MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Eighty-Third Session
March 10, 2025

The Committee on Judiciary was called to order by Chair Brittney M. Miller at 9 a.m. on Monday, March 10, 2025, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 3 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda [Exhibit A], the Attendance Roster [Exhibit B], and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Brittney M. Miller, Chair
Assemblymember Elaine H. Marzola, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Lisa K. Cole
Assemblymember Joe Dalia
Assemblymember Cecelia González
Assemblymember Alexis M. Hansen
Assemblymember Melissa R. Hardy
Assemblymember Selena La Rue Hatch
Assemblymember Cinthia Zermeño Moore
Assemblymember Hanadi Nadeem
Assemblymember David Orentlicher
Assemblymember Erica P. Roth
Assemblymember Toby Yurek

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblymember Ken Gray (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cesar Melgarejo, Committee Policy Analyst
Karly O'Krent, Committee Counsel
Aaron Klatt, Committee Manager
Karyn Werner, Committee Secretary
Ashley Torres, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Regan Comis, representing Xquisite
Christina Rangel, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Tyson League, Chief Deputy District Attorney, Carson City District Attorney's Office
Jennifer Noble, representing Nevada District Attorneys' Association
Brenda Sandquist, Executive Director, Xquisite
Lynn Chapman, State Vice President, Nevada Families for Freedom
Paloma M. Guerrero, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public Defender's Office
Angela Knott, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Public Defender's Office
Tonja Brown, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Lauren Boitel, Cofounder, Nevada Policy Council on Human Trafficking
Annemarie Grant, Private Citizen, Quincy, Massachusetts
Joshua Martinez, Captain, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Amy-Marie Merrell, Co-Executive Director, Cupcake Girls
Serena Evans, Policy Director, Nevada Coalition to END Domestic and Sexual Violence
Tyler Winkler, Supervising Attorney, Resiliency and Justice Center, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada
Jason Woodard, representing Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association
Robert L. Gipson, Litigation Fellow, Giffords Law Center
Aswad Thomas, National Director, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice; and Vice President, Alliance for Safety and Justice
Marla McDade Williams, Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services, Department of Health and Human Services

Chair Miller:
[Roll was taken. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] We have a quorum. Before we get started, we do have a bill draft request (BDR) introduction. So, our BDR today is BDR 13-869.

BDR 13-869—Revises provisions governing guardianship of minors. (Later introduced as Assembly Bill 387.)

Our vote today is not showing any type of support for the bill. It is just enabling us to turn the bill draft request (BDR) into a bill. Are there any questions before we vote? I will take a motion.

> ASSEMBLYMEMBER MARZOLA MOVED TO INTRODUCE BILL DRAFT REQUEST 13-869.
>
> ASSEMBLYMEMBER DALIA SECONDED THE MOTION.
>
> THE MOTION PASSED.

Chair Miller:
We will go on to our first bill on the agenda today, which is Assembly Bill 299

Assembly Bill 299: Revises provisions relating to prostitution. (BDR 15-1080)

Assemblymember Elaine H. Marzola, Assembly District No. 21:
I am here to present Assembly Bill 299, which revises the provisions concerning customers, also referred to as "johns," who unlawfully engage in prostitution or solicitation of prostitution. Joining me today at the witness table is Regan Comis with R&R Partners and Chief Deputy District Attorney Tyson League. Also on Zoom with us today is Christina Rangel. She is a survivor.

To give you a little background on this bill, two sessions ago, we revised the Nevada law to separate provisions applicable to prostitutes and to their customers into two distinct sections of the *Nevada Revised Statutes*. Last session, in 2023, I introduced the same legislation as I am introducing today. It was Assembly Bill 145 of the 83rd Session, which received unanimous support in both this Committee and the Assembly of the Whole. Despite the Legislature's continued focus on these issues, Nevada remains a hub for human trafficking, sex trafficking, and illegal prostitution. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (Metro) reported a nearly 50 percent increase in offenses across its jurisdiction from May 3, 2023, to May 3, 2024.

While Nevada law addresses both prostitutes and their customers, it is clear that enforcement has disproportionately focused on those who are being exploited rather than those who are driving the demand. Assembly Bill 299 is intended to shift that balance to increase accountability for the customers who fuel the illegal prostitution industry by increasing penalties, mandating arrests, and adjusting record sealing provisions. This bill sends a clear message that purchasing sexual services is not a victimless crime, and those who engage in such activities will be held responsible for their actions. I would like to pass the presentation over to Regan Comis.

Regan Comis, representing Xquisite
Sexual exploitation and sex trafficking are complex problems with many causes, but the key driver is sex buyers. Without their money, pimps and traffickers have no incentive to force vulnerable women and men, girls and boys into the illegal sex trade. Nevada is facing a crisis. We ranked second in the nation for human trafficking according to a World Population Review report. Research in 2018 found that at least 5,016 individuals were sold for sex in an average month in Nevada. What is important is that this figure excludes those who provide sex in licensed brothels. Buyers of sex, or johns, are almost exclusively men from all races and ethnicities and socioeconomic standing. Buyers who have participated in research on the illegal sex trade provided the following reasons for why they purchased sex: "Anything you cannot get from your girlfriend or wife, you can get from a prostitute." "I want to pay someone to do something a normal person would not do." And finally, "Being with a prostitute is like having a cup of coffee, once you are done with it, you throw it out."

A survivor who asked to remain anonymous shared their experiences with johns as follows:

> I had johns, many of them, who asked, "What do you cost?" admitting with that question that they were not just buying sex, they were buying a woman. I had johns who grinned at me in a revolting way when they saw that I was in pain. My first john was like that. I had johns who brought drugs with them, so they could use them with me. I had johns who loved to violate my boundaries and go beyond what was agreed. Some were totally aware that I was not consenting but continued in spite of it. You cannot avoid a feeling that it is not about sex, but about tormenting and torturing someone. Again and again, you see questions asking how resilient the woman is, which is code for saying, How much can she take and still keep quiet?

Buyers have stated that they are most concerned about their own personal safety, sexual health, and freedom from arrest. In the 2018 report, *Who Buys Sex? Understanding and Disrupting Illicit Market Demand* [Exhibit C], both current and former buyers stated that if there was the risk of arrest and increased penalties, they would consider or altogether stop purchasing illicit sex in the future. Another study of 763 buyers found that 87 percent of participants stated that, should their photo or name be published in the paper, it would be a deterrent. In the same study, 79 percent said the risk of their families or employers finding out that they were arrested for solicitation would cause them to stop this behavior.

What is important to understand is the way the law currently works. If a buyer is caught for solicitation on their first offense, it is very similar to a traffic ticket. They get a citation, they pay their $400, and in one year their record is sealed. Our goal with this legislation is to reduce demand and thus help solve the problem of sex trafficking in our state. [Exhibit D, Exhibit E, and Exhibit F, copyrighted supplemental articles, were submitted by Regan Comis but not discussed.]

Christina Rangel, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:
I am in support of this very important and essential legislation to reduce the demand, which is the very driver of sex trafficking in the state of Nevada. I myself was born and raised in Carson City, Nevada. My grandparents owned the Ormsby House, so I basically grew up in the casinos. My grandma worked at the Nevada State Legislature as a secretary for 30 years, and my mom was a clerk to the Carson City court.

I moved to Las Vegas as a young single mother looking for job opportunities and to be closer to my dad. Unfortunately, I met a man who was nice and kind and recognized my vulnerabilities of being completely naive of the insatiable demand for young girls to buy for sex in Las Vegas. While I thought I was dating him for a few months, he was investigating my life. To make a very long and tragic story short, I was sex trafficked in Las Vegas for a year and three months. I did not even know what sex trafficking was until it was happening to me.

Prior to my trafficker forcing me into prostitution in the Las Vegas casinos through abuse and threats, my trafficker had previous contact with hundreds of local sex buyers. He had lists of men who lived in Las Vegas whom he could contact and let them know that he had, and I quote, "Fresh new meat walking on the casino floors." While some of the buyers were tourists, nearly all of them knew what they were doing was illegal. Almost 100 percent of the tourist buyers who bought me as a victim in the Las Vegas casinos would ask me questions to try to prove that I was not some undercover police officer. While Vice Metro and undercover officers were in the casinos and on the Las Vegas Strip, arresting me and countless other victims of prostitution and sex trafficking, the majority of the local buyers roaming the casinos looking to purchase me were not even considered by law enforcement. As it stands, the consequences for this crime, buying sex, is merely a parking ticket and the consequences must be increased.

For the past 17 years, I have worked in nine countries fighting sex trafficking in many different forms. I have my bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley and my master's in international law from the University of Oxford in England. But it is right here in Nevada that I had my most shocking encounter with a buyer while advocating for victims of prostitution and sex trafficking. On a reverse sting in Reno, Nevada, the buyer laughed at the police and then asked if he could just pay the fine on the spot to not deal with the "hassle of mailing it in." He was then caught two more times that same night attempting to purchase sex from a young 18-year-old during the same operation. The way to end sex trafficking is to increase the penalties for buyers and to reduce the demand.

It is an economic system. The dollars buyers spend in the sex trade in Nevada do not stay in the sex trade. They are funding other types of violence and crime. It is imperative for the future of all Nevadans, for tourists visiting our state and for future generations of children in Nevada—like I once was—that Nevada finally takes a stand and looks at this issue for what it is. We must reduce the demand for sex trafficking and approve increased penalties for sex buyers.

Tyson League, Chief Deputy District Attorney, Carson City District Attorney's Office:
I would like to lend my support to this bill primarily because of the arrest issue. We see people face consequences for purchasing sex. This is a demand reduction measure. This goes to reducing the demand and changing the economic balance for something that is an exceptionally traumatizing and damaging portion of our community. So many times, we see people who are cited but not arrested. What people do not understand is that this is largely not entered into your criminal history, your National Crime Information Center record. If you are not booked—if you are not processed—that record does not follow you. If someone is cited in Las Vegas, the chances of someone in Reno finding out about that, with that not following them on their criminal history, is very limited.

This follows the person, allows it to be attached to their criminal history, and allows for these increased penalties to take effect if people are repeat offenders. It allows people in district attorney's offices to see that people have been convicted and prosecuted for this previously. So many times, courts are not entering these into individual's criminal history, so we do not know. I have had the duty of prosecuting a number of offenses involving trafficking. Identifying the trafficking victims and the traffickers is very difficult. Identifying the johns is very easy. This is a very easy way of attaching a real consequence and taking action on this matter that is so damaging to the human condition.

Regan Comis:
I will just briefly go through the bill. It is short, so I can do this very quickly and, hopefully, meet our 15-minute time frame. In section 1, subsection 1, you will see where it requires the arrest. That language requires it as opposed to the citation. Then, below that [section 1, subsection 3], the first offence increases the fine from $400 to $800, as well as the civil penalty from $200 to $600. Then skipping ahead to section 1, subsection 8, it requires the sealing of records to be after two years and for the person to petition the court for that sealing.

Assemblymember Marzola:
If I can just add one last bit of information for the Committee before we take questions. To put some numbers in perspective of how much this has increased just in the Las Vegas area in one year, from 2023 to 2024, in the Spring Valley area, there was a 234 percent increase in solicitation. The downtown area was 81.1 percent, and in the Convention Center area, it was 21.7 percent. These are real concrete numbers that were provided to me by the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

Chair Miller:
Just so people understand, Spring Valley is not a resort area. It is not a downtown area. It is actually a full residential area. It butts up against my district, but it is just houses and shops and schools and hospitals. There is nothing touristy about that area.

With that, I would first like to get some context. Ms. Rangel first, you know we are all grieving for the victimization that you experienced, but we appreciate all of your work and advocacy to fight for other people who are in that situation. When you spoke about the johns,

it is basically like getting a citation or a ticket. It reminds me of something as severe as when I was in college and the youth would get a minor-in-possession if you were caught at a party with alcohol: you got a ticket, you paid it, and you moved on with your life. That is what seems to be happening here. When you said that you and other victims were arrested, could you tell us, during your time of victimization, what it looked like when a victim would be arrested? What did it look like in the criminal justice system for those individuals as opposed to the buyer or the john?

Christina Rangel:
For me, I can give you a concrete example; I have plenty of these. I was in the Bellagio Casino and my trafficker would force me to go sit at a bar. I had to sit at the bar, and the guy next to me was talking to me, and he leaned over and asked me if we could negotiate a price in the room. I said okay, so we started walking towards the elevator to the hotel where you go up to the hotel rooms within the Bellagio, and he turned to me and said, "I am sorry, it is not a good night for you, I am vice." He took out his badge, then he took me to the back, to a big conference room with a big conference table. When we walked into the room, there were other police in there waiting, and the entire table was full of girls just like me. They came in, and they were mocking us; they were making fun of us. They asked us how much money daddy was making tonight, talking about our traffickers. Then they took us all in the back of a van to Clark County where they put us in a holding cell together. They booked us in, put us in a holding cell together, and then we sat there for 24 hours.

After 24 hours, they let us go out the back door down by Fremont Street, where all of our traffickers were parked along the curb waiting for us to get out of jail where they would just pick us up. My trafficker picked me up, took me home, and I took a shower. He made me go back out. I had to start at the Treasure Island that day, during the day, to make up for the money that I did not make the night before. When I was sitting in the room at the Bellagio, and we were around the table, I remember asking one of the police officers, "How did you know?" He said to me, "Oh, because I have not seen you before. We know all the girls that walk through these casinos." I was 86'd from every casino that was owned by the MGM, and I was charged with solicitation. I have many examples like that.

I have another pretty good example as well. The very first night I had to be trafficked, I had no idea what was going on. Of course, growing up in Carson, we know that the brothels are out there, there is prostitution, but it was really disconnected for me just coming from a middle to upper class family. He told me, "Tonight, you are going to have to go to the Treasure Island. You are going to go on the escalator. At the bottom of the escalator, there is a bar, and you are going to sit at the bar, and the first man who talks to you, you are going to tell him you want to negotiate a price in the room." I was shocked, but I remember thinking that this is not how it works. I grew up in casinos. This is not happening in the casinos. Honestly, I said, "Okay, I will do this tonight because I have to, I have no other choice, but I will never do this again."

I had absolutely no idea what was about to happen in my life. I did exactly what he said. I got on the escalator, I sat at the bar, and immediately someone came and sat next to me and

started talking. I told him that we had to negotiate a price in the room, so we got on the elevator. We go up to where I thought his hotel room was and got off the elevator. We were walking down the hallway where all the rooms are, and he turned to me, looks at me, and pulls out his hotel security badge. He looks at me and says, "Hey, I gotta take you down and book you." I am about to cry, and I wanted to hug this man. Oh my gosh, he saved me. I did not know. The trauma of the moment is indescribable. We go down to the basement of the Treasure Island, and he takes my picture and asks me for all my information. I am thinking, Oh my gosh, this is amazing, he is going to save me, and I am going to be okay. Then he tells me, "Now you are 86'd from that casino for solicitation. I am not going to arrest you tonight, I'll let you go." He kicked me out the back door of the casino where my trafficker was sitting, and he picked me up and took me next door to the Mirage Casino.

Through the year and three months that I was trafficked in Las Vegas, every single girl in that casino was a victim of trafficking. This is one of the hardest things to explain to people in the state of Nevada. If you would have asked me back then, I would have said, "I have an abusive boyfriend who is making me be a prostitute," because I did not understand how trafficking works, and I did not have the language to be able to say, "Hey, excuse me. I am a victim of human trafficking." It is really important we understand that this line is gray in between, and every single one of the girls who were victims, who were working "in prostitution" in the casinos or on the streets, on Las Vegas Boulevard, we were being looked for by vice and the police and undercover police officers, not the buyers, not the buyers.

I loved what the previous man said that they are the easiest to identify. Their money is funding not only sex trafficking, but a myriad of other crimes, organized crime, and drug crime. The people who are selling women are not good people. They are not turning around and doing anything good with the money that buyers are funding. The idea that they are just these innocent tourists is the most frustrating part of this because every tourist knew what they were engaging in was illegal. Every single one of them. They might get arrested or tell the police when they get a citation, "Oh, I did not know. I thought prostitution was legal in Nevada." They are lying, every single one of them. It is important that we go after this crime at the source, and that is the demand.

Chair Miller:
Thank you so much for that additional context. We are going to start with member questions.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:
Ms. Comis mentioned that, if the buyers thought they were going to be publicly shamed or people would know, they would be less likely to engage in this behavior. I wonder if you could explain how this bill helps lead to more public awareness or people being more aware of what these johns are doing?

Regan Comis:
As we are stating, the current law just requires the citation; therefore, there is no reporting, as Mr. League shared. There is no reporting of this crime. By having that mandatory arrest, that record will follow the individual. That arrest is what enables. Then you can see reports of

sting operations, et cetera, in the newspaper. That is the fear that these buyers have; that their community, their family, their jobs are going to know what activities that are transpiring, and that is why the arrest component is so key.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:
To confirm, if an officer believes they are engaging in this action, then they "shall" arrest, right? It is not a discretion; they have to arrest them. Is that correct?

Regan Comis:
Yes, that is how this is drafted. Correct.

Assemblymember Roth:
I think something that really stood out to me in that is the arrest of our victims in these scenarios. I am wondering, with this bill, do we have the numbers on the amount or number of sex workers who have been arrested in these stings versus the johns? Do we have that nexus on if that is going to reduce the number of arrests of sex workers?

Assemblymember Marzola:
I do not have those numbers on me, but we will make sure to provide it to the Committee. I am not sure if anyone coming up to support or oppose or in neutral may have those numbers, but if not, we will make sure to get it to the Committee.

Assemblymember González:
I was really shocked when you talked about the fee they pay, $400. Do you know the history of why this was set so low, or why they have to pay just $400, and they do not have to do anything else?

Assemblymember Marzola:
I do not know that history. We can provide you with that information, but I always say that the citations these johns are getting might as well be like a parking ticket or a speeding ticket, right? I pay, and it gets dropped or it gets reduced or it gets dismissed, and you do not even know what happens. I will get that information for you.

Tyson League:
I just want to share that this is not always just $400, but what this does is it puts in people's minds that have not ever engaged in this behavior that I will be arrested if I am caught doing this. That is the difference. Are there police officers out there arresting people for this crime? There are. Are there people out there facing more significant penalties for this crime? There are. This does not give them discretion. This works as a deterrent because the people who may engage in the purchase know for a fact that this is the absolute minimum that will happen to them now. It is very effective in terms of deterrence to make these changes.

Chair Miller:
I would like to follow up on the questioning of the cost of the fees and how the bill attempts to increase that. I am sure there are multiple, multiple reasons why a person would not go to

a brothel that is legal. I am sure there are many, many reasons why they choose not to. It is my understanding that one of the reasons is that the brothels are quite expensive. They just cost more money. I do not want members looking it up on their laptops, but if we could have staff find some of those costs for us. If we could research what some of the costs would be at a brothel where you could go legally. I know there are many reasons why someone may not choose a brothel, not just in terms of the cost of these fines and fees, because even $800 does not seem that expensive, not that high. The average person can still put $800 on their credit card as opposed to what I understand the cost of the brothel may be. Can you tell us? I do not know if there is a question there, or if there is even an answer as to why. I would really like to see a comparison, if you had gone to a brothel where you could legally request certain things, and what the difference in costs would be. If anyone would like to respond to that, if there is a response. If not, that is fine as well.

Assemblymember Marzola:
I do not have those prices for you, but I will make sure to research it even while we are waiting and people are testifying

Regan Comis:
I believe all of the individuals working at the brothel are independent contractors, so they negotiate those prices themselves. I do not know if there is an average rate sheet that you would necessarily follow. There probably is some sort of average that you could find, but we just do not have that for you here today.

Assemblymember Nadeem:
Listening to Ms. Rangel, what worries me most is that it seems like there are more people, more agencies, helping those joins. Is that going on? Are there some agencies or some people helping them? As you said about the security people who took you over there, and then you had a back door that you had to go out where you met the person who paid for sex trafficking. It looks like there are agencies in Nevada, in Las Vegas, and there are more people helping and waiting outside to pick you up, not for sex.

Christina Rangel:
The person waiting outside was my trafficker. The person who was forcing me to work in prostitution was the one who would be waiting outside the jail or waiting outside the back of the casino when we would get taken by security.

Assemblymember Nadeem:
Thank you. I just wanted you to clear that up.

Chair Miller:
I will open it up for testimony. We will begin here in Carson City.

Jennifer Noble, representing Nevada District Attorneys' Association:
We are in support of Assembly Bill 299. Thank you for addressing this important issue of demand in sex trafficking.

Brenda Sandquist, Executive Director, Xquisite:
I am one hundred percent in favor of this bill. [Also provided written testimony, Exhibit G.]

Chair Miller:
Is there anyone else here in Carson? Not seeing anyone, is there anyone in Las Vegas that would like to testify in support of Assembly Bill 299? Not seeing anyone, will you open the lines, please?

Lynn Chapman, State Vice President, Nevada Families for Freedom:
We as a state need to protect our citizens, and this includes prostitutes and people who are sex trafficked. Higher penalties for the buyers, not the victims—money and arrest—seem to be a good place to start. I agree that $800 does not seem to be high enough. Please pass A.B. 299. We need protections for our people, especially the vulnerable.

[Exhibit H and Exhibit I are letters of support submitted but not discussed and are included as exhibits for the hearing.]

Chair Miller:
Since there are no other callers wishing to testify in support at this time, I will open it for testimony in opposition of Assembly Bill 299 in Carson City.

Paloma M. Guerrero, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public Defender's Office:
Research and the lived experiences of sex workers teach us that increasing criminal penalties for sex-related offenses escalates the violence for all people in the sex industry, especially victims of sex trafficking. People enter the sex trade for a variety of reasons: some are coerced to trade sex, some trade sex because it is their best or only option to earn a living, and others work freely and by choice. Increasing criminal penalties does not prevent or minimize human trafficking. Additionally, the negative effects of criminalization fall disproportionately on women, people of color, transgender and non-binary workers, people with disabilities, and economically marginalized community members.

Evidence-based research conclusively shows that further criminalizing the sale of sex, both the buying and selling, makes circumstances more dangerous and self-perpetuating for victims of human trafficking and sex workers. We understand this argument may feel counterintuitive; however, legislation increasing criminal penalties will increase the harm this bill seeks to mitigate. From looking at other countries and jurisdictions where this approach has been implemented, where it has been tried, we know raising criminal penalties on buyers and repressive policing corresponds with an increase in human trafficking, an increase in violence, and a decrease in the health and safety of both victims and workers. Raising criminal penalties on buyers discourages buyers and other sex workers from cooperating with law enforcement to report and prosecute human trafficking. Raising criminal penalties does not lead to a decrease in the number of buyers, workers, or victims selling sex. In fact, these numbers increase. Research finds that deterrence does not reduce the demand for sex and may encourage a riskier client profile. Evidence is so clear that

increasing penalties is harmful to those in prostitution and victims of sex trafficking that 250 scientists wrote an open letter urging policy makers to move toward decriminalizing sex work.

The idea here is that, by going after johns, it is going to decrease the demand, that it is going to make them think twice, but other countries and jurisdictions have tried it. They have done that. What research shows is that the demand does not stop [Exhibit J].

Angela Knott, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Public Defender's Office:
Arrests for soliciting is already happening. Law enforcement can arrest if they are witness to the crime or if they get a warrant. Warrants are important. A judge can review the evidence, and they make the decision on whether there is enough to go and arrest that person, to deprive them of their liberty. The warrantless arrests that this bill seeks to do for soliciting will just be based on probable cause by the officer. When we arrest someone, as a tenet of our *U.S. Constitution*, we want that bar for arrest, that bar to deprive someone of their liberty, to be high. Probable cause is a very low standard. This will lead to people being arrested based on rumors.

People are always surprised to hear what little evidence is needed to make an arrest. People want to think probable cause is not just one person saying they saw something happen, but there also needs to be video surveillance or DNA. That is just not the case. A warrantless arrest based purely on probable cause can be as simple as me calling law enforcement, telling them that I saw Assemblymember Jane Doe at Jimmy G's last night soliciting a sex worker. That is it. The cop must now arrest Jane Doe. Now, imagine this arrest occurs during an election period based purely on a lie. You cannot take back that arrest. The consequences of an arrest, even if it does not lead to a conviction, can have catastrophic effects. That is why, as a country, we have said there needs to be some bar to overcome. The Fourth Amendment, as a principle, states that warrantless searches are presumptively unreasonable.

Another concern with A.B. 299 is the language of "shall." "Shall" means mandatory arrest. The cop must act, no discretion. This language is different from the other exceptions provided in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 171.124, which may allow a warrantless arrest. This includes the temporary protective order (TPO) violations. Police officers "may" arrest, not "shall." Raising the fines is not the issue. We have an issue with the mechanism of the arrest.

Chair Miller:
Is there anyone else here in Carson City? Not seeing anyone, is there anyone in Las Vegas? Not seeing anyone, will you open the lines? I understand that there were people trying to call in support but were not able to get through, so we will be flexible with the opposition or support testimony based on the callers we receive. With that, please open the lines.

Tonja Brown, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:
We are in opposition of A.B. 299. We ditto all the previous comments made.

Lauren Boitel, Cofounder, Nevada Policy Council on Human Trafficking:
I am calling to indicate our strong support of A.B. 299. Human trafficking persists because there is a market for purchasing sex. Buyers create the demand that fuels exploitation, and the most effective way to combat trafficking is to target that demand. Assembly Bill 299 takes a critical step forward by increasing penalties and fines on buyers, making it clear that Nevada will not tolerate the exploitation of our most vulnerable. By strengthening enforcement and deterrence, this bill helps disrupt the cycle of trafficking and protect those at risk. Our mission is to advocate for just and equitable policy solutions that improve anti-trafficking efforts and support survivors. Assembly Bill 299 aligns with that mission by reinforcing accountability and serving as a meaningful intervention opportunity. On behalf of the Policy Council, I urge you to support A.B. 299 and appreciate your commitment to fighting human trafficking in our state.

Annemarie Grant, Private Citizen, Quincy, Massachusetts:
I am calling in opposition and echo the other callers' opposition.

Chair Miller:
With no other callers, we will move to neutral testimony, if there is anyone in Carson City who would like to testify in neutral.

Joshua Martinez, Captain, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:
We are neutral on this bill right now, and we are looking forward to continuing to work on it. We are here to protect and serve the community, and we want to work on these issues that are of concern to us all.

Chair Miller:
Is there anyone else here in Carson City? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Las Vegas who would like to testify in neutral? Not seeing anyone, will you open the lines?

Amy-Marie Merrell, Co-Executive Director, Cupcake Girls:
Is it too late for me to testify in opposition to A.B. 299?

Chair Miller:
No, we will go ahead and take your opposition testimony.

Amy-Marie Merrell:
My pronouns are she/her. I am the co-executive director of the Cupcake Girls, an anti-trafficking organization here in Nevada, as well as in 38 states nationwide. I am writing to express my strong opposition to Assembly Bill 299. While I understand the intent behind the bill, its approach will have devastating, unintended consequences, ultimately making trafficking survivors and sex workers less safe and more vulnerable to exploitation. Assembly Bill 299 seeks to impose harsher penalties on the clients of sex workers, but in practice, laws like this push consensual sex work further underground. It leads to severe and dangerous outcomes, an increase in risk and violence. When sex workers are forced deeper

into the shadows, sex workers lose access to safer, more reliable clients. Instead, they are left with riskier, more exploitive individuals leading to heightened dangers, including violence and trafficking.

The other issue is arresting the wrong people. The clients most likely to get caught under these laws are not the exploiters or abusers, but rather those who might otherwise be following harm-reduction practices. The truly dangerous individuals will continue to evade detection, making the work riskier for everyone.

Another issue is blocking access to resources. Criminalizing clients makes it harder for outreach organizations like us to connect with sex workers. When clients are forced into secrecy, sex workers lose the ability to screen for safety, get access to health services, or to reach out for support when needed.

The other issue, and the most important one to us, is undermining exit strategies for those seeking to transition out of sex work. Criminalizing clients makes it exponentially harder. Pure financial resources, pure connections to support system, and greater legal risks create a cycle that makes the industry nearly impossible to leave. Criminalizing clients does not reduce demand. It only makes the industry far more dangerous and harder to regulate. If the goal is truly to reduce harm, resources should be directed towards expanding legal protections, harm reduction strategies, and access to supportive services rather than enacting policies that exacerbate the risk. For these reasons, we strongly urge you to oppose A.B. 299, and instead support measures that prioritize the safety, dignity, and well-being of all people [Exhibit K].

Chair Miller:
With no other callers, I will go ahead and close testimony on the bill and welcome back the bill presenters for some final comments.

Assemblymember Marzola:
Before we get to the conclusion, I can talk about some numbers that were provided to me. A woman in the brothels says she generally does not have intercourse with a client for less than $1,000. If the interactions are lengthier, such as an overnight stay or the girlfriend experience, it is even more expensive. We are talking about $1,000 an hour, not $1,000 for a longer time. That is where we are. So, looking at those prices and then looking at the fines, there is quite a discrepancy. The fact that this bill mandates arrest for soliciting prostitution underscores the ongoing challenges law enforcement faces in addressing these issues. Existing laws, while on the books, have not been sufficient to deter this activity, leading to the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms.

Chair Miller:
We have one final addition from Legal Counsel, Ms. O'Krent.

Karly O'Krent, Committee Counsel:
I just wanted to note for Committee members that NRS 171.137 requires a law enforcement officer to arrest certain persons suspected of committing domestic violence battery.

Chair Miller:
With that, I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 299. Next, I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 329.

Assembly Bill 329: Revises provisions relating to victims of crime. (BDR 16-1050)

Assemblymember Erica P. Roth, Assembly District No. 24:
Joining me today is Tyler Winkler, supervising attorney at the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's Resiliency and Justice Center, and Serena Evans with the Nevada Coalition to END Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCEDSV). Briefly, established in 1969, the Nevada Victims of Crime Program (VOCP) plays a crucial role in providing financial assistance to individuals who have suffered physical, emotional, or financial harm because of crime. The program helps to compensate victims for crime-related expenses, such as medical costs, mental health counseling, funeral and burial costs, and lost wages. To receive compensation, victims must apply within the state's mandated time requirements and report to law enforcement. However, the strict time requirement and mandate that victims share some of their most traumatic moments with law enforcement creates a barrier to accessing this essential fund for victims who do not feel safe or ready to seek help from law enforcement or otherwise struggle to navigate the often complex legal system.

Assembly Bill 329 builds on the important work of the VOCP by making the compensation process more accessible and equitable for victims in Nevada. The changes proposed in this bill will ensure that victims have the time and opportunity to apply for the assistance they need to rebuild their lives [Exhibit L]. I will now pass it over to Serena Evans.

Serena Evans, Policy Director, Nevada Coalition to END Domestic and Sexual Violence:
As a statewide domestic and sexual violence coalition representing 14 program members from every corner of the state, we advocate for trauma-informed and victim-centered policies that will increase the resources and support for victim survivors. Assembly Bill 329 is a crucial step forward, offering commonsense legislation that will reduce unnecessary barriers and improve our state's victim compensation program.

The aftermath of an assault or an act of violence is unique and deeply personal to each victim-survivor. While some may find comfort in contacting and engaging with law enforcement, others may turn to different avenues, like a victim advocate, a member of their church, or their therapist. In fact, domestic violence goes unreported to law enforcement roughly 30 percent of the time, and sexual assault goes unreported 63 percent of the time. In 2023, law enforcement recorded 28,698 domestic violence reports, yet NCEDSV's program members served 33,165 survivors. This discrepancy highlights the many survivors who may never engage with law enforcement but still need critical support.

The Victims of Crime Program can help play a critical role in safety and healing, yet when survivors of violence reach for those support programs, they are often met with bureaucratic red tape that is hard to navigate in the aftermath of trauma. Their applications are denied due to not meeting the requirements and timelines. There is no one right way to heal from violence, and having the bravery to come forward and seek support in whatever way feels the most safe and supportive should not be penalized. We as a state should not deem victims who are comfortable engaging with law enforcement as more deserving victims.

Assembly Bill 329 sends a clear message. We trust survivors to make the choices that best support their healing. By expanding the types of documentation allowed and extending the eligibility period for compensation, this bill respects survivors' autonomy and ensures they are supported during their most vulnerable times.

Tyler Winkler, Supervising Attorney, Resiliency and Justice Center, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada:

I work with a multidisciplinary team to advocate for victims of crime ensuring they receive the resources and support they need. A major part of my role is helping victims navigate Nevada's victim compensation program, which provides financial assistance for things like medical and mental health care, relocation to safety, lost wages, and funeral and burial expenses for families who have lost loved ones. Despite these critical benefits, victim compensation is severely underutilized, in part due to bureaucratic hurdles that prevent eligible victims from accessing the help they need. This bill removes those barriers.

Currently, victims must file a police report within five days and cooperate with law enforcement to qualify for compensation. This disqualifies many victims who, for valid reasons, do not report their victimization. Research has consistently shown that more than half of victimizations go unreported, and the reasons vary; including fear of retaliation, distress to the justice system, shame or trauma, or lack of awareness that they could get help if they reported to police first. The result, even though these victims need help, is that they are denied assistance because of a procedural issue.

An example is my client, James. In June 2021, James was the victim of a violent crime. He spent almost a year in a coma in rehab recovering. James did not know about victim compensation or other resources to assist him, and he did not reach the Resiliency Center until fall of 2023, two years later. We could easily access his substantial medical records and emergency medical services reports proving what had happened to him, but because he never filed a police report, he is ineligible for compensation. James' story does not make sense.

The purpose of victim compensation is to help victims recover, not make them jump through hoops. More importantly, these requirements do not benefit victims of a broader community. Studies show that, when victims receive support for basic needs and mental health, they are more likely to heal, more likely to feel safe, and more importantly, more likely to cooperate with law enforcement. It does not make sense to create a barrier to recovery by forcing a police report and cooperation before helping them. For example, survivors of sex trafficking are commonly, historically treated as offenders instead of the victims that they are.

Compounding this issue, many underage victims have run away from abusive homes or other dangerous situations and unknowingly into the arms of a trafficker. This situation leaves them with one of three choices: return to the original abuse, remain with a current abuser, or self-report to a system they already do not trust and that criminalizes their victimization. This bill ensures they do not have to choose between getting help and protecting themselves.

The Resilience Center has a dedicated staff attorney who serves survivors of human trafficking. Many of our clients are resistant to reporting their trafficker and are often openly hostile to cooperating with law enforcement. However, when a survivor works with us to access community resources and legal help, we have an opportunity to begin healing their trauma. A crucial part of that healing is undoing the destructive narrative that their trafficker has ingrained in them: that law enforcement is the enemy. We are providing supportive services first without demanding that cooperation up front. We create a safe environment where survivors feel protected. Time and again, once our clients see that they have support and an attorney in their corner, they voluntarily choose to assist in a criminal prosecution, but this takes time. Not every survivor has a trauma-informed attorney to guide them through the process. Encouraging the removal of these unnecessary barriers will support these efforts and ultimately increase cooperation with law enforcement.

Now, walking through A.B. 329 and incorporating the conceptual amendment [Exhibit M] that was uploaded to Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System, this bill modernizes and improves Nevada's victim compensation system. It does this by increasing the time to apply for compensation, allowing victims to prove eligibility in multiple ways and not just with the police report, expands protections for minor victims, and ensures that choosing not to engage with law enforcement does not stop someone from getting help.

Going section by section, section 1 amends *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 217.100. Under subsection 1, it amends and takes away language to make it so that the filing deadline to apply is extended. Victims now have 60 months, or 5 years, to apply for compensation instead of just 24 months, and it removes the language of a strict police report requirement. Victims no longer need to file a police report within five days to qualify for compensation.

Section 1, subsection 4. This goes through the ways that someone can prove their eligibility. The current law lacks other ways to prove eligibility beyond the police report, so the change now will be that victims can submit various types of evidence: medical or mental health records, police reports if they are available but not required, protection orders, court transcripts, government records, records from victim service providers, affidavits from qualified professionals, and other documentary evidence deemed sufficient by the director of Health and Human Services.

Section 1, subsection 5. Current law states that minors who are sexually abused or involved in pornography can apply to victim compensation until they reach the age of 21. The change here is that all minor victims can now apply up until age 26, or another way of thinking is that the 60-month timeline starts once they hit 21. Then again, we put in a waiver provision for a good cause.

Section 1, subsection 6. This defines who counts as a qualified third party. This would be doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed social workers, registered psychiatric nurses, marriage and family therapists, clinical counselors, victim advocates with training, and clergy members. This expands the pool of credible sources who can verify a victim's experience, making the process more accessible.

Per the conceptual amendment [Exhibit M], section 2 amends NRS 217.220 and removes section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (c), which is the strict cooperation with law enforcement requirement. Victims can now receive compensation even if they do not participate in a criminal investigation. Those are the changes in the bill.

Chair Miller:
Under subsection 6, when you listed out the qualified third parties, you talked about physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, all of those different professions, as well as a victim advocate and members of religious or faith-based communities. Would a teacher or an educator be able to advocate as well? We know that, not only are they trained professionals when it comes to identifying and assisting victims, but often they are the ones who many victims see the most, and also one of the number one reporters. If you could respond to that verbally.

Assemblymember Roth:
I will let Mr. Winkler speak on this as well since he does this in practice. I think the language here was really to bring this in line with the Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), but that does not mean that Nevada cannot do better. I think that is an insightful suggestion.

Tyler Winkler:
How this was written was just to be a list of examples. The Director could also add to that as it makes sense. Teachers definitely make a lot of sense.

Chair Miller:
We obviously want as many people advocating and supporting them as possible. With that, I will go ahead and open it up for questions.

Assemblymember Nadeem:
My question is just for my understanding. The state already has a program for the victim, and this bill is just expanding that program.

Assemblymember Roth:
That is correct. At this point, victims are entitled to compensation, but the burden on getting that compensation is very onerous. This simply expands what can be used as proof to access that compensation.

Assemblymember Hardy:
I agree. I appreciate extending the time because, as you mentioned, it could take victims a long time to even come to terms with what is going on, and then to get it all together and

seek the help they need. I just wanted to clarify this because you mentioned that it puts us in line with the federal law for this victims fund. Does the federal law require a police report to be the only document that can be submitted?

Tyler Winkler:
No, there is no requirement for police reports or even cooperating with law enforcement. The federal statute says that state programs should work to promote cooperation with law enforcement, and then it also has a bunch of wellness exceptions. Again, that is a requirement for the state program. It is not a requirement for any of the applicants applying for the program.

Assemblymember González:
Under the examples, I believe it is section 1, subsection 4, paragraph (e), "A record of a governmental entity," what would an example of that be?

Tyler Winkler:
There would still have to be verifiable evidence standards that are developed within the state program. The statute was to give an idea of the kinds of things that would be helpful to determine eligibility if there is not an official police report, but there are other types of information that could create a timeline for you. If they try to make a call to law enforcement, or if there were different things, the idea is not to exclude someone who can demonstrate their eligibility through other verifiable means.

Assemblymember González:
Sorry, I am still not clear on the governmental entity. If I am at the DMV, and I tell the teller? I guess I am just wondering what is defined in the governmental entity section of the amendment.

Assemblymember Roth:
I will jump in on this one. The first thing that comes to my mind from my own practice would be somebody possibly seeking a protective order, but they do not ultimately go through with it, but there is some court documentation or some documentation of that. What the language really does when you look at section 1, subsection 4, paragraph (i), "Other documentary evidence deemed sufficient by the Director," is to really capture that we are not just looking at police reports but any documentation that the Director would deem appropriate for creating a timeline and some sort of proof. That is the first example that came to my mind.

Assemblymember Hansen:
When we talk about the qualified third party, and we know a lot of those are mandatory reporters, I just want to make sure I understand the process. Fortunately, I have not ever been in this kind of situation. You are seeing a therapist, maybe a nurse, you do not want to press charges, but as a mandatory reporter, must that person file or make some sort of notification?

Serena Evans:
If somebody is a mandatory reporter, they do not have to file a police report for disclosed domestic violence unless that person is a child; then it is totally different. I, as a grown adult, am going to my therapist because I am experiencing domestic violence. My therapist is not required to report that. Through my healing journey, we discover the Victims of Crime Compensation Program. I can then go apply for it, and my therapist, being a qualified third party, can submit an affidavit saying, "Yes, Serena has discussed her victimization of domestic violence in my office. I am here testifying that she has experienced domestic violence." It is not that the qualified third party is submitting a police report on behalf of the victim. It is that they are submitting the truth and their oath through an affidavit that the person has disclosed domestic violence or any violence to them. I am just using domestic violence as an example.

Assemblymember Hansen:
That really helps to clarify it. When I thought about mandatory reporting, I thought it was just for children, not for adults, even though it is such a serious thing.

Assemblymember Cole:
With an affidavit, there is probably going to be a statement that says "under penalty of perjury" or something. I am not sure if there is—in the process that the Director uses—some other mechanism that they use to make sure that people are submitting truthful and verifiable documents. When you talk about the physician, the psychiatrist, the psychologist, and the social worker licensed to practice in this state, many of us have been in committees where we are talking about compacts. I do not know if you might want to massage that language so that it pulls in anybody who is licensed here through a compact,

Assemblymember Roth:
Yes, it does require an affidavit under oath and under penalty of perjury. There are already mechanisms put in place to ensure that people are not misusing the system. I do not have those numbers, and I am sure Mr. Winkler can speak to this more. This is really about staying outside of the legal system per se so that victims can just access the care that they need to heal. We know that this is an evidence-based way in which we can really support victims of crime, victims of sex trafficking. Yes, there is a mechanism already in place to ensure that proof is provided under oath and is verifiable.

Assemblymember Yurek:
One of the challenges that we have is a very heavy focus on suspects and folks who are engaged in perpetuating crimes against people. I really like this. I assume there are limited resources that are available through VOCA funds and these sorts of resources that we are going to try to direct to these folks. It was very narrowly tailored before; it was set at a two-year window. Is there any concern at all that, by expanding this to pretty much any victim and expanding it to a much greater time period to apply for these funds, we might deplete these funds too quickly, and thereby miss what was previously on the statute to direct the resources—limited though they were—to victims of sex trafficking? Can you address that to see if that is a concern that we should be mindful of?

Tyler Winkler:
Victim compensation through VOCA is kind of a unique program. The funding primarily comes from the federal government, about 75 percent. The way it is set up is that they increase the payment based on whatever the state paid in the last fiscal year. So, if there is an increase in paid claims, the federal government is going to pay more the next federal go-around. States that have implemented making it more accessible for folks to apply have not seen major increases in the actual number of applications. Unfortunately, there are still barriers that exist to requesting victim compensation. This just removes the easy targets so that we can get out of the way for folks.

Assemblymember Yurek:
If I could summarize what I think you said, with increased demand locally, next year would be met with an increase of those funds from the federal government.

Tyler Winkler:
Yes, that is correct.

Assemblymember Roth:
If I could just follow up for clarity purposes, the states that we have seen with relaxed requirements around reporting do not have a huge depletion of funds. What we are seeing is about the same number of applicants, but more applicants are being approved. There has not been a flood of new applications. We are seeing about the same numbers.

Assemblymember Hardy:
I was wondering if you could tell us how the fund actually works, how a victim gets money from it. Is there a limit as to how much they can receive, or is it certain expenses that they are allowed to recover from the funds? Maybe give us the more technical part of how it works in practice, and what they are allowed to receive.

Tyler Winkler:
I will try to make this as succinct as possible. Yes, there are categorical limits based on the state program. The maximum amount on any one claim is $35,000, but that could be for medical stuff. And then, there are separate categories for different things, like funeral expenses are capped at $5,000. The relocation benefit is capped at $2,500. These are all reimbursable. It is not like you get approved, and then they give you a check. You have to show that this is the expense that you have to pay or you did already pay, and then you get reimbursed for it.

Assemblymember Hardy:
Just so we have an idea that they are not submitting everything they have spent, but rather medical and those types of things.

Chair Miller:
With that, it seems there is a panel or someone making decisions on what would be approved and, of course, the amount that would be approved for each instance. Could you tell us on

average how long it typically takes a recipient to receive separately the approval and the funds?

Tyler Winkler:
When an application has everything it needs, which at the moment is a police report and expenses, it is very fast. I have seen the compensation program approval within a week. If they get it in by the time they cut checks, the person is going to get it the following week. But, when they are waiting for something like a police report, it is, who knows. It could take a really long time if there is an active investigation or something like they cannot get the police report. There are all kinds of different holdups, so this would get rid of that barrier to speed that up.

Chair Miller:
With that, and not seeing any additional questions, I will open it up for testimony. Anyone here in Carson City who would like to testify in support of Assembly Bill 329, please come forward.

Jennifer Noble, representing Nevada District Attorneys' Association:
I am testifying today in support of Assembly Bill 329.

Paloma M. Guerrero, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public Defender's Office:
Ditto. We support this bill.

Jason Woodard, representing Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association:
We also support this bill.

Angela Knott, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Public Defender's Office:
We support this bill.

Chair Miller:
Not seeing anyone else in Carson City, is there anyone in Las Vegas who would like to testify in support of A.B. 329?

Robert L. Gipson, Litigation Fellow, Giffords Law Center:
We are the gun safety organization founded by former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords in support of A.B. 329. I focus on victim services and compensation reform throughout the country. I come to this work, however, as a son of Nevada, moved to action after the 1 October shooting [October 1, 2017, shooting in Las Vegas, Nevada]. The 1 October shooting united our state, and it brought me to the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center, where we serve survivors. In that tradition, Giffords strongly supports A.B. 329, a bill that would continue innovations made after the shooting by opening alternative ways to report victimization.

Current state law requires victims to report and engage with law enforcement for program eligibility, but this does not account for the realities of crime. The majority of victims do not report to police for many reasons. Victimization is traumatic. Alongside trauma, survivors are often fearful of victim blaming. They have real concerns regarding retaliation, or they do not trust law enforcement. Assembly Bill 329 would better account for these realities.

Additionally, the public safety benefits of alternative reporting cannot be understated. When victims work with third-party trauma service providers, they are more likely to cooperate with law enforcement, and these alternative reports can help repair survivor distrust. Since most victims do not report to police, alternative reports would provide the state with a more accurate picture of crime. They would also play an important role in crime prevention, as more accessible compensation can help to stop cycles of violence. Recognizing the priority of survivor well-being, Congress recently changed federal law to clarify that working with law enforcement is not a precondition for compensation. The U.S. Department of Justice has repeatedly stated that programs are not required to mandate victim police reports and engagement. With that flexibility, leading states have opened alternative ways to report, including Louisiana, Illinois, New York, and Maryland. This bill would, therefore, continue Nevada's place among the vanguard, all the while remaining compliant with federal law. To strengthen public safety and ensure our state is victim-centered, Giffords strongly urges the Committee to pass this bill [Exhibit N].

Chair Miller:
Not seeing anyone else in Las Vegas, will you open the lines?

Tonya Brown, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:
I am in support of this bill. I do see some things that should have gone up in the neutral part. I want to bring to your attention an issue that has come to my attention as well. I have a friend who is the victim of domestic violence. It goes in with the stalking part, but is not a part of the stalking. He has gone through everything. The issue is that this individual has gone under the domestic violence. He has beaten her and has broken into her home. She has filed temporary protective orders (TPO). She has tried to get an extended TPO but was unable to serve. She has had to move out of her home and incur all these extra expenses. How does that affect this? I am in support of this bill. I wanted to bring to mind ongoing domestic violence and if this would cover each and every time when nothing happens because he is unable to be located or arrested.

Chair Miller:
We will take your support testimony. Next caller.

Aswad Thomas, National Director, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice; and Vice President, Alliance for Safety and Justice:
I am here testifying in support of A.B. 329. Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice is a national network of 200,000 crime victims nationwide. Like many of our members, I am a victim of a violent crime. I was shot twice in my back shortly after graduating from college. Those two bullets ended my professional basketball career and nearly my life. Like so many

victims in Nevada and across the country, it took me years to recover. Law enforcement visited me several times about the case, but they never shared information about victim services or the compensation program. These experiences brought me to working with Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice and dedicating my life to elevating victims' voices in policy and working with victim compensation administrators across the country to improve programs.

Red tape in statutes unnecessarily excludes many victims from accessing financial assistance from the Nevada Victims of Crime Program. Many are automatically ineligible due to the requirement to have a police report, even if another form of trusted documentation is readily accessible. Nationally, more than half of violent crimes are not immediately reported to police for various reasons, including the legitimate fear for safety or a negative past experience with law enforcement when the victims are struggling through the worst moments of their life. Tying compensation to immediate reporting can deter victims from getting help, undermining their safety goals. We know when victims get help they are more likely to feel safe and are able to cooperate with law enforcement. Even for victims who report right away, requiring the program to get that police report—

Chair Miller:
Sir, your time is up. Can you wrap it up?

Aswad Thomas:
For these reasons, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice is in strong support of A.B. 329 [Exhibit O].

[Exhibit P is a letter of support submitted but not discussed and is included as an exhibit for the hearing.]

Chair Miller:
As a reminder, you are invited to submit any additional comments you have if you would like to mail or email that to us.

Next caller. [There was no one.] I will open it up for opposition testimony in Carson City or Las Vegas? [There was no one.] Will you open the lines?

Annemarie Grant, Private Citizen, Quincy, Massachusetts:
My brother, Thomas Purdy was murdered by police in 2015 during a mental health crisis. Unfortunately, I have to oppose the bill because I find that the victims of police murder are always excluded from this, and that needs to change.

Chair Miller:
Since there are no other callers, I will open it up for neutral testimony in Carson City.

Marla McDade Williams, Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services, Department of Health and Human Services:
I want to go on the record with two points. One is about the budget. What Mr. Winkler said is correct, that the more money we spend at the state level, the more we can get from the federal government. The problem is that I still have a limited state budget, and if we do come up against that, I would have to ask for additional state funding to be able to draw on the federal funding.

As it relates to the caps, we have a state plan that reconciles state law and federal law. That state plan guides what the caps are, so they are not in statute. We just have to ensure that the state plan is always updated to reflect any of the applicable changes.

Chair Miller:
Thank you so much for that context. Anyone else here in Carson City or Las Vegas? [There was no one.] Will you open the lines for neutral testimony? [There was no one.] With that, I see the bill sponsor is not coming back to the table for any final comments, so I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 329.

I will open public comment. Not seeing anyone, and not seeing anyone in Las Vegas, will you open the lines?

Tonja Brown, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:
Just in case you get a bill coming up that deals with criminal justice discovery, *Brady* violations, please consider what I call "Nolan's law." Nolan's law is, once the defendant is arrested and charged with a crime, the law enforcement agency must provide the accused defense counsel with a copy of the materiality, exculpatory evidence at the same time the prosecution receives it. Then it will be left to the court to decide what is or is not admissible for trial. Any additional materiality, exculpatory evidence that is provided to the prosecution must be simultaneously provided to the accused and the counsel. Then dealing with *Brady* violations versus work product, when it is clear that a *Brady* violation existed, but the court deems that it is a work product. If any bill should come up during this legislative session, or possibly in 2027, please consider this. We need to help prevent wrongful convictions, and this will definitely help in that area.

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Chair Miller:
Since there are no other callers, I will close public comment. That concludes our work for this morning in this Committee. I will adjourn and see you all back at 8 a.m. tomorrow morning. This meeting is adjourned [at 10:36 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

_____
Karyn Werner
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

_____
Assemblymember Brittney M. Miller, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
A.B. 299	C	Regan Comis, representing Xquisite	Copyrighted research report published by Demand Abolition titled "Who Buys Sex? Understanding and Disrupting Illicit Market Demand"
A.B. 299	D	Regan Comis, representing Xquisite	Copyrighted article published by David Charns of KLAS titled "Illegal Las Vegas brothel raided; men accused of smuggling Chinese women into U.S."
A.B. 299	E	Regan Comis, representing Xquisite	Copyrighted article published by David Charns of KLAS titled "I-Team: Hundreds of men paid for sex at illegal Las Vegas brothel, police say; 2 charged"
A.B. 299	F	Regan Comis, representing Xquisite	Copyrighted article published by Michael Bell of KVVU titled "Las Vegas woman accused of running suspected illegal brothel as massage parlor"
A.B. 299	G	Brenda Sandquist, Executive Director, Xquisite	Letter in support
A.B. 299	H	Carol Hill, Private Citizen	Email in support
A.B. 299	I	Liz Ortenburger, Chief Executive Officer, SafeNest	Letter in support
A.B. 299	J	Paloma M. Guerrero, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public Defender’s Office	Written testimony in opposition
A.B. 299	K	Amy-Marie Merrell, Co-Executive Director, Cupcake Girls	Email in opposition
A.B. 329	L	Assemblymember Erica P. Roth, Assembly District No. 24	Information sheet titled "Supporting Survivors AB329"
A.B. 329	M	Jonathan Norman, representing Nevada Coalition of Legal Service Providers	Conceptual amendment

A.B. 329	N	Robert L. Gipson, Litigation Fellow, Giffords Law Center	Written testimony in support
A.B. 329	O	Aswad Thomas, National Director, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice; and Vice President, Alliance for Safety and Justice	Written testimony in support
A.B. 329	P	Liz Ortenburger, Chief Executive Officer, SafeNest	Letter in support