were incarcerated for being homosexual, criminals or nonconformists. These people, although treated brutally, were never slated for utter annihilation as the Jews were. The Roma and Sinti people, who are often called by the derogatory name Gypsies, were murdered by the Nazis in large numbers. Those estimations range from 200,000 to over 500,000. The people of Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria were also deemed racially inferior by the Nazis, yet it was not racial ideology alone that determined how the Nazis treated this particular ethnic group. The Poles were treated terribly by the Nazis, but they were not a target for annihilation.

I will now go through A.B. 231. Section 1, subsection 1 requires the State Board of Education to:

Create a subcommittee to review and make recommendations on the manner in which to provide age-appropriate and historically accurate instruction about the Holocaust and other genocides, such as the Armenian, Cambodian, Darfur, Guatemalan and Rwandan genocides.

In addition to the examples referenced, there are unfortunately dozens of genocides in the modern era. The instruction will be in social studies and language arts courses.

Section 1, subsection 2 states the subcommittee's review must include what available resources there are for classrooms, how to modify the curricula of relevant courses, professional development and consideration of other states similar instructions. Section 1, subsection 3 requires the subcommittee to link current standards with community resources. The subcommittee must list standards how to prepare pupils to confront the immorality of the Holocaust and other genocides, learning about the Third Reich, learning about respect for cultural diversity and human rights, a personal responsibility of citizens in a democratic society and history of discrimination in our State.

Section 1, subsection 4 is the makeup of the subcommittee. This is a minimum number, the subcommittee could grow. Section 1, subsection 5 provides the requirement that in even-numbered years the Board will report its findings and

any recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education with recommendations from the subcommittee. Section 1, subsection 6 states in odd-numbered years the Legislative Committee on Education will consider the report and submit their own report to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau with any recommendations for possible legislation to ensure the instruction described in this section is included in the curricula. Section 1, subsection 7 defines genocide.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LISA KRASNER (Assembly District No. 26):

The Holocaust was not the first genocide, and sadly it was not the last. It was the first time genocide had been carried out in such a systematic and carefully orchestrated manner. The enormity of the evil of six million Jewish people, gay people, persons with disabilities and others murdered because of their identity was an atrocity. The numbers themselves are incomprehensible. The extent of collective human cruelty and the utter failure of immorality cannot be imagined if not among the best documented historical facts. Even while we struggle to understand, the ethical imperative of never again is crystal clear. We must not allow what happened to the Jewish people to ever happen again.

That is why Holocaust education is so important, so we never forget. As time passes, memories fade. A Pew study released in 2020 indicates that millennials know less about the Holocaust than previous generations. The Anti-Defamation Leagues most recent Global 100 poll determined that only an estimated 54 percent of the entire world's population has even heard of the Holocaust, and others think it is not important anymore.

Matching this trend of hate, incidents of anti-Semitism remain alarmingly high. Hate is getting more violent too, as we have seen over the past few years. Extremists feel emboldened to act out their hate against Jewish people and other groups. The connection between the Holocaust knowledge gap and the rise in incidence of hate is clear, but so is the solution—education. Education is instrumental in fighting hate, and that is why we must provide more resources for an improved Holocaust and genocide education in Nevada schools.

SENATOR DONATE:

As you were presenting A.B. 231, I was reflecting on everything I learned in CCSD. I learned more by going to Yad Vashem and the Washington D.C. museum. That is a shame. We could have done more to support our students as they are going through their progress. What I like about A.B. 231 is it talks

about simulating the reflection on how what we do as a society can reflect on our actions towards others.

We see a rise in anti-Semitism right now, given current events. Are we planning to revise how we talk about the Holocaust at different grade levels? Will this conversation happen not just in the U.S. history course students take in high school? Is this a multi-level project that will happen, or are we just looking at the U.S. history course?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COHEN:

This education is through English and social studies. It is looking at age-appropriate education throughout a student's time in his or her school district. Much of those decisions will be left up to the subcommittee.

CHAIR DENIS:

Every time I hear about the Holocaust, I always learn something new. I thought I knew the statistics, but when you mentioned 90 percent of Polish Jews, I realized I did not know the numbers were that high. There is a lot of information and we do not, as you mentioned, want to forget it. As we lose people who were there, it is important we figure out a way to maintain that remembrance.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Regarding the members of this advisory board you are creating, who will oversee them so the curriculum is accurate and timely?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COHEN:

The subcommittee is discussed in section 1, subsection 4, paragraphs (a) through (g). It is composed of the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee; three members from the Governor's Advisory Council on Education Relating to the Holocaust; three members from nonprofit organizations that have developed curricula regarding Holocaust for use in public schools; at least one member from a school district which is 60,000 pupils or more enrolled; at least one member from a school district 60,000 pupils or less; at least one member representing a charter school located in the State; at least one member representing a nonprofit organization that has developed curricula for use in public schools regarding the Armenian Genocide; and at least one member representing a nonprofit organization that has developed curricula for use in a public school regarding genocides other than the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. We want to ensure students are learning about all

genocides and understanding this has happened throughout the world and throughout time.

SENATOR HARDY:

We have tender feelings about this subject. Yad Vashem is real, the whole process was real. I am wondering when we start looking inwardly at ourselves and the Indigenous people of the Americas. Are we ignoring them or will we have those events part of the cultural experience we want educators to teach?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COHEN:

I do not think it is a zero sum game. Our students definitely need to learn about Native Americans and slavery. Assembly Bill 231 is just a little portion of what our students should be learning. It does not mean that other issues should not be addressed. Students should be aware of our history in the U.S. and throughout the world.

CHAIR DENIS:

The way I read section 1, subsection 1 is says "such as", so it is not limited. It gives a list of genocides, but before that it says "historically accurate instruction about the Holocaust and other genocides." It seems like the subcommittee putting forward the curriculum could look at these topics Senator Hardy is addressing.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COHEN:

There are definitions of genocide the subcommittee would need to be careful about. Assembly Bill 231 is not about excluding the history we need to learn about what the U.S. has done. This bill is saying we should be learning about other incidents as well.

ELLIOT MALIN (Anti-Defamation League):

I present supporting testimony ([Exhibit O](#)) from myself and supporting testimony ([Exhibit P](#)) from Lieutenant Governor Kate Marshall.

MAGGIE O'FLAHERTY:

Assembly Bill 231 is a phenomenal bill. Education is the key to combating hate. I took a literature class of the Holocaust when I was in college as a diversity requirement and quickly learned how shuttered my worldview was. I ended up changing my education path and got my minor in Holocaust, Genocide, and Peace studies. Assembly Bill 231 highlights some of the most critical points in

our history and allows us to include those in the education of Nevada's next generation of history makers.

ALEXANDER MARKS (Nevada State Education Association):

I present support testimony ([Exhibit Q](#)) for A.B. 231. Adding to this testimony, as a Jewish person I was fortunate enough to receive Holocaust education in both Hebrew school and my elementary school. I was lucky enough to have a man called Sasha Seminov come and visit our class several times. As a child hearing a survivor of the Holocaust telling the awful, horrible stories was life-changing. This was a man who was full of so much life and I remember he did not speak out until the 1960s when his father inspired him because he said these are stories that need to be told so people would never forget the hardships and horrible things he went through. He survived four concentration camps. I remember him talking vividly about the smell of the bodies and how they would ration the food from the dead bodies every single night. When I say food, I mean black coffee and maybe a piece of bread.

Sasha Seminov was a musician, he could play the piano and violin. I remember him telling a story about being transported to his second or third concentration camp, and a German Nazi soldier saw him holding a mandolin and instructed him to play La Paloma. Thank God he was able to do so, because he was literally playing for his life. That put everybody in a much better mood that evening, and he survived. To hear somebody tell you that still sends chills down my spine. He would always tell us even as elementary school children, we must never forget and never let this happen again. I think in terms of age, we needed to hear that because to this day I am retelling a story that needs to be told. It is important to know their stories and retell them over and over again. That is why I am here.

JACOB CONEH (Student, Adelson Educational Campus):

I am Jewish and a great-grandson of Holocaust survivors. Today, not everyone, especially those in my generation, have heard of the Holocaust. As time passes, we get further and further from that period and lose survivors. We see signs that people do not seem to grasp the meaning and the absolute horror that one group of people committed against another. The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution, murder and annihilation of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime. It translates by Greek origin to "sacrifice by fire."

The Nazi's, who came to power in Germany in January 1933 believed that Germans were radically superior, and the Jews, specifically because of their religion and different belief system, were deemed inferior and a threat to the German racial community. It took the Germans and their accomplices four-and-a-half years to intentionally murder six million people just like me only because of their religion. They never showed any restraint and slowed down only when they began to run out of Jews to kill. They only stopped when the Allies finally defeated them. There was no escape. The murderers were not content with destroying the communities, they also tracked down each hidden Jew and hunted down each person who ran.

The crime of being a Jew, a person like me, was so great that every single one had to be put to death. All men, women and children were meant to suffer and die. By 1945 most of the Jews of Europe were dead, and it was not only Jews who were murdered. Persons of color, disabilities and homosexuals were also murdered. All of these people were killed because they were different.

We need Holocaust education because the Holocaust is perhaps the most infamous genocide committed in all of human history, and kids of all ages need to learn, know and acknowledge this happened. Teaching this in Nevada schools will cultivate a sense of moral responsibility among our residents and inspire respect, tolerance and mutual understanding and response to incidents of hate, intolerance, discrimination against all races and extremism. Kids of all ages need to learn about this period so it is never denied or forgotten. Future generations need to be reminded of the past and to ensure this does not happen again.

The Holocaust is a warning that the unthinkable is possible even now. Human nature makes people susceptible to the abuse of power, a belief in the inferiority of the other and the ability to justify behavior, including ignoring it and doing nothing at all. Kids my age face a shocking lack of knowledge about the facts and history of the Holocaust.

My older sister realized this when she attended Bishop Gorman in high school following years at Adelson Education campus. She met with her counselors and together they came up with a strategy to teach students about the Holocaust for the first time in Bishop Gorman's existence of over 80 years. The religion and history teachers invited survivors to speak about their experience. After

hearing from actual survivors and the tragedy and triumph they endured, there was no denying it, no making fun of it and no forgetting it.

The hope is to teach students early and often there is no room for intolerance and to constantly remind them there is no room for the past to be repeated. Especially today when we have social and justice movements like Black Lives Matter. Constant emails about swastikas on our campuses, on our homes or threats made against Jewish people and anti-Semitism is the fact there is growing hate crime in the U.S. and the world. These are our realities every single day. Remembering the Holocaust is more about remembering my ancestors; it is about remembering what hate and bigotry can do against anyone. Be it anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia and all forms of hatred, establishing a place for Nevada to remember and teach the Holocaust is an important step in remembering what hate and bigotry can do.

Right now, especially after the pandemic where we lost several survivors, there are fewer Holocaust survivors and witnesses alive to share their story. It is imperative we do all we can to preserve the memory of my ancestors and those who suffered and perished during this massacre. Teaching about the Holocaust in school—not just mentioning it or glossing over the details—would serve to preserve the knowledge and memories about the Holocaust, and preserve the memory of those in Nevada who suffered.

DILLON HOSIER (Israeli-American Civic Action Network):
We support A.B. 231.

LENNA HOVANESSIAN (Co-chair, Armenian National Committee):
We support A.B. 231. The Armenian Genocide was the first genocide of the twentieth century and the first time there had been a premeditated, state-sponsored crime of this colossal scale against 1.5 million Armenians. I thank this Committee and the Lieutenant Governor for giving dignity to the souls of the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide. I am a granddaughter of four Armenian Genocide survivors. It is important to teach all the horrors of genocide. As the first genocide, the Armenian Genocide is a prototype and an educational model. One of the most important quotes that have come out of the Armenian Genocide are by Ambassador Morgenthau who said "the Ottoman Turks gave a death warrant to an entire race." This was before the word genocide had been invented and was invented after the

Armenian Genocide. Adolf Hitler said before he invaded Poland "Who today remembers the annihilation of the Armenians?"

Perhaps the course of history can be changed when there is accountability. To this day, Turkey does not acknowledge the Armenian Genocide occurred and denies it ever happened. It is an open wound for the Armenian community. Through educational bills such as A.B. 231, President Joe Biden's official affirmation of recognition and Congress, and now hopefully by Nevada, some of those wounds are healed for our ancestors and the Armenian community.

ROBYN WEBER:

I support A.B. 231. As a third-generation Holocaust survivor and part of a social justice collective against anti-Semitism task force, I could not agree more Nevada education must include the Holocaust and genocide education within the school districts to further prevent atrocities such as the Holocaust from ever happening again. Anti-Semitism today is no different than generations past. We must teach the lessons from our past to not repeat them. As we shall remember, anti-Semites start with Jews but never ends with them. It is important to teach the origins of hatred and the differences of labelling and stereotyping which prevents the growth of hatred within. When we do educate, we prevent. There is no better time than now. Our and your future depends on it.

BEN LESSER:

I am a Holocaust survivor and founder of the Zachor Holocaust Remembrance Foundation. Zachor means remember, never forget. My historical journey of survival and intolerance are more important than ever. Holocaust education along with other genocides should be required in all schools as anti-Semitism and hate crimes continue to rise. I have been talking about my story of survival to schools worldwide, including Nevada for nearly 25 years. It saddens and pains me that many under the age of 30 today do not even know what the Holocaust means or have no idea how many died from it. Teaching the Holocaust is the best way to defeat increasing racism, discrimination and bullying.

When we educate people about the subject, we in turn promote tolerance, respect and diversity. We must start teaching the entire history of the world, not just the good parts of history but the good and the bad, whether it happened in the U.S. or in any other part of this world. Do not minimize, we

want the absolute truth. Perhaps we can learn that any kind of hatred must stop. Then perhaps we can make this a better kind of world. I want to see Nevada as an example to lead our Country in the right direction.

LYDIA COSTANTIAN:

I present supporting testimony ([Exhibit R](#)) for A.B. 231.

SEDA SARGSYAN:

I present supporting testimony ([Exhibit S](#)) for A.B. 231.

NICOLE DATASTANYAN:

I am an Armenian-American student attending CCSD and I support A.B. 231. This bill will shed light on events that have gone far too long unnoticed in Nevada schools. In my 12 years in CCSD I have never had a teacher touch on the 1915 genocide of the Armenian people committed by the Ottoman Empire. My own teachers who have been teaching history for years were unaware of the event and were surprised to hear about it. Only 35 percent of the American public surveyed was aware of the Armenian Genocide, which is far too little knowledge, and 54 percent do not know of the Holocaust against the Jewish people. As an Armenian-American, I strongly support the education of both genocide and Holocaust teaching in Nevada's schools so future students can acknowledge the crimes of the past and ensure they will never occur again.

JOLIE BRISLIN (Nevada Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League):

The need for enhanced Holocaust education in K-12 schools cannot be more urgent. It also comes at a time when Holocaust and genocide awareness, particularly among young people, is fading fast from memory. According to one of our recent studies, 22 percent of American Millennials have either never heard of the Holocaust, or are unsure whether they have heard of it at all. Only 35 percent of all Americans know about the Armenian Genocide.

These statistics are not a coincidence. When our students do not understand the history of genocide or the elements leading to it, they cannot fully grasp the significance of their actions, or the tremendous harm they cause to an entire community because of the polarizing and intimidating impact of anti-Semitism and other forms of hate. Education is therefore key to combating hate. By learning about the Holocaust and other genocides, students will have the opportunity to explore how stereotypes, prejudice, religious and ethnic hatred can escalate to atrocity.

Assembly Bill 231 will send a strong message to educators, students and families that Nevada recognizes the importance of the Holocaust and genocide education, and this Legislature is committed to doing everything possible to prevent the rise and escalation of bias-motivated incidents in schools. For these reasons we urge the Committee to support this critical and timely legislation.

EDEN GAL:

I am a twelfth-grade Israeli-American student attending CCSD and I support A.B. 231. As a student in CCSD, I have yet to learn about the Holocaust inside my classroom. Instead, I often find myself informing my peers about the Holocaust because school curriculum does supply their yearning for knowledge regarding this atrocity. Forty-two percent of millennials and Gen Z Nevadans cannot name a single concentration camp of the ghettos. Over half of Nevada's millennial and Gen Z population is unaware that 6 million Jews were massacred in the Holocaust. In high school, I learned about the Armenian Genocide solely from my Armenian peers, not the school curriculum. Only 35 percent of Americans are familiar with the Armenian Genocide. These studies prove that Nevada student's alarming and inadequate knowledge about genocide exemplify the passage of this bill is absolutely fundamental.

Furthermore, as an Israeli-American it is vital our youth learn to understand the horrors our world has faced as a result of discrimination to ensure history does not repeat itself. The dangerous surge of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial across the U.S. proves how necessary genocide education is to combat future hate. Genocide education will build a more kind, unprejudiced and inclusive future in Nevada.

KELLIE PRYOR (Nevada Freedman Association):

I am a descendant of U.S. chattel slavery. While the Holocaust was a systematic and orchestrated genocide, I am asking that one of the main genocides that occurred on U.S. soil be taught in schools and be included as another genocide. Adolf Hitler took his queues from the U.S. and the racist practices against my people. I am asking on behalf of my descendants who are still suffering from the accrued disadvantages of Jim Crowe, Reconstruction, redlining and others that A.B. 231 not pass unless it is amended to include U.S. chattel slavery.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COHEN:

I am honored that Ben Lesser called in support of A.B. 231. He has taught children throughout this State and the world about the Holocaust. One more point I do want to make is when we teach about the Holocaust we also teach about the U.S. Anthony Acevedo was an American soldier who was interred in a concentration camp because he was Hispanic, and the Nazis did not know what to do with him. Jehovah's witnesses, members of the LDS church in Germany and Germans who were of African descent were victims during the Holocaust. This is something we need to make sure our students understand.

It is important to teach about slavery in the U.S. It is important we teach about slavery through Jim Crowe to today. However, this is not what A.B. 231 is about. This bill is a single piece of history that we are asking to teach. There are other issues that should be addressed, but they should be addressed by the school districts and by the State in a much broader respect.

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the hearing on A.B. 231.

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CHAIR DENIS:

Seeing no public comment, the meeting is adjourned at 3:27 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Ian Gahner,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Begins on Page	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
A.B. 167	B	1	Assemblyman Glen Leavitt	Lauren Porter Support Testimony
A.B. 67	C	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 88	D	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 105	E	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 109	F	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 136	G	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 169	H	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 194	I	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 195	J	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 215	K	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 235	L	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 254	M	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 258	N	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Document
A.B. 231	O	1	Elliot Malin / Anti-Defamation League	Support Testimony
A.B. 231	P	1	Elliot Malin / Anti-Defamation League	Lieutenant Governor Kate Marshall Support Testimony
A.B. 231	Q	1	Alexander Marks / Nevada State Education Association	Support Testimony
A.B. 231	R	1	Lydia Costantian	Support Testimony
A.B. 231	S	1	Seda Sargsyan	Support Testimony