

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eighty-second Session
May 15, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Roberta Lange at 2:27 p.m. on Monday, May 15, 2023, in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Roberta Lange, Chair
Senator Edgar Flores, Vice Chair
Senator Dina Neal
Senator Fabian Doñate
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Carrie A. Buck
Senator Robin L. Titus

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Brittney Miller, Assembly District No. 5
Assemblywoman Erica Mosca, Assembly District No. 14
Assemblywoman Shondra Summers-Armstrong, Assembly District No. 6

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jen Sturm-Gahner, Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Counsel
Kirsten Oleson, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Athar Haseebullah, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association
Brandon Summers
Tameka Henry, Rise Up Nevada

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Patricia Haddad, Clark County School District
Tessyn Opferman, Washoe County School District
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Craig Statucki, Nevada Department of Education
Chelsea Capurro, Urban Chamber; Nevada Association of School Administrators
Anthony Curry, Opportunity 180
Ashley Cruz, Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance
Alejandro Rodriguez, Nevada System of Higher Education
Kanani Espinoza, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Nevada State College
Dylan Keith, Vegas Chamber
Nick Velasquez, Nevada Resort Association
Michael Flores, University of Nevada, Reno
Eric Jeng, One APIA Nevada; Asian Community Development Council
Gil Lopez, Charter School Association of Nevada
Jeff Horn, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School
Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees
Kevin Osorio Hernandez
Jack Giese, Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada
Alexander Avila
Peter Guzman, Latin Chamber of Commerce Nevada
Annette Dawson Owens, Children's Advocacy Alliance of Nevada
Alexis Perez
Calen Evans, Washoe Education Association
Dora Martinez, Nevada Disability Peer Action Coalition

CHAIR LANGE:

We want to recognize the contributions of Senator Scott Hammond. After this Session, he will be termed out. I will ask Senator Hammond to Chair this meeting.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 282.

ASSEMBLY BILL 282 (1st Reprint): Establishes provisions governing a subsidy for certain substitute teachers. (BDR 34-841)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SHONDRA SUMMERS-ARMSTRONG (Assembly District No. 6):

As a point of privilege, congratulations Senator Hammond for all of your years of service. This is a tough environment for anybody; you have lasted.

We would like to use a little bit of our time to show a video. The video shows substitute teachers in Nevada sharing their experiences—especially relating to lack of healthcare and benefits. As seen in the video, benefits are a critical issue throughout our State—even more so in southern Nevada.

ATHAR HASEEBULLAH (Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada):

I also want to take a point of privilege and thank Senator Hammond. He is my Senator.

Assembly Bill 282 is rather simple. It guarantees a subsidy for long-term substitute educators to purchase health insurance through the exchange or through other means upon furnishing proof of such.

In the Assembly, we had a couple different provisions come forward. It would have included a dependent portion that was stricken because it did not necessarily match up with existing collective bargaining. It also modified it from long-term substitute educator to full-time substitute educator. Regardless of what language ends up being utilized, this bill would require school districts to provide a \$450 per month subsidy to someone who meets an eligibility definition for working full time.

Why is this important? We constantly talk about a teacher pipeline shortage. More often than not, we are seeing those shortages are not filled or addressed. Something that has been neglected throughout these conversations is we also have a substitute teacher shortage. We are running into more scenarios where the number of long-term substitute educators is not shrinking.

Through this bill, we attempted to define what it means to be full-time substitute educators as having worked 30 consecutive teaching days within a school year. It also means they continue to work with a 70 percent threshold for the remainder of the school year with no break from teaching for 45 days. If they miss days within that timeframe, they would not be eligible. Upon reaching those thresholds, they would be eligible to purchase health insurance through the healthcare exchange. The district would be required to provide a \$450 subsidy to do so.

Initially, our position was that it could be a lower threshold than 30 days to satisfy that definition. We spoke to the business community and to stakeholders, and it seemed that 30 days was in line with the market.

These are 30 available teaching days that are not stripped away from someone's ability to continue to work to be able to earn this benefit. Upon reaching that threshold, the district would be required to furnish \$450 per month as a subsidy to specifically purchase health insurance. The money is not for general purposes. This is because these long-term substitute educators are full-time substitute educators and do not currently have any health insurance or benefits, nor are they entitled to anything. In fact, certain policies and procedures that have been set forth by school districts throughout the State preclude districts from offering benefits.

Today, you will hear from a couple of school districts in opposition to this bill. There are going to be a couple of arguments. As a former government lobbyist, I am familiar with both arguments. They will say this is an unfunded mandate. It is not. I will walk through the specifics of why this is not an unfunded mandate.

This Legislature continues to fund education as if these classrooms are being filled with actual full-time licensed educators. That is, in fact, not happening. What is happening is every full-time substitute educator that is put into a classroom ends up being an accrued savings versus what the actual budget is for a school district. This matters because if you have a substitute educator whose cap is \$120 a day, their average income ends up being under \$25,000 a year with no benefits. The licensed educator is making double that and receives benefits. For every substitute educator that falls within this parameter, filling that seat in a classroom, a school district is saving upward of \$35,000 to \$40,000.

How many teachers does this affect? We tried to reach out to various counties to get specific numbers and, unfortunately, only Nye County responded. They gave us an exact number. After we probed further, some other districts responded. We thought the number of affected teachers would be a small amount. In Clark County School District (CCSD), there were 700 educators that met the definition of a long-term substitute. In Washoe County School District, there were over 130.

Why is this a challenge? Why are we here today? Substitute teachers do not have a bargaining unit. A majority of substitute teachers burn out and do not end up getting benefits. They do not stay long enough to be able to be in the classroom because, quite frankly, they are not treated with any dignity.

These educators are oftentimes on Nevada Medicaid, so the State ends up covering the cost of this or they are forced into ambulatory care because they do not have any sort of health insurance benefit. As a result, the State ends up incurring the cost either way. From a financial standpoint, this ends up saving money for the State.

It should be incumbent on districts to do this because these are their employees. They are simply not treating them that way, despite the fact that they are working 70 percent of the available days; despite the fact that they are filling the gap; despite the fact that, if they quit, these schools are going to end up closing. We are not talking about a miniscule number.

You will hear from CCSD saying they have a policy in place. We have included that insurance market report ([Exhibit C](#)). We also received other documents that say if a substitute teacher works for a year, they will calculate dates and, during the second year, may give benefits. What other employer makes employees work for a full year before getting health insurance benefits?

This bill does not require the district to furnish the health insurance; it is a subsidy for insurance through the private market. It does not impact bargaining for any teachers union or any other bargaining unit that might be in place. It allows these individuals to receive some semblance of dignity. If they get sick while they are in their line of work, they do not have to worry about losing whatever little funds they have available.

From our perspective, this is a pro-business bill because it will end up propelling the market forward. It is a pro-educator bill because it may help reduce the shortage and help put out this fire. It is also a commonsense bill that should have already been in place. There are other districts nationwide that are affording their substitute educators health insurance.

I recognize that this is not a perfect solution and other challenges may come up. However, it goes a long way in making sure that public health is addressed, as well as making sure educators receive some level of support for the work they

are putting in. Whether or not there is an exception in place because they are viewed as substitutes, not educators, ignores the reality that this applies to a subset of people who are in these classrooms for 30 consecutive days and 70 percent of the days thereafter. It shifts the burden to districts to give them the subsidy, once proof is provided. If the substitutes do not provide proof of health insurance purchase, they do not get a subsidy.

Summer is when we run into a problem. What happens over the summer if they are paid per day? They do not get insurance then. We talked to several substitutes and, while they might like it to continue through the summer, they oftentimes take on gig work over the summer or other lines of work, so they are potentially able get insurance through other means. At some level, this bill does put those benefits in place.

There have been many conversations over the last two to four years about guaranteeing health insurance coverage for all Nevadans. We are not even guaranteeing coverage for people who are in classrooms teaching every day. From our vantage point, we should start with them.

I am happy to answer any technical questions that come up, but I cannot emphasize enough to this Committee that this is a real concern. These educators are not going to last if they are not receiving any level of support. Any arguments that this is an unfunded mandate ignore the reality that districts are saving \$30,000 to \$40,000 per long-term substitute under this criteria by not giving them benefits.

SENATOR TITUS:

I appreciate what you are trying to accomplish. I have some technical questions. If the substitute teachers were to buy this insurance, most insurance companies have limited enrollment periods. How does this apply if they are substitutes for 30 days in the middle of January or in April? Does that affect the open enrollment plans?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

It should not. When we had conversations about purchasing through the exchange, those same challenges did not seem to exist. In fact, there seems to be some level of enthusiasm for getting more individuals covered. There is also the ability to purchase separately outside of that, but it did not seem to be an issue.

The one challenge we ran into concerned continuous coverage and what happens in the summer if they end up qualifying in advance of that. The people we spoke to were content to have some level of benefits in place to begin with. We can come back later to modify that.

One of the biggest challenges was how the subsidy would be dispersed. These educators are paid based on their work per day, not in a consistent fashion throughout the year.

Nonetheless, the provision in place will allow them to have coverage during a secondary period of employment in the summer. This would be whether they were employed through the school district or elsewhere. They would continue to pay during that summer employment, but they would at least have coverage. There might be some teachers who simply decline the coverage. That is also fine because the subsidy is limited to purchasing health insurance and giving proof of that.

SENATOR TITUS:

There is something already in place on the federal level. It is continuation health coverage from the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). They can purchase that for the three months they are unemployed. Would this be different than that?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

It would be different. The COBRA generally applies when employment ceases; it also is specific to the type of coverage that is given. Generally, COBRA works when full-time employment ceases and the employee is able to pay out of pocket to continue coverage.

This would be a little bit different in that the coverage, to begin with, is not covered by the employer. The coverage is purchased privately by the substitute educator. They would purchase their own insurance. The distinction is the insurance is subsidized. The private subsidy helps them purchase a private policy; therefore, COBRA would be inapplicable.

SENATOR TITUS:

Many of our insurance regulations have a federal component—which includes COBRA. Does this, in any manner, require federal waivers?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

No. This does not modify or affect COBRA in any capacity. The coverage is not provided; a subsidy is provided. If we were to go backwards and have districts provide insurance, the employment would be viewed as having ceased over the summer which would implicate COBRA. That is part of the reason we went the private subsidy route instead of having districts providing health insurance coverage. There are gaps but, through this bill, we tried to limit the gaps to the degree we could. We did not let perfect become the enemy of good or vice versa. We wanted to get something in place that was tangible without implicating COBRA or other provisions that specifically deal with employment benefits only to run into an issue six months later when it becomes a distraction.

That is part of the reason why we also moved forward with a 30-day provision, a 70 percent threshold thereafter and 45 days of employment with continued teaching during that time period. We did not want to provide any excuse for full-time substitutes not getting any level of support to purchase these plans to stay safe and healthy.

SENATOR NEAL:

I understand the 30-day provision. How many substitutes are in CCSD?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

I believe there are 735 substitutes who meet this definition. More than 1,000 substitutes meet a broader definition. When speaking with the districts, we attempted to make a public records request to figure out who met the threshold. Initially, we were provided a series of Excel spreadsheets which we attempted to go through and, in doing so, ended up narrowing our records request. We received that information and I can provide exact numbers. The numbers are broken down by districts. In Clark County, 775 substitute teachers meet the 30-day minimum threshold; in Washoe County, 132; in Nye County, 28; in Douglas County, 12; and in Carson City, 32.

SENATOR NEAL:

I saw Elko's fiscal note, which was roughly \$2 million over the biennium. Would Clark County's 775 substitutes get a \$450 subsidy?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

That would be correct. They would receive the subsidy. Our contention is that the fiscal notes are fake. The reason we say they are fake is because these are accrued savings and budgeted expenses by the districts. You can add up a fiscal note and say this is what it is costing a district. They are saving more than \$30,000 because that money has been dispersed to the school districts and they are not filling positions with full-time licensed educators.

They are saving by using long-term substitutes. That is part of the story that is not being mentioned. The story is more of a bait and switch. If you have a full-time educator in the classroom, this provision would not apply. If you do not have any substitute or any long-term substitutes, your fiscal note becomes zero.

How can we reconcile that the number ends up being zero with the fact that these numbers are what they are? It does not add up. The districts can offer their fiscal notes and say it is an unfunded mandate, but that is not true.

SENATOR NEAL:

Clearly you are passionate about this topic. However, there is a reconciliation. In 2015, we dealt with the issue. School districts are not supposed to use the vacancy savings for a long-term substitute or spread their money to another district. We are having issues with carryover dollars at the local precinct. The discussion is happening at the local precinct level. You can find their savings in their carryover dollars.

How do you reconcile the substitute teacher who comes in within 30 days but may not have a contract that reaches the 30-day mark? It looks like there is a 45-day period, where if they do not work, they would not qualify. The substitute teacher is hired on Day 28. They may not be guaranteed to keep an assignment. They are there as long as the vacancy exists—whether that is a daily, weekly or long-term position. They deal with substitute services who tell them the length of the position. How do you reconcile that with the person who was looking forward to the 30-day mark where they could receive health insurance? You cannot tie the hands of the district not to put a teacher in. We have also passed legislation that is contrary to that position.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SUMMERS-ARMSTRONG:

We know that substitute teachers cannot be guaranteed a long-term assignment. The catchall in the bill is the 30 consecutive days. It does not mean

they have to be in one place. If their position ends at Day 20 and there is still an availability within the district to go someplace else, their time will compound. It is 30 days of consecutive work.

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

Section 1, subsection 6 specifically addresses that. It precludes a district from not allowing that educator to work those available days specifically for the purposes of precluding receipt of this benefit. Would there be a scenario where this is inapplicable? Potentially. We would be happy if this bill did not need to exist because that would mean we have met the licensed teacher threshold and somehow, overnight, CCSD found 735 licensed educators that they gave full benefits to. That would be wonderful.

We are not anywhere near there yet. The number is not shrinking to the degree it was expected to. This issue is not limited to Nevada schools; it is a nationwide issue. Teacher shortages are everywhere. The difference is that certain school districts across the Country are already or have started the process of giving substitutes benefits to retain them. Ultimately, we want to get them into the pipeline to becoming licensed educators—instead of the turnover rate increasing and substitutes leaving the profession.

SENATOR NEAL:

In subsection 6, there is an “or” statement regarding reassigning a person to other duties within a school. How can you prevent that from happening? In your “or” statement, you are saying the school cannot take a long-term substitute out of the classroom to use them in a different way. How can you tie their hands that way?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

It is only an “or” statement to the extent that section 1, subsection 6, paragraph (c)—which was added in the adopted amendment—is not included. Paragraph (c) is conjunctive to paragraphs (a) and (b) specifically to prevent a district from preventing a person from qualifying for the subsidy provided. Because of the limitation in place, that would be a baseline preclusionary factor. They are allowed to use substitutes where needed, but they are not allowed to say they want to save money so at 29 days, they dismiss the substitute. I am not saying that would ever happen in any school district, but it might. That is protection for an individual against the subsidy being cut off. We could have used language that mentioned good cause, but we know what using good cause

language for terminations would do. We will not allow that to happen with respect to this bill because too many individuals are depending on it.

SENATOR NEAL:

What is the remedy if someone claims that he or she was prevented from qualifying for the subsidy? What is the recourse?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

I see myself as part of the solution.

SENATOR NEAL:

You see this as being a private right of action?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

Yes. I see this being a private right of action if that violation occurs because this law would be in place. This scenario is unlikely, but if a district decides to take that action, it would be like any other State action that occurs where the individual does not have ability for recourse. If somebody works 29 days and it is clear that the individual has been deprived of the right to continue to work because the school district wanted to continue to save money and not pay out benefits, the substitute would have a private right of action pursuant to whatever employment claims exist. At that point, it becomes contractual. The substitute has worked a portion of time and has relied on receiving that benefit. It almost becomes an estoppel argument at that point.

The goal is not to open the floodgates of litigation. The point is districts could act in a way to maintain their workforce and, if they do not deprive anybody of their rights and act in accordance with the law, this law would mirror every other provision that exists. It would allow for individuals to continue to work, without being deprived of benefits. It would be incumbent on districts to comply with the law. The way to avoid legal action would be to allow these individuals to continue to work. They can be removed for good cause or whatever else may warrant removal, but they cannot be removed for the purpose of saving on a subsidy.

SENATOR NEAL:

I understand the policy, but this is creating a contract right for someone who is listed as a temporary employee. I am trying to understand this. You are saying the contract right exists as long as there is a vacancy saving in place. When the

vacancy savings is no longer part of the circumstance, what rights accrue and is it still a contract position? The superseding piece is the vacancy. The full-time licensed teacher who gets that role supersedes the substitute. Explain to me how the substitute triggers contract law and then says my contract was violated—in a vacancy scenario.

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

As a real-life example, CCSD has 735 unfilled vacancies, and those vacancies will not be filled overnight. They are not filling those vacancies next year or even two years from now. That is the reality of the situation we are facing and have been facing throughout recent history. The only way the substitute would have a right is if the school district is specifically precluding one from working to not obtain the benefit. If the district fills the vacancy, section 1, subsection 6 would not be applicable—neither would the rest of the provisions. The only time the right would apply would be under section 1, subsection 6, paragraph (c). That paragraph is a catchall and says that the district cannot preclude an individual from working specifically and explicitly for the purposes of not giving the subsidy.

If every vacancy is filled, this bill is no longer applicable. What is more likely to happen and the reason why we included this language, is that the district says it does not want to pay the benefits. It has been 29 days, then it lets the person go and does not give cause. Realistically, that is where paragraph (c) comes in.

Again, if there are no vacancies, it would not be applicable. The only time the private right of action could be enacted is if work is denied for the purposes of not issuing a benefit.

SENATOR NEAL:

Am I understanding correctly that you want this subsidy to come out of the potential savings the local school precinct accrues from using a substitute?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

That is correct.

SENATOR NEAL:

In that scenario, if there is savings, do you want the principal at the local school precinct level, who is in charge of budgeting, to set aside money for potential long-term substitutes based on the prior year's number of substitutes? Should

the principal create a bucket for the potential vacancies? The principals have to plan for this activity. That money has to be withdrawn or set aside from the account.

Let us use the example of an at-risk school, such as Matt Kelly Elementary School. The school's staff is 50 percent long-term substitutes. If this bill were to pass, the principal at Matt Kelly would need to set aside the \$450 subsidy for potentially up to 50 percent of the staff. Would that subsidy come out of the budget every 30 days? Is it \$450 every 12, 9 or 7 months?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

That would be our goal. The way the language of the bill is drafted, it would be incumbent on the district to specify that. The reason it is the district that decides is because the policy is applicable Statewide. For example, Douglas County or Nye County would be able to provide certain parameters. If CCSD, which is the fifth-largest school district in the Nation, says it wants certain parameters to make principals budget for the costs, it could do it that way. There is some level of flexibility with that and the way the dispersal happens. Districts also have the ability to check if the policy was actually purchased.

This bill does not allow for educators in our classrooms to be without any benefit. The prescription of the bill is to have a subsidy in place, but the parameters associated with the dispersal is largely left to the district to decide what is best for them. What happens in Nye County or Douglas County is not going to be the same model that CCSD uses in terms of actual implementation. Some counties are only dealing with 28 long-term substitutes, while others are dealing with more than 700—and the number is increasing.

Should there be a time when they stop budgeting for it and they have filled their teacher vacancies, this bill will not need to exist. The goal would be for this bill to never exist, but that is not the reality we face. We are coming here every year and the number of long-term substitutes is increasing. They are getting sick and ending up on Nevada Medicaid then coming to organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and asking what they can do because they are not given any benefits from their workplace.

SENATOR FLORES:

In this Committee, we have heard multiple bills with a common theme. Some teacher unions have concerns that school districts would prefer to keep substitute teachers in the classroom because there is an economic incentive. We have heard a lot about that. There are many bills addressing that. I am not suggesting I agree or disagree with that, I am saying that is an issue that has been raised multiple times.

Something that was alluded to, perhaps not said directly, is that the more protections we are adding, the less school districts are financially incentivized to use substitutes versus teachers. Some people might argue that is not true and the school districts would prefer having teachers in the classroom. Having spoken to teachers and some unions, they would argue differently—saying there are instances of districts preferring substitutes. I wanted to make that point because it has been alluded to multiple times.

I know my colleague has pointed this out, but the reality is that it will be difficult to know if a substitute teacher, under section 1, subsection 6, was purposefully removed. The district could say it did not like the relationship it had with the substitute, or something happened.

In the grand scheme of things, this bill protects more substitute teachers. I agree with my colleague that there may be certain situations where the district, in a sneaky way, perhaps the substitute has worked 27 days, removes the substitute so it does not have to pay the subsidy. I understand that may happen, but I agree protecting more substitutes through this subsidy is the right objective. I appreciate that sentiment.

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

I agree with you and Senator Neal on that point. We run into challenges trying to figure out what the best solution is. Right now, there are no protections in place for this group of people. Doing something like this, which still pales in comparison to what is happening across the Country in terms of recruitment and stabilization, is at least a starting place. Is it enough? Probably not. Would we have liked to have seen the dependent portion stay in? Yes. Would we want coverage throughout the summer and a lower threshold? Yes.

That is not the reality of where we are right now. We looked at the numbers and the aggregate state of where we are overall as a society and as a climate,

and we have attempted to carve out something that is narrow enough to be efficient.

We want to reiterate that there is no bargaining unit for these folks. They do not have someone fighting for them. That is why the ACLU of Nevada is working with Assemblywoman Summers-Armstrong to bring this piece of legislation forward. There is no voice for substitute educators here. They do not have the resources to be able to come to Carson City to push a bill. There is nobody who is able to go on their behalf and fight with school districts about pay parity. It would have been lovely for us to show up here and ask for a pay parity bill where substitute teacher's salaries would be within a specific percentage. We all know how that bill would have likely gone over. We are here with a narrow bill to get a specific population health insurance. We will move on from there.

SENATOR BUCK:

I agree with you. I think this Legislative Body needs to look to our charter school innovation counterparts. In most charter schools, substitute teachers get a contract, insurance, 11 days paid time off, salary paid over 12 months, a retention bonus and, if they are in a classroom, they get incentive bonuses based on their student growth percentile and proficiency ratings.

I believe that substitutes are an important part of the teacher pipeline to get more people into the teaching profession. Parents are asked if they can substitute and get their license, and those benefits would be provided.

I do not agree with the subsidy. That is the piece districts might not be able to do. It is so vague and uncertain whether the substitute will be there for 30 days. Districts could hire a pool of substitutes for their long-term needs. I agree with you, there is money in the school budgets for this allocation. I do not agree with the way the subsidy is happening. Can you address that? I do not think a subsidy is the right way to go; is there another option? It is too vague and too much paperwork.

Look at what charter schools are doing. They receive \$1,500 less per student and have to pay a building lease. They are able to do all of that and treat substitutes better with less money.

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

With respect to the actual subsidy portion and health insurance, we are dealing with larger districts. As you alluded to, and I will touch on with the charter school model specifically, we are not dealing with individual school sites making their own determinations. We are dealing with massive districts and various other sized districts that are not independently managing each school site.

As somebody who has consulted for large and small businesses and government agencies, I know that when we look at the uniform application of rules and what you can do as a larger employer versus a smaller employer, each of these requires different parameters and has different special needs in place. You cannot treat a large business, organization or entity like CCSD the same as an individual school site. That is part of the thought process behind why some argue for smaller apparatuses to be put in place. That does not mean that is the most effective option. There are various opinions on that. We are not here today to discuss that.

When we are looking at larger entities and school districts, the best way of approaching it is through a subsidy. It is the least vague way of doing it. If you attempt to require the purchase of health insurance or give your employees that benefit, you do not have the same turnover rate.

You may run into a scenario of waste where an individual does not work beyond a specific period of time. We chose the subsidy route because a district can manage and track the employee's attendance to see when he or she came in and how long that individual has worked. Through this bill, the district would also be able to track when the substitute became eligible to receive a subsidy and when the policy was purchased.

The district is also able to track the subsidy to make sure it is used specifically for insurance and not in a general capacity. In that regard, it safeguards against government waste. We do not support government waste. We would not want to be in a scenario where the point of the subsidy was to use it for health insurance purchase and that does not happen. When dealing with large scale environments and a labor force as large as CCSD, there will be different needs.

While I respect and appreciate the point about charter schools, it is an apples-to-oranges comparison in terms of the overall size of the model and what

they are able to purchase. This bill deals with a district 1,000 times bigger than an individual school site. Because of that, we have to have parameters in place.

This bill does not create a written contract. It creates a statutory right. That statutory right almost serves as a contract because the substitutes know what to expect. The substitutes know if they work a certain period of time, they will receive benefits. The school district could go above the required subsidy, but it cannot go under.

My goal is to be out of business because there are no civil rights violations. Do we think that will happen? No. That is why we are here today: to ask for a basic level of rights to be guaranteed. If charter schools want to share their model or where they are purchasing health insurance, that is useful.

As it stands right now, without that baseline subsidy, long-term substitutes cannot purchase private health insurance. They cannot get any health insurance. When they are paid \$120 per day, it precludes them from being able to purchase anything besides Nevada Medicaid.

SENATOR BUCK:

You could scale up the model from charter schools. If I was going to advertise a job and take 500 long-term substitutes and put them in my support staff pool, they are not actually licensed staff members, yet I could offer them benefits. It would provide an alternative for the part-time workers who would not get the benefits. That could be done.

You said there were 735 long-term substitutes in CCSD. Why not offer 500 long-term substitute positions and give them benefits? I agree with the point that substitutes are filling a vacancy and making \$27,000 a year. They do not get any benefits. It would benefit and bring more applicants to the pool if we were able to offer them a long-term contract with benefits. They might not get exactly what other teachers make because that might step on some people's toes.

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

I appreciate that point. Should they decide to bargain for that, and it becomes a conversation, it will be addressed then. Part of the challenge, with respect to Senator Titus's point, is running into situations where there are additional benefits, including the payout of COBRA and the challenge with that, which

poses barriers. I would love to see it happen and substitutes get full-time benefits. I would be happy to work with you to make that a reality, but we need something now. We cannot wait until two years from now. This shortage is going to increase and be exacerbated. Two years from now, there might be support for something similar to what you proposed. It would be great to have a pool of qualified, full-time substitutes who could receive benefits, but we are not there right now.

It would be difficult to go from substitutes receiving zero benefits, to them receiving widespread benefits. The arguments you will hear later in opposition will end up piling in comparison. You will hear that there is no guarantee the substitutes will stay and this should not be forced on the districts because they cannot pay for it.

We have intentionally limited this bill. We would like to see it expanded. I would like to work with you in the future, but right now we need to fill the gaps.

SENATOR BUCK:

If you only take the health insurance piece and offer 500 long-term positions, that would solve the problem.

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

I do not disagree. That would solve the problem. The reality of where we are today is that bill has not been brought forward. There has not been support or any offering of that. Realistically, in the long-term, that ends up looking like bargaining. Bargaining is the space where long-term substitutes would be able to ask for that. That is a separate scenario.

Where we are today is there are no benefits, no pool of 500 that is going to get any benefit, no pay bump and no real support for those substitutes. In fact, what happens is these individuals get sick. They end up in the hospital and have to figure out whether they will have a position moving forward, if they will lose their car, have to get a payday loan, and if they will be able to work.

I would love to work with you to address this issue in a systemic, long-term way. Where we are today is this is almost a stopgap emergency measure to start the process of where we need to be and to provide these folks with some level of basic dignity.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SUMMERS-ARMSTRONG:

You have a lot of cogent responses. The difference between what we are seeing in school districts and charter schools is a little bit shocking, but what we need is to deal with the critical nature of the current situation. Right now, we are using this bill to provide some incentive and protection—at least health insurance. If we do not move on this immediately, what will happen? We will be piling on to an already existing problem without presenting any type of solution.

You will hear that this is too difficult to do and is cost prohibitive because of administrative fees and costs. You will also hear, if you listen closely, the school districts are already tracking this data, especially in districts such as CCSD that offer a subsidy after an entire year of work. They know how many hours their substitutes are teaching. They know how many hours of vacancy they have every day. There is a system that pings teachers incessantly to try to get them to sign up for substitute work. We are clear that this is a need. It is a matter of will and if we find this issue important enough. Are the people who are saving our necks everyday by being in the classroom important enough for us to do something and give them dignity?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

We have submitted a few things to the Committee. There are various letters ([Exhibit D](#)) of support with substitute teachers' firsthand accounts, a digital petition ([Exhibit E](#)) with a few hundred signatures and a presentation ([Exhibit F](#)). We realize a bill deadline is approaching, so rather than having a few hundred people call in, they have signed a petition. There is community-wide support. I do not think you will hear from many members of the public opposed to this bill. I would be surprised to hear it.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Is there anyone wishing to speak in support of A.B. 282?

CHRIS DALY (Nevada State Education Association):

We support A.B. 282, which provides a subsidy for full-time substitute teachers to purchase health insurance. For many years, Nevada has struggled with an educator shortage. Since the coronavirus pandemic, record numbers of educators left their jobs due to low pay and severely low morale. As we end this school year, there are nearly 2,000 teacher vacancies and districts across the State are relying on long-term substitutes to cover classrooms. While we have been saying it is "Time for 20" to address this crisis, we also believe

full-time substitutes should be guaranteed greater dignity in their work, which means access to health care.

We also supported Senator Neal's bill, which would have made long-term substitutes eligible for retirement benefits. I think that bill has been amended. Providing long-term substitute teachers with health insurance will strengthen our schools by attracting more qualified substitute teachers. School districts should be able to afford this additional expense with savings accumulated from teacher vacancies. Substitute teachers are critical to school operations, especially those we rely on to fill lengthy vacancies. With many full-time substitute teachers living close to the poverty line, we should at least ensure their health needs are being met.

In response to some of the discussion, which I thought was interesting, Nevada State Education Association, as an education union, believes that this bill is less about incentivizing any particular action or behavior and it is more about dignity and work. With that said, if there is an incentive or disincentive created by providing a baseline benefit for substitute teachers, we think it would be less about disincentivizing substitutes from pursuing a teaching license and more about disincentivizing school districts from filling teacher positions with substitutes. I have also submitted a letter ([Exhibit G](#)) of support.

BRANDON SUMMERS:

I am a substitute teacher for CCSD. I have covered four vacancy assignments, three for orchestra and one for math. Based on my experiences, I have no desire to jump into another vacancy ever again due to low pay, an absence of benefits and the demands which make this an unattractive line of work. Based on my experiences with day-to-day subbing, I may stop doing this altogether.

I wanted to address some of the concerns that were brought up. We are not protected. We are expendable and it feels that way when schools put substitutes on a do-not-use list or when the district fires us without giving us recourse. Schools would certainly rather have a licensed teacher in the classroom. It fills a vacancy, and it is an indication that a long-term commitment may be made, beyond a semester or a year.

SmartFind is the system CCSD schools use to fill substitutes positions. There are many vacancy assignments—pages worth of assignments for all grade levels. It would be hard to believe that the school would dump substitutes

suddenly on the twenty-ninth day for licensed teachers. The reality is licensed teachers are not available. Once schools start in August, these teachers are not coming to the schools, they are looking for jobs in other jurisdictions or in other lines of work.

TAMEKA HENRY (Rise Up Nevada):

I am the chairperson of Rise Up Nevada. I want to vote in favor of this bill. We need to strengthen our public education pool for our educators and guest educators.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Is there anyone wishing to speak in opposition?

PATRICIA HADDAD (Clark County School District):

I want to share our appreciation for substitute teachers and the hard work they do every day to ensure our districts can continue to operate. I also want to share appreciation for many of the remarks Senator Neal made. We have many of the same concerns that were articulated and discussed—specifically in relation to the classification of temporary employees. Substitute teachers, in this sense, are considered temporary employees.

Clark County School District's vacancy dollars cannot offset the cost of this subsidy and what the total cost would be. I can assure you that our fiscal note is not fake. Any funding used for this would reduce the funding available for raises for teachers, support staff and administrators.

It was alluded to, but in addition to the Silver State Health Exchange at CCSD, substitutes may opt in after 1 year of a 29.5 hourly average a week, into a health maintenance organization plan. That cost is offset by the district. They are eligible for that and are covered for the entire following calendar year.

I would also like to draw your attention section 1, subsection 2. While I recognize that proof of purchase is required, it reads as if the first month, you receive the subsidy and proof is required thereafter, in subsequent months. One question that came up was, what about the subsidy for the first month? I appreciate the time and the discussion around holistically looking at the benefits of substitute teachers and, as a State, what we might do to improve that.

SENATOR DOÑATE:

I have a question for CCSD, given its position in opposition. In my capacity as Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, I always pay attention to the report of which employers in the State have the most employees on Medicaid—CCSD is one of them.

I do not agree with the notion that we cannot do enough. Obviously, the State fronts the bill regardless for these employees. If we were to rewrite the bill and reduce the eligibility requirements, would CCSD be opposed to that? The bill might say something like for all the individuals employed—whether as a substitute teacher or someone working for the school district—the State should cover the health insurance in the same way that has been done for teachers. Would there be opposition to that or is the opposition more towards the subsidy and how the bill is written?

Ms. HADDAD:

The opposition has to do with the way the subsidy is built out, including the total amount of subsidy and the mechanism by which it is provided. If there was an amendment similar to what you were proposing, I would have to look at the language and bring that back to CCSD before I could tell you our position.

SENATOR DOÑATE:

Once again, would there be opposition if we reduced the eligibility requirements you have? Substitute teachers have to wait for a certain time period or work a certain amount of days to be qualified for health insurance. Is that correct?

Ms. HADDAD:

To be eligible for the health insurance plan that is provided through the District, temporary employees including substitutes, but not limited only to substitutes, would have to work an average of 29.5 hours for the duration of the year.

SENATOR DOÑATE:

I was interpreting it as 29.5 hours per week, not per academic year.

Ms. HADDAD:

It is 29.5 hours per week over the course of a year.

SENATOR NEAL:

How long has that been in place?

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Ms. HADDAD:

I do not have that information with me. I would be happy to find out for you.

SENATOR NEAL:

Do you have an estimate?

Ms. HADDAD:

No.

SENATOR NEAL:

You do not know whether it was in place in 2020, 2019, 2017 or 2011?

Ms. HADDAD:

I do not know.

SENATOR NEAL:

I can tell you it was not in place in 2019. Start from 2019 forward and tell me when it started. The reason I know there is no insurance for a long-term substitute filling a vacancy is because I did that. I worked at a college and at CCSD as a long-term substitute. I only filled vacancies and stayed at a school site. Regardless of whether I worked at Booker Elementary or Cheyenne High School, there was never any insurance unless you paid out of pocket for it. I was never offered an insurance plan or an opportunity to have one. I always had a private plan I paid for myself. I want you to start at 2019 and then move forward to 2023 because that was the last year that I worked at Cheyenne High School.

Ms. HADDAD:

I believe that the bill presenters referred to [Exhibit C](#) as an example of insurance and benefits. I am happy to provide that to you directly. There was a letter sent to eligible employees in December 2022 outlining the insurance policy and coverage. There are individuals who are currently on a plan.

TESSYN OFFERMAN (Washoe County School District):

We stand in opposition and consider this an unfunded mandate. Some of our rollover dollars are being used to give back to our full-time teachers who are having to teach extra-large classes because of our teacher shortage. We also consider it an unfunded mandate because the tracking piece is quite burdensome. We do not have the ability to figure out if a substitute teacher

taught less than 70 percent of days in a given month. We would need to hand track that, which would take additional staff time.

I also want to emphasize that we are doing our best at Washoe County School District (WCSD) to divert the funding we have to teacher and staff raises. That is important to us, and so is making sure our teachers and staff have necessary benefits. This past year, we have shortened the wait time for full-time teachers to get healthcare benefits. That was important to Superintendent Susan Enfield when she came to WCSD. She has shortened the timeframe because we know that health benefits are important to our teachers.

I know there was a comment about school districts hiring substitutes or trying to bring on substitutes rather than teachers because they are less expensive. At WCSD, that is certainly not the case. We absolutely want teachers. We are doing our best to hire teachers and, across the board, we feel there should be an emphasis on giving raises and appropriate living salaries to the staff and full-time teachers that we currently have. By no means are we attempting to hire substitutes to save money. We want full-time teachers. We want to make sure we keep them in our school district. We oppose this bill.

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):

We appreciate the sponsor of this bill for her thoughtfulness in trying to help out our substitute teachers. As a former substitute teacher, I get it. The superintendents have some concerns about this. The first concern is that it should be a local decision how to handle their substitute teachers and how they want to attract substitute teachers. This bill would make how teachers and substitutes are paid and how the process is carried out uniform across the State. We feel it should be a local decision.

We are confused by the definition of full-time substitutes. If they become full-time substitutes after 30 days but do not work the next 45 days, they would lose the subsidy. However, the bill says once they reach the 30 consecutive days, they have that full-time status for the rest of the school year as long as they work at least 70 percent of the time. In an average month, there are 20 school days, and the substitutes would have to work 14 days. It boils down to if the substitutes are lucky enough to get to 30 days, they are okay. If they do not reach 30 days, then they could be working anywhere between 14 and 16 days a month without getting health insurance. Perhaps that is confusion on our part.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Seeing no one else wishing to speak in opposition, do the presenters have any closing remarks?

MR. HASEEBULLAH:

We heard the opposition testimony and we wanted to clarify CCSD's policy. Substitutes need to work full time for an entire year to be offered health insurance. The reason you probably have not heard about it is because nobody is going to be there the next year to receive it. If we look at the aggregate numbers, they do not follow through the following year. It does not end up being a provision that is applicable. It may be the single worst benefit that exists: receiving a benefit after a full year of work. No other employer does that. Almost every employer gives benefits after 30 days—except apparently if you are a substitute teacher or other temporary employee.

With respect to the superintendents' concern about this being a local decision, the local governments have decided. The policy they have decided on is they do not want to give any substitute teachers benefits or subsidies. They could have done so voluntarily since the inception of the educational system in Nevada; they have chosen not to. In fact, certain districts, including CCSD, have expressly prohibited any benefits from being received. To the degree that it becomes a matter of local concern, your local governments and local superintendents have already decided that they do not value this specific provision, in terms of potential benefits or subsidies.

We heard that our districts value our substitute educators. What good are your values or your concept of values if you refuse to adequately take care of your employees? At this point, that is not happening. As much as anybody might say they love or care about these substitutes, if you care, love, believe in and support them, then give them a subsidy for health insurance. Allow them to have some level of dignity should they end up getting sick.

With respect to any other concerns about statutory construction, I am happy to answer any questions offline. I have also made myself available to anybody in opposition to explain this bill to them. From our vantage point, the parameters are clear. There are no vague elements associated with this bill. This is the most simple, straightforward pathway to making sure these benefits are put in place for our substitute educators. They should feel a sense of dignity and support coming from this Legislative Body once they hear someone has listened to their

concerns and cares about them enough to allow them to purchase health insurance. They should not have to worry if they end up in ambulatory care or in a hospital setting.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SUMMERS-ARMSTRONG:

Remember, when we talk about financial stability, the biggest risk for people getting into financial trouble is medical bills. The No. 1 reason people in the United States of America filed for bankruptcy is because of medical bills. We do not want to be in a situation where we do not recognize that. We want to back up what we say with what we do, which is to offer this benefit to the very people who are saving our neck by providing education in this very difficult time to be in the field.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

I have received six letters ([Exhibit H](#)) of support. I will close the hearing on A.B. 282 and open the work session on A.B. 74.

ASSEMBLY BILL 74 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to higher education. (BDR 34-377)

JEN STURM-GAHNER (Policy Analyst):

As nonpartisan staff, I can neither advocate for or against any measure. Assembly Bill 74 was presented by Assemblywoman Erica Mosca on May 3, 2023. There are several proposed amendments. The bill and the amendments can be found in the work session document ([Exhibit I](#)).

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

I will entertain a motion.

SENATOR LANGE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
A.B. 74.

SENATOR DOÑATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR BUCK:

I will be voting no today. I was fine before the amendments.

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SENATOR TITUS:

I will also be voting no today. The amendment was basically a nonstarter for me. The amendment defined that all public-private partnerships would include this collective bargaining and prevailing wage. That is something I cannot support.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Hearing no more discussion, we will vote.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATORS BUCK AND TITUS VOTED NO.)

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HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

The next bill on work session is A.B. 256.

ASSEMBLY BILL 256 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to work-based learning programs. (BDR 34-534)

Ms. STURM-GAHNER:

Assembly Bill 256 was sponsored by Assemblywoman Erica Mosca and heard on May 5, 2023. The bill and its amendments are in the work session document ([Exhibit J](#)).

SENATOR TITUS:

I absolutely will be supporting this bill with the amendments. I appreciate the sponsor hearing our concerns.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Hearing no more discussion, I will entertain a motion.

SENATOR TITUS MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
A.B. 256.

SENATOR BUCK SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:
The next bill on work session is A.B. 274.

ASSEMBLY BILL 274 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing required instruction in financial literacy. (BDR 34-759)

Ms. STURM-GAHNER:
Assembly Bill 274 was presented by Assemblyman Duy Nguyen and heard on May 1, 2023. There are no amendments. The bill is outlined in the work session document ([Exhibit K](#)).

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:
Hearing no discussion, I will accept a motion.

SENATOR LANGE MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 274.

SENATOR BUCK SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:
The next bill on work session is A.B. 372.

ASSEMBLY BILL 372: Revises provisions relating to higher education. (BDR 34-704)

Ms. STURM-GAHNER:
Assembly Bill 372 was presented by Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod and heard on May 3, 2023. There are no amendments. The bill is outlined in the work session document ([Exhibit L](#)).

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:
I will entertain a motion.

SENATOR LANGE MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 372.

SENATOR FLORES SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

The next bill on work session is A.B. 423.

ASSEMBLY BILL 423 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing meetings of a board of trustees of a school district. (BDR 34-847)

Ms. STURM-GAHNER:

This bill was presented by Assemblywoman Selena Torres on May 3, 2023. There is a conceptual amendment ([Exhibit M](#)). The bill is outlined in the work session document ([Exhibit N](#)).

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

I will accept a motion.

SENATOR FLORES MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED A.B. 423.

SENATOR DOÑATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR TITUS:

Initially, I would have voted no on this bill because of the section that is now removed. I appreciate the sponsor of the bill removing that section. I also appreciate a person's right to make a comment at a public hearing. I will be supporting this bill.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

We will take a vote.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

I will open the hearing on A.B. 241.

ASSEMBLY BILL 241 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing the education of pupils enrolled in a public high school. (BDR 34-625)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ERICA MOSCA (Assembly District No. 14):

I will talk about a big policy change from both my personal and professional experience, reviewing the national context as well as what is happening in our State. During the Assembly hearing, Dr. Tonia Holmes-Sutton shared an educator's perspective. I submitted her letter ([Exhibit O](#)) of support to save time. I also have asked Eddie Martinez, who is a current student at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), to share his perspective. He is not here today, but has given me permission to summarize his thoughts. I will end the presentation ([Exhibit P](#)) by going over the bill.

According to the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, a proximate leader is defined as someone who has experienced the injustice he or she is trying to solve. Growing up, I had the most loving and caring parents and without them I would not be here today. My dad immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 17 and learned English from Sesame Street. He has his general equivalency diploma.

He met my mom, who was a senior in high school, the same year he immigrated here. My mother left home before graduating from high school and moved in with my dad because of issues in her own household. They had me three years later. My home life could be tumultuous, not because they did not love me or were not trying their best to put a roof over our head and food on the table, but because of the systemic inequities they were facing every single day.

My dad worked nights so that someone could pick us up from school. They never saw each other. We lived paycheck to paycheck, and they tried their best to make ends meet. This caused me to move to seven different schools growing up. Every time we moved, we reached another level of economic stability. Even though I experienced eviction, the judgmental looks of buying food on food stamps or walking to school because our one car was repossessed, school was always the most stable and important place in my life. Sometimes school saw my home life, the poverty, my young parents or my immigrant father before they saw my potential. In the seventh grade, after earning straight A's, I was not put into the accelerated courses that we know puts students on a college pathway. My seventh-grade English language arts teacher, after finding this out the first week of my eighth-grade year, was so irate that she walked to the principal's office and got my classes changed.

In the eleventh grade, I moved to a new high school in a much higher economic area because my dad would be paid a better hourly rate. I was the one who wrote his resume. We did not understand that we would be in the same economic position because of the increased cost of living. It was the first time I went to a non-Title I school. Though I was ranked in the top 20 of my class in my first high school, this new school showed me everything I did not have access to. I had to retake classes I had already earned A's in and struggled academically for the first time in my life. The one place I found solace and success was no longer that place for me.

Because I went to that better school, I was able to get a scholarship to attend college. I was the first in my family to graduate. It was no surprise that I wanted to move somewhere with a community similar to the one I grew up with to help young people like me. Through my experience as an educator, my work on policy for the superintendent and the support I provided students in the nonprofit I started, I have seen the same issues of low expectations for our most marginalized youth. Better quality schools are based on zip code and young people who needed school to be their place to thrive. That is not true for all teachers, counselors or systems. Mrs. Jackson, who got my classes changed in the seventh grade, is my lifesaver. I believe and know most teachers are life savers to students.

As a system, we know that tracking for our most marginalized students happens and their futures are impacted by this. Eddie is an example of this. I will share his story later. Linda is also an example. She is in the picture on page 4, [Exhibit P](#). Linda's counselor told her to stop asking for letters of recommendation because she was going to stay local. She is now a UNR graduate who goes to Touro University Nevada and is on her way to becoming a physician assistant.

This is an issue that students in our State face. We wanted to think pragmatically about what we could do as a State to solve this issue, while also understanding there is a teacher and support staff shortage—which we have heard throughout the Session. I know that so many factors make our system the way it is. I want to say we are not blaming anyone, instead, we are trying to find a solution for young people, so they will not have to suffer from long-term consequences.

What we can we do? We came up with making the college and career readiness (CCR) diploma opt out instead of opt in. The CCR diploma is the highest standard we have for young people in our State. By not making them sign up and know they should be getting this degree, we hope we are lessening one barrier.

Page 5, [Exhibit P](#), shows the differences between diplomas. These are set by the State. I want to point out a couple of things. One, you will see that the electives totals are the same. Two, there is a grade point average requirement. That is really important. This bill does not say that every young person must graduate on this diploma. We are not trying to make it harder for young people to graduate. We are also not trying to create grade inflation, which we think could be an unintended consequence. We are trying to give young people access. If they do not want to be on this diploma, they can opt out. By putting them on this track, they do not have to have to advocate to their counselor why they should be on it. Every career technical school, at least in the CCSD, enrolls every student automatically in the CCR diploma. We are trying to create equity.

What is different is highlighted on the right side of page 5, [Exhibit P](#). The argument I make is that we want all young people to have access to these courses. The three classes that are included are a foreign language; advanced placement (AP), international baccalaureate (IB) course or dual-credit class; and career technical education and work-based learning. It is not just about going to college; it is about a career. If a young person took two years on a career track, that would count toward this diploma. The endorsements are at the bottom. Again, we are not trying to make this diploma a requirement; we want all young people to have access to this diploma.

Nationally, 35 states have some type of CCR diploma, but there is no standardization across the Country on how to put students on this path.

I would like to thank the Legislative Counsel Bureau staff for helping me research what was happening in other states. I wanted to understand this issue and what other states were doing. Page 7, [Exhibit P](#), shows what three states I found interesting are doing. There was some academic planning. We saw there were different diploma options but, again, no standardization.

The most important aspect is what our State is doing. Why am I trying to pass this bill? Less than half of our students graduate on the advanced or the CCR diploma. That is what is circled on page 8, [Exhibit P](#). When it comes to access, that is when my qualitative story matches up with our quantitative data, especially for our most marginalized youth who have disproportionate access. Page 9 shows that our Black and Latino youth have much lower access rates to these higher standards, both the CCR diploma as well as the advanced diploma. When we look at the subgroups on page 10, it is even worse.

The question I want answered is one that often arises in my work: what happens 10 to 20 years later? We want to ensure young people are able to fulfill their dreams through equitable access. In speaking to Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), we were not able to get the completion data. That is not available right now. However, we were able to get the access data that is on page 11, [Exhibit P](#). Looking at the graph, it shows students have a better chance of attending an NSHE institution if they have graduated on a CCR or advanced diploma. They also have a better chance of going to a four-year institution.

To quickly summarize a student's perspective, I will share Eddie's story. He is a Latino male from east Las Vegas. I met him when he was in ninth grade. He went to a comprehensive high school. Though he dreamed of becoming an engineer, he had a middle school teacher tell him he would become a dropout. He also had a high school counselor who never helped him with college access towards his goals.

He was able to transfer to another CCSD high school, the College of Southern Nevada High School, where all students are on the CCR track. Today, he is a senior at UNR; that is why he is not here today. He wanted to share that he supports this bill because he wonders if he never knew to transfer to this other school, where would he be today? He wants to help all students. I think 99 percent of educators and teachers are amazing, and we are all doing our best. I wanted to give an opportunity for our young people to have the easiest access possible.

This bill is cosponsored by every member of the Assembly Committee on Education except for two members. There are some conceptual amendments because we are continuing to work on it to make sure that we have the best bill possible. Section 1, subsection 5 provides that students opt out. One of the

conceptual amendments was that different districts have different diplomas. Washoe County, for example, still has the honors diploma. As I was speaking to teachers, we did not want to do anything that that would impact young people's ability to graduate. We put in language that the students would be opted in to the CCR, equivalent or higher diploma. If the student wanted an honors diploma, they could still take an honors class in ninth grade and do both without being impacted.

We added a conceptual amendment that says the State Board of Education would come up with a standardized process so everyone in the State is doing the same thing. After the ninth grade, students can say they do not want to be on this diploma and that is fine because we do not want to tell students what to do. We want to give them access so they know their options.

Based on the bill hearing in the Assembly Committee on Education, we put in that a counselor, parent and administrator would have to be in this meeting. We talked a lot about administrators having time to do that, but at least they could sign off so they know trends in their schools.

We had a robust discussion about individualized education programs (IEP) and 504 plans. Those students would still have access to this diploma, but if it interferes with their plan, they can follow their plan.

In section 1.5, we did not want to put the specific diploma in statute. We do not want to have to change the bill every two years to update the diploma type. The conceptual amendment removes that specific language and, instead, says the Board of Education can change the diploma requirements—which they already do.

Section 2 has a big change. We wanted a stair-stepped and pragmatic approach for districts. Though this is a policy committee, I do want to say on the record, we support the fiscal implication it would take to make this bill happen for all students in all districts.

I have also submitted a one-page summary ([Exhibit Q](#)) and a web link ([Exhibit R](#)) to an article.

SENATOR BUCK:

I agree with a lot of your sentiments. In fact, I feel like this is the first piece of legislation this Session that is student-centered, makes a difference and increases student achievement. We have never increased student achievement by lowering expectations. I like this bill because many districts do an algebra weekend course and various things to hit these credit requirements. Those things do not ensure students actually have the skills after they take the class.

You alluded to grade inflation and a lack of honesty about whether students can actually perform the skills. How can you ensure proficiency or adequate skills without end-of-course exams? I want to make sure students are proficient when they leave and can actually do what the class says they can do.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSCA:

That is a great question and this is not a great answer, but it is true: I do not think this bill would address that. We want to start three steps before that with how to make sure all students, despite which school they go to, can access these materials. After access is success and making sure there is mastery. Right now, we know our students do not have access, so we are starting there.

SENATOR BUCK:

I agree with you. There is a discrepancy at different schools. When I was supervising student teachers, I would go to various schools. At-risk schools typically had lower expectations. You can tell which schools have lower and higher expectations. The student achievement data shows where the gap between expectations and performance gets wider. I commend your work on this bill, but I would like to see the next step where, if they are on this track, they can actually perform the skills.

SENATOR NEAL:

I have a question about section 1.5. This section talks about a language requirement. Is it correct to assume that, if they do not take a language course, there is an alternative? Does this allow them to test out of the course?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSCA:

In section 1.5, we wanted to make sure those requirements are not in the bill. We want the requirements to be through the State Board of Education. We are not legislating the diploma requirements. What is mentioned in the bill is the current diploma requirement. If they do not take the language course, the AP or

IB dual enrollment would count. The career and technical education (CTE) courses would also count. I would like to ask legal counsel for further clarification.

ASHER KILLIAN (Counsel):

Section 1.5 of the bill brings in the current CCR diploma requirements from *Nevada Administrative Code* (NAC) 393.443. For the language course requirement, the regulations as they currently exist in this bill's language only require a demonstration of proficiency and speaking not less than two languages. It does not necessarily require coursework to be completed. There would be an option to demonstrate proficiency in a manner other than coursework to satisfy that requirement.

SENATOR NEAL:

That is good because I remember being able to test out. If the State Board of Education is going to adopt the requirements, how are you ensuring the intent of having higher standards is going to be applied across the schools?

Can you also talk about how we bridge learning before ninth grade? Fifth grade through eighth grade matters; some bridging needs to occur. I absolutely agree with having a higher standard.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSCA:

I was here when you told another freshman colleague about how important it is to follow up. In section 2, we put in a stair-step approach where they do each class and, the difference would be, they are automatically put on the CCR track. They will stay on that track until they opt out. That is the provision where we are trying to have accountability—maybe that is not the right word—so we are ensuring a quality education.

You are right about bridging. That is why my counselor knew to change my coursework in the seventh grade. That changed my entire life and that is why I can be here today. I have had many discussions with the CCR associate superintendent in CCSD who has started work on articulation patterns from the fifth to eighth grade to make sure education flows upward. We know there is the much larger discussion about how not to set up our students for failure. That will be important for the districts. If this goes through, we have to look at all of our backward mapped articulation patterns to make sure that rigor and

access is there. We do not want to put them on this track then in tenth grade they all opt out because it was too hard.

SENATOR NEAL:

This is a really good bill. You will probably have to do a little more. You will have to keep track of this and collaborate with Nevada Department of Education. What you are bringing up now is the same thing that happened in 2010. We talked about the stair-step approach, but the curriculum did not match up with the courses. For example, a student might have had a science class, but they need chemistry; they did not take chemistry. There was a need, even in math, to get students to a basic level to graduate.

It is a problem in the district, but I created an outside program to help increase their proficiency—their proficiency did not match up. In 2010, I created Project Save; it was created through a grant. Thirteen years later, we are still having the discussion about AP courses and not having access to them. That says something about how we are progressing and how we view our kids.

SENATOR TITUS:

I have a question about section 1.7, paragraph (a). I appreciate my colleague's question about the steps and available classes. In that section, it asks students to complete a college-readiness assessment prescribed by the UNR Board of Regents. I am not familiar with that. Is there only one of those tests produced by the Board of Regents or does each college have a different one? Is there an online option? Can you fill me in on that test and process?

MR. KILLIAN:

This language is also from current regulation in NAC 390.550. The reference to a college readiness assessment is something that the State Board of Education has already prescribed by law. I believe it currently uses the American College Test (ACT) as the college-readiness assessment.

SENATOR TITUS:

If the ACT is used, that answers my question.

CRAIG STATUCKI (Nevada Department of Education):

The NSHE's corequisite and college-ready gateway policies that we utilize for the assessment is in the Board of Regents Handbook, Title 4, chapter 16, section 1. There are various college-readiness exams used. For the ACT, an

English score of over 18, English language arts score over 20 and a math score over 22 is required. For the Scholastic Assessment Test, a score of 480 for math and 530 for English is required. For the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium test, an English score of greater than or equal to 2583, which is equivalent to an achievement level of 3, and a math score of 2628, which is achievement level 3, is required.

SENATOR TITUS:

I am concerned about the language course requirement. I happen to like “Saturday Night Live.” I saw a skit a couple of weeks ago. In the skit, students are taking a Spanish class taught by someone who does not know Spanish very well—they had learned it themselves. A couple of true bilingual students show up in the class and totally destroyed the teacher.

I have some concerns about the mandatory two language proficiency. I worry our kids often cannot pass an English class—their native language—let alone pass a secondary language. That question was already addressed though.

Thank you for your advocacy. I was very poor growing up in Smith Valley. My dad made \$3,000 a year the year I graduated from high school. They were not going to be able to help me with higher education. Fortunately, my chemistry teacher knew I was smart, advocated for me and sent me in the right direction to end up with a scholarship for chemical engineering. That changed my life. I am glad good teachers are still out there. We need to help the students who do not have those teachers.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Is there anyone wishing to speak in support of A.B. 241?

CHELSEA CAPURRO (Urban Chamber; Nevada Association of School Administrators):

We support this bill.

ANTHONY CURRY (Opportunity 180):

In 2022, only 26 percent of high school graduates in Nevada earned the CCR diploma. That same year, the State's average ACT score was 17.3—well behind the 22 that serves as a general baseline to be considered college and career ready. The CCR diploma track is not accessible for every student, which puts them at a significant disadvantage at a pivotal moment in their lives. The

coursework involved in the CCR diploma program helps students be prepared and active participants in the community and our democracy.

This bill sets high expectations and sends a powerful message that every kid deserves an opportunity to succeed. For these reasons, we are proud to support A.B. 241.

ASHLEY CRUZ (Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance)

As the greater Las Vegas regional economic development authority, we appreciate Assemblywoman Mosca's efforts and we support this bill.

ALEJANDRO RODRIGUEZ (Nevada System of Higher Education):

Nevada System of Higher Education supports A.B. 241. The analysis NSHE has done on the CCR diploma and ACT scores shows a strong positive relationship. This bill begins from a place of high standards, which our faculty wants. Rather than requiring students to opt in to higher standards, an opt out approach is taken. It allows students and families a chance to opt out at a later point. We urge your support.

MS. HADDAD:

The Clark County School District supports this legislation.

MS. PIERCZYNSKI:

The Nevada Association of School Superintendents supports this bill.

KANANI ESPINOZA (University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Nevada State College):

We support this bill.

DYLAN KEITH (Vegas Chamber):

This bill focuses purely on student achievement and makes it equitable for all of Nevada's students. For those reasons, the Vegas Chamber is in support.

NICK VELASQUEZ (Nevada Resort Association):

We support this bill.

MICHAEL FLORES (University of Nevada, Reno):

We are in full support of A.B. 241.

ERIC JENG (One APIA Nevada; Asian Community Development Council):
We have hosted eight annual college readiness boot camps and are about to host our ninth. We are in full support of this bill.

GIL LOPEZ (Charter School Association of Nevada):
We are here in full support of A.B. 241. We should have a high standard for students.

JEFF HORN (Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees):
We represent approximately 1,450 CCSD administrators, of which nearly 98 percent are members. As a former high school principal, I know, firsthand, the positive impact of a teacher or administrator who believes in a student and encourages them to achieve a higher level. Students need adults in their lives to inspire and motivate them, especially when these same students doubt their own abilities. The expectation that every high school student can achieve a CCR diploma sets the stage for high expectations that will ultimately increase student outcomes. We support A.B. 241.

KEVIN OSORIO HERNANDEZ:
I want to thank Assemblywoman Erica Mosca; she represents my district. I am so thankful she represents the best interests of everyone, especially students. I wish I had this when I was in high school. I am at Nevada State College getting my degree and I am so thankful for that. I am in full support of this bill.

JACK GIESEA (Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada):
I want to echo the sentiments of my colleagues. I want to add that Southern Nevada Strong is our regional plan. A top priority within that plan is improving economic competitiveness and education in the region. We think this will help prepare students for better colleges and careers which will, in turn, support workforce development and make southern Nevada more economically competitive. We urge your support.

ALEXANDER AVILA:
I am a student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I wish I had the chance to be a part of this before graduating high school in 2016. This is a good bill for the next generation of students in Nevada. This is amazing. I wish this was available to us back then. I know a lot of colleagues of mine and students who attended high school years earlier wished something like this was available to us

when we were figuring things out. I am glad to see this is happening now. I hope to see this bill move forward.

MS. HENRY:

Rise Up Nevada supports A.B. 241. This will help our students. My daughter is a student at Nevada State College. I know that she benefited from this diploma. We are in full support of this bill.

PETER GUZMAN (Latin Chamber of Commerce Nevada):

We are in full support of this bill which gives more choices and opportunities toward education. I commend Assemblywoman Mosca for bringing such sensible legislation forward.

ANNETTE DAWSON OWENS (Children's Advocacy Alliance of Nevada):

I am serving as the school readiness policy director. We are in full support of A.B. 241, which will allow all students to be automatically enrolled in a college and career ready path. This will help prepare them for future success upon graduation.

We know education can be a highway on and off in one's life path. This will raise the bar and allow all of our students access to high-quality education and prepare them to be proficient in their jobs. Thank you for all your work and championing the needs and successes of all our Nevada students.

ALEXIS PEREZ:

I am a student at Nevada State College and I am in full support of this bill. I would like to commend the Assemblywoman for creating this amazing opportunity for our students.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Is there anyone here in opposition?

MR. DALY:

The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) is opposed to A.B. 241, which might not be the most enviable position. I am speaking on behalf of my members who have some concerns, certainly not about aiming higher or setting higher expectations, grounded in the reality of some difficult conditions right now.

This bill would track students into an additional year of math, science, and social studies. While it would not take away electives, it would take away some flex credits, which is where students have some choice in their classes. Among my members, there is a concern around student attendance. Students are not motivated to attend classes and are not interested in certain course offerings. If you look at the overall proficiency rates in subjects like math and science, they are as low as 20 percent for Nevada high schoolers.

This bill would require additional math and science classes for students who are struggling. On one hand, you could argue that an additional year might be needed. On the other hand, it could discourage students.

I would also like to point out, based on the conversation today, there is a severe educator shortage in Nevada; it is even worse for math and science teachers. Requiring these classes, despite not being able to fill the classrooms with qualified teachers, is a recipe for failure. It is setting high expectations without having the resources or tools to give those students what they need when they enter high school to help them meet those expectations.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

I cannot speak to the teacher shortage and getting math and science teachers in classrooms, but I wanted to mention this is an opt-out program. One of the provisions of the bill is everyone is opted in automatically. If the students do not want the extra year of math or science, they can still opt out. That is my understanding. Is that the way you understand the bill as well?

MR. DALY:

Yes.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Would that take care of the problem?

MR. DALY:

Perhaps. I would have to go back to my team. If there was an opt one way or the other, that would take care of our concern. We think switching from opt-in to opt-out is probably the wrong direction to go.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MOSCA:

I wanted to thank this Committee for hearing this bill. I also wanted to thank all the teachers out there. I know all that they do. For me, in one generation, my dad grew up without indoor plumbing and then I was able to earn a master's degree from Harvard and be the first Filipina in this Legislative Body. It is really important that we ensure all our young people have access and can opt out if they want. This will ensure that for the students who want to receive this diploma, but might not be in the right circumstances, they have a chance.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

I have received a document ([Exhibit S](#)) on graduation requirements, a document ([Exhibit T](#)) on college and career readiness, a flyer ([Exhibit U](#)) and six support letters ([Exhibit V](#)). I will close the hearing on A.B. 241 and open the hearing on A.B. 182.

ASSEMBLY BILL 182 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing educational personnel. (BDR 34-121)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BRITTNEY MILLER (Assembly District No. 5):

This bill largely seeks to cement existing requirements from NAC into statute. We can all agree, and it was discussed earlier in this meeting, teachers are important, and it is important to attract and retain the most qualified and well trained teachers possible. Assembly Bill 182 takes the statutory language regarding licensing teachers in NAC and moves it into *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS).

Section 2 of the bill states a person must hold a bachelor's degree in order to obtain certain licenses for K-12 teachers and other educational personnel. I know what people are thinking, we already require a bachelor's degree to be a teacher. Again, that is a requirement coming from NAC, but it is not in NRS. This would make it law. It further explains that the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the Nevada Department of Education may issue an endorsement or license to a person to serve as a substitute teacher if that person meets certain other requirements according to the Commission on Professional Standards in Education that makes recommendations.

Somehow the narrative around this bill got twisted. There is an incorrect assumption, and I will reiterate this throughout the hearing, that this bill seeks to change the requirements of a substitute teacher or any of our additional

special licenses, including CTE or Business and Industry (B&I) licenses. There is a difference between licenses; that was highlighted by Mr. Killian while we were working on this bill on the Assembly side. There is different lingo used by the Nevada Department of Education, educators and what is written into NAC. There is a difference between a teaching license with a CTE and a special license with a B&I endorsement.

You can get a license as a K-12 teacher and you can get a special license, which is used for substitute teachers. The CTE and B&I endorsements would be on top of a special license. A K-12 teaching license, special license or any type of license can receive additional endorsements. An endorsement is a specified category that goes onto the license.

For instance, I have a teaching license with an elementary school endorsement. Others may have added endorsements for special education, gifted and talented education, CTE, English language learners and so on. Nevada also grants a B&I license. That endorsement enables people from business and industry to come and teach specialized classes in the arts, technical trades or specific vocations. There are almost 40 different special license categories, including dance, cosmetology, culinary arts, welding, plumbing, law enforcement, dental, science, carpentry, automotive, etc.

The B&I license is a value license, where experienced skilled trade professionals can bring their expertise from the real world into our schools. Simply put, the only person who can teach automotive or mechanics is a mechanic. The only person who can teach welding is a welder. There are specific requirements that these individuals must complete for their B&I endorsement as outlined in NAC.

Again, this bill does not seek to make any changes to those who hold a B&I endorsement. It only confirms that a person with a special license and the B&I endorsement can only teach in the specified field of their endorsement. If you are brought into the school as a welder to teach welding, you teach welding. You do not end up teaching science, math or anything else. This bill is not changing or requiring a bachelor's degree for those individuals. Similarly, it is not changing or requiring a bachelor's degree for the most common special license with endorsement, which is the license for our substitute teachers.

The bill was amended to exclude the holder of a special license, those with a B&I and CTE endorsement or substitute teacher from this requirement. The

intent of the bill is to establish a law that at least a bachelor's degree is required for persons receiving what we commonly refer to as a teaching license but exempts this requirement for those with a special license.

Section 4 of the bill concerns the regulations adopted by the Commission on Professional Standards in Education concerning licenses, adding that a person obtains a bachelor's degree before participating in a program for an alternate route to licensure. This practice is already in NAC. Section 5 of the bill adds a license to serve as a substitute teacher. It is a special kind of license for professionals. The types of jobs that require special licenses include nurses, counselors and psychologists. The individuals who are substitute teaching have a substitute license.

I urge your support of A.B. 182. This measure seeks to create clarity and longevity by including these requirements and changes to licensure in statute. Nevada has an opportunity to acknowledge and respect the time, effort and money our teachers have put into earning their degrees. In more cases than not, our teachers have earned multiple graduate degrees and even doctorate degrees. This bill demonstrates that we appreciate these professionals and do not accept the notion that anyone can teach. Teaching is a very specialized skill and art. Before the extensive and continual training required for teachers, it begins with their own academic achievement and accomplishments. An electrician in an apprenticeship learns from a journeyman electrician. They do not learn from a handyman.

It sends the message to our parents that we expect and strive to have the most qualified professionals teaching their children. Parents want to have confidence in the ability of those who are teaching their children. It also sets an example for our students. We are demonstrating that we are not expecting students to go through a journey, path or requirements that we ourselves have not achieved. We also are able to help students as they maneuver and focus on their own academic journey.

In a time when many states are reducing the requirements for teachers and alternative routes to licensure, Nevada can demonstrate to the rest of the Country that we know that the way to build a pipeline is to restore the profession, which starts with respecting and retaining our current workforce.

We do not want to rely on “just anyone” because if we get “just anyone,” we will get “just anyone” results. We should rely on an educated, licensed workforce. Today, and probably every day this Session, teacher shortages have been mentioned. When talking about teacher shortages, it would be interesting to compare the number of licensed individuals in State to those who are actually working as teachers. As we seek to diversify our economy and bring more businesses and jobs into the State, imagine the impression we give if we do not require our teachers to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

My first year teaching, 12 years ago, I got yelled at by a parent who said “where did you come from, you just got here and you do not even have to have a college degree.” I gasped at that because I thought it was the most unheard-of thing to be a teacher without having a college degree. When I told her I had a college degree, she did not believe me. She said, “I know this is Nevada and you do not even have to have a college degree to teach.” That was 12 years ago; think about that how that reflects on the State, especially compared to what other states are doing.

You might wonder why would we move the language in NAC to NRS; it is because, right now, it is just a regulation. The Commission on Professional Standards in Education could decide at any time, especially given the teaching shortage, to reduce or waive those requirements. We have to think of the impact this would have on students, the morale of our existing workforce, parents and any prospective businesses interested in coming to Nevada.

SENATOR DOÑATE:

I had a question regarding the bill provisions that deal with teachers that have been given the special CTE endorsement. In the language, it says teachers in public schools. Does that include charter schools? What was the rationale for only including public school teachers?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

Typically, when public schools are mentioned in the language, charter schools would be included. Remember, there is a difference in the amount of required licensed teachers in charter schools. In this case, yes, it would include charter schools. What is interesting about the CTE endorsement is that it could be achieved by a typical K-12 teacher, or it could be done as a special license. The license, being of the career and technical nature, could fall into the B&I category as a skilled trade field.

SENATOR BUCK:

There is a critical shortage of teachers and of substitutes. I know that Mr. Daly said we do not have enough math and science teachers. I am wondering what this bill will do. I was a principal and I had to figure out how to find breathing people to cover a class. Toward the end of the year, especially on Mondays and Fridays, there are a lack of available substitutes. Administrators end up covering classes. How will this bill fix that? Where are you going to find these teachers?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

I know it has been said before, we view education based on our own experiences. I had an amazing education and an amazing experience. Until moving to Nevada, I could never imagine that any breathing person was enough. It is not enough for our kids. It is not enough for our professionals. It is it is not enough for who we are as Nevadans. I think we need to move away from approaching the teacher shortage as though we are running downhill. We hear we do not have enough teachers; we cannot do it; and there is no one available. We keep lowering standards.

Why not look at improving the profession again? Let us look at the number of people in the State who are licensed compared to how many are actually teaching. Talk to the teachers that are in the buildings right now. I know charter schools are full of a mix of licensed and unlicensed, educated and uneducated and full-time substitutes making full-time salaries. In Clark County and throughout the State, there are many public school teachers who transferred to charter schools.

Think about the morale of teachers who have multiple graduate degrees working with teachers who do not even have a college degree, but the State says "That is okay, we view you as the same." We are the only profession without different categories. For police officers, there is a difference between an officer, detective, sergeant, lieutenant, captain and chief. The same applies to firefighters and nurses.

I have said why we need this for our businesses; why we need this to keep our teacher's morale up; why we need this to maintain parent's trust; and why we need this for our students, who deserve the best.

To your question, I am not looking at it from how it solves the teacher shortage problem. I did not say this was the solution. I am looking at it from the

perspective of why is this acceptable and why do we not believe our kids deserve the best?

SENATOR BUCK:

A pilot who teaches aviation, math and science would be better than a random substitute who does not have a strength in math. That is more of a comment. I struggle with this bill.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

There are different scenarios when it comes to that pilot. Obviously, that pilot is already strong in math and science. In some cases, and I can speak to my experience in Clark County, elective classes can be offered in specialty areas. That is how the robotics classes and programs started. It was offered to students who are already strong in math and science. This was offered at middle schools. It could count as one of their math credits. A debate class could count as an English credit.

I do not want us to fall into the trap that anyone can teach. I would like to remind people that the pilot or someone we might call a genius, cannot necessarily teach. Your own professional, personal academic ability or knowledge does not mean you can teach. Some of those college math professors were indeed geniuses, but they did not have the skill or art to communicate the information to everyone else in the classroom. The professional title does not mean they can teach. I want us to be careful with that.

SENATOR TITUS:

Thank you for your advocacy for your profession and for Nevada students. Section 4, subsection 1, paragraph (a), subparagraph 1, sub-subparagraph VI says a person is required to obtain a bachelor's degree before participating in a program for an alternative route to licensure (ARL). If a person is taking extra credits for the bachelor's degree, could that be done at the same time as the ARL? The person is taking teaching courses for credits. Are you saying the person cannot apply for a teaching position even when short a few credits? Why is that separate?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

The ARL was originally designed for college graduates; otherwise, a person pursuing a degree would have and could have majored in education. It was for

individuals who had already obtained a degree not in education, but who decided later on to go into education. Remember, those people also have a choice to go back into a full program. I already had multiple degrees before I became a teacher. I did not take an ARL because that is more like a training or apprenticeship. I did another full degree, got a teaching license and did student teaching; I did the complete path. The ARL is the route for those who did not major in education; it is not a quicker way to get to a degree.

SENATOR TITUS:

In rural areas, we may not have people with college degrees, and we may need to get a substitute at the last minute. We are already short on substitute teachers. I have some concerns about the narrowness of this. Certainly, we want people in the classrooms and sometimes, if there is no one available, someone with a pulse is better than not having anyone. I do not mean that for long-term substitutes. I respect the process teachers go through. I have grandkids in education systems across five counties in the State.

I do not want there to be easy access to become a teacher; however, to put into statute these specific requirements might narrow the access to substitutes and might do more harm than intended. I have heard about the issues around long-term substitutes and that is an issue that needs to be dealt with. I worry that this particular bill might decrease the amount of available substitutes. Right now, we have a lack of all educators, including substitutes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

I want to reiterate this does not attempt to change the qualifications for substitutes of any type—long-term or otherwise.

SENATOR NEAL:

Just to be clear, is this going to impede creating a teacher pipeline? We have been engaged in and trying to figure out different pathways to get people into the teaching profession.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

The pathway I am familiar with, for instance, is one we passed last Session for support staff to have an expedited path through teaching. The license comes from the State. Regardless of the pathway, before they can obtain the license from the State, according to this bill, they would have to have a bachelor's degree. Keep in mind, when going through student teaching, a substitute license

is required. That is a different license. Yes, in order to be a fully licensed teacher, you will need a college degree regardless of your path, alternate route or process.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Is anyone wishing to speak in support of A.B. 182?

CALEN EVANS (Washoe Education Association):

All of you are fully aware of the massive teacher shortage we are facing in the State. I also know lawmakers on both sides of the aisle believe that addressing this issue is critically important. We have to address this crisis by providing competitive wages, better working conditions, treating educators like professionals and removing unnecessary barriers that prevent educators from staying in the profession. We cannot lower the bar to becoming a teacher. That is why I am here speaking in support of A.B. 182.

All stakeholders in our State should want the highest quality professionals supporting the students in our community. Removing barriers is one thing, but continuing to lower the standards to become a teacher is something completely different. We do not treat other professions in the same manner that we treat teaching. Would we ever think of allowing any person who applies as a nurse to be hired without the proper training and qualifications? What about a pilot or an engineer? We would not allow that because doing so could severely impact people's lives. Yet, we are okay allowing people who are not trained and qualified in teaching to become teachers as if the impact, either positively or negatively, that a teacher has on a student is not profound. If we continue to lower the bar, we will not only see the quality of instruction diminish but the teacher turnover rate will continue to rise.

We need to maintain a high-quality standard for the profession and address the teacher shortage by empowering our current educators. We have a significant number of educators in our communities. They left the profession for livable wages and more respect for them as a professional. The idea that we should allow any warm body to cover our classes and teach our students diminishes the importance of education and the teaching profession. The way we get teachers in the classroom is to treat them like professionals.

MS. ESPINOZA:

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and Nevada State College are in support of A.B. 182.

MR. DALY:

The NSEA supports A.B. 182. Teachers should be profession-ready on the first day of class. This means teachers must demonstrate the skills and knowledge needed for effective classroom practice. Teachers who are placed in classrooms and expected to learn how to teach on the job, are not profession-ready. All persons entering the teaching profession must have enough opportunity to witness, implement, learn and reflect on quality teaching. They also need to have a foundational basis for this work. For most teachers, that preparation includes four years of undergraduate education, a broad liberal arts education and creating a firm foundation of teaching knowledge and experience.

The bill helps ensure the professionalism of teaching. Respect for educators, who have completed years of schooling and training, builds parent and community confidence in our teachers and schools. It makes sure the most qualified individuals are in front of our students.

We believe that strengthening the teaching profession will work to reduce the number of teacher vacancies over time. Disrespect and low pay have been cited as the major factors in educator departures.

DORA MARTINEZ (Nevada Disability Peer Action Coalition):

We know many people who have children in K-12 receiving IEPs. Some of the teachers are not qualified, they are high school graduates. They are burned out. We thank Assemblywoman Miller for lifting the bar and creating this standard.

MS. HENRY:

Rise Up Nevada is in favor of this bill.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

Seeing no one in opposition or neutral, Assemblywoman Miller, do you have any closing comments?

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

I want us to all think and reflect upon how we got here. How did we get to a time and a place where we are arguing, pushing back or considering whether or not our K-12 teachers need a college degree themselves? I ask you to support A.B. 182.

HONORARY CHAIR HAMMOND:

I have received one opposition letter ([Exhibit W](#)). I will close the hearing on A.B. 182. Seeing no public comment, this meeting is adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Kirsten Oleson,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Roberta Lange, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Introduced on Minute Report Page No.	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
A.B. 282	C	5	Athar Haseebullah, ACLU	Insurance Market Report
A.B. 282	D	19	Athar Haseebullah, ACLU	Support Letters
A.B. 282	E	19	Athar Haseebullah, ACLU	Digital Petition
A.B. 282	F	19	Athar Haseebullah, ACLU	Presentation
A.B. 282	G	20	Chris Daly, NSEA	Support Letter
A.B. 282	H	26	Senator Scott Hammond	Six Letters of Support
A.B. 74	I	26	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
A.B. 256	J	27	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
A.B. 274	K	28	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
A.B. 372	L	28	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
A.B. 423	M	29	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Conceptual Amendment
A.B. 423	N	29	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
A.B. 241	O	30	Assemblywoman Erica Mosca	Support Letter
A.B. 241	P	30	Assemblywoman Erica Mosca	Presentation
A.B. 241	Q	34	Assemblywoman Erica Mosca	One-Page Summary
A.B. 241	R	34	Assemblywoman Erica Mosca	Web Link
A.B. 241	S	43	Senator Scott Hammond	Graduation Requirements

A.B. 241	T	43	Senator Scott Hammond	CCR Document
A.B. 241	U	43	Senator Scott Hammond	Flyer
A.B. 241	V	43	Senator Scott Hammond	Six Support Letters
A.B. 182	W	52	Senator Scott Hammond	Opposition Letter