MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Eighty-third Session
May 28, 2025

The Senate Committee on Finance was called to order by Chair Marilyn Dondero Loop at 10:27 a.m. on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, in Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 6 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, 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. Link to Executive Budget. Link to Budget Amendments.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair
Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen, Vice Chair
Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro
Senator Melanie Scheible
Senator Dina Neal
Senator Angela D. Taylor
Senator Carrie Ann Buck
Senator Robin L. Titus
Senator Jeff Stone

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Edgar Flores, Senatorial District No. 2
Senator Melanie Scheible, Senatorial District No. 9
Assemblymember Steve Yeager, Assembly District No. 9

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wayne Thorley, Senate Fiscal Analyst
Cathy Crocket, Chief Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst
Dee Chekowitz-Dykes, Committee Secretary
Gail Anderson, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Leonardo Benavides, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Jackie Spicer, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition
J.J. Goicoechea, Director, State Department of Agriculture
Dominique M. Etchegoyhen, Deputy Director, State Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
Ross Kinson, Northern Nevada Central Labor Council
Carlos Hernandez, Nevada State AFL-CIO
Cassie Charles, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
Olivia Tanager, Director, Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter
Anahit Baghshetsyan, Nevada Policy Research Institute
Paul Moradkhan, Vegas Chamber
Bryan Wachter, Retail Association of Nevada
Tom Clark, Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce; Nevada Association of School Boards; Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Misty Grimmer, Nevada Resort Association
Tiffany Greenameyer, Director, Office of Finance, Office of the Governor
Andy Matthews, State Controller
James Smack, Chief Deputy Controller, Office of the State Controller
John R. McCormick, Assistant Court Administrator, Administrative Office of the Court, Nevada Supreme Court
Robbie Burgess, Administrator, Fleet Service Division, Nevada Department of Administration
Megan Peterson, Deputy Superintendent, Student Investment Division, Nevada Department of Education
Christy McGill, Deputy Superintendent, Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement, Nevada Department of Education
Patricia Charlton, Chancellor, Administrative Services, Nevada System of Higher Education
Gabriel Di Chiara, Chief Deputy, Office of the Secretary of State
Emily Persaud-Zamora, Executive Director, Silver State Voices
Kimberly Fergus
Eric James, Chief of Police, University Police Department, Northern Command, University of Nevada, Reno
Kent Ervin, Nevada Faculty Alliance
Arnold Vasquez, Chief of Police, University Police Department, Southern Command, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Doug Unger, Nevada Faculty Alliance

Dan Thielen, Administrator, Division of Museums and History, Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs
Paul Schubert, Chief, Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance, Division of Public and Behavioral Health, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Kelsey McCann-Navarro, Administrative Services Officer, Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Dan Waters, Adjutant General, Nevada National Guard, Office of the Military
Cheryl Tyler, Administrative Services Officer, Nevada National Guard, Office of the Military
Andrew LePeilbet, State Chairman, United Veterans Legislative Council
John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association
Marie Neisess, President, Clark County Education Association
Gil Lopez, Charter School Association of Nevada
Sarah Adler, Coalition of Independent Public Charter Schools of Northern Nevada
Alexander Marks, Nevada State Education Association

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will start with Senate Bill (S.B.) 85.

SENATE BILL 85 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to public safety. (BDR 43-490)

SENATOR MELANIE SCHEIBLE (Senatorial District No. 9):
The policy of S.B. 85 extends the traffic study that we have already been doing for two years to gather information about people who are stopped in the State of Nevada by peace officers. Having two years of data is really not enough to make any meaningful inferences, so S.B. 85 suggests that we extend this traffic study.

I know that there is a fiscal note on the bill. I think that the Department of Public Safety has indicated about $3,000 to $5,000 in administrative costs in addition to new personnel. I am not quite sure why they need new personnel when they have been doing this for the last two years. I am not sure if they are here to answer that question, but I would hope that we would be able to continue to utilize the personnel that have been doing this work for the last two years into the future.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
You answered the question I had. I know that they have been doing this already. I have heard this in the policy committee that I chair. During the policy hearing, we heard from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, (UNLV) School of Medicine that was doing the data collection on this. They had indicated that with the two years—and it is a little less than two years because it took a while for the data to start to be collected—at a very minimum, they would need at least three years of this data. Is that my correct understanding?

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:
Yes, that is correct. They would need at least at least three years' worth of data to make any meaningful inferences.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Just so I am clear, this is a study where when you get stopped by a police officer, they take down some demographic information, and then they are sharing that with the UNLV School of Medicine so that we have that information moving forward.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:
Yes, that is correct. This is a partnership between the State and UNLV. When the concept was first developed to do this study to help us understand better our patterns of traffic stops and traffic violations, it was really not feasible for the State to undertake all of the data collection and analysis. We are lucky that the UNLV School of Medicine was willing to take on that very significant role of compiling all the data and analyzing it. While peace officers collect it, they send it to UNLV. The University is working to provide us with information like, where are the most vehicle stops occurring? In what zip codes? What is the most common reason for stopping vehicles? When a vehicle is stopped, how often is a citation issued? When a citation is issued, how often is it for the same reason that the person was stopped?

I know that was not your question, but with two years of data, it is just not enough to say, "because we do not have enough data points." We risk not just getting bad information, but UNLV has a standard of integrity, and they are not willing to draw conclusions from such little information. So the study would basically be rendered moot at that point.

SENATOR TITUS:
Based on what you just said that the two years is not enough, then what would be a reasonable amount of time? I have concerns that there is no stop date here. For me, you are looking for a problem and trying to gather data that does not exist. What are we doing with the data? We have ten stops here, ten stops there. What is a reasonable amount of time that UNLV said in their research that they need depending on what they are looking for?

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:
The purpose of the data is to improve traffic safety throughout Nevada. We have a high incidence of traffic collisions and especially with traffic fatalities. There are a lot of policy pieces that go into preventing traffic fatalities, and one of them is enforcement. We are looking on the back end of the enforcement to see where are enforcing the laws. Are those the same places where the fatalities are occurring? Are we missing the places where the fatalities are occurring? Are there other patterns that we do not know about that would help us to be smarter in the way that we enforce traffic laws?

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, indicated during the policy hearing and in my conversations with them, that with the two years that they already have, at least one additional year would give them enough information that they feel comfortable, not comfortable, but scientifically they would be able to assess some trends. More information would always be helpful.

From a policy perspective, I see the value in continuing this indefinitely as our communities' change, as we develop more roads in different places, as people move from one community to another. It is always helpful to be able to see in real time where and how we are enforcing traffic provisions and how we can best adapt to increase public safety.

LEONARDO BENAVIDES (University of Nevada, Las Vegas):
The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, is here in support of S.B. 85. We are very appreciative of everyone who has been working with us on this to make sure that we are able to get more time in order to fully analyze that data that we need, so we can present some clean information to the State, to the Legislature.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on S.B. 85, and we will open the hearing on S.B. 260.

SENATE BILL 260 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to air quality. (BDR 53-961)

SENATOR EDGAR FLORES (Senatorial District No. 2):
By way of reference to give everybody a guide to where we originally started with S.B. 260, we wanted to create certain triggers to protect outdoor workers when we have poor air quality, whether it be with work stoppages or mandating that we have certain protective gear in place so that we could provide some protection for workers. We have seen what happens in Northern Nevada with some of these horrific fires, and at times we still have jobs to complete. We wanted to make sure that we were not impacting work, but at the same time, we are protecting employees. That is where the bill started.

It was casting a very large net in that we wanted to try to impact and bring in as many industries as possible. However, after many months of going back and forth, we realized that perhaps that was not the best approach. We wanted to have further input from all industry and allow the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to implement these regulations and create the rules. We have had a similar process occur already with heat mitigation last session where we ended up doing something very similar.

JACKIE SPICER (Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition):
We have had extensive stakeholder meetings to get this bill to a place where we have received a neutral standpoint on both sides. What this bill would do is direct the Department of Business and Industry, Division of Industrial Relations (DIR) to create regulations that an employer must follow to monitor the air quality levels during wildfire smoke and to reduce the exposure of employees when poor air quality from wildfire smoke happens, when the air quality index is 150 or more and also when the air quality index is 200 or greater. That difference comes from when air quality levels are 150 or greater, and it becomes dangerous for people's health to be breathing smoke.

There are many pollutants in wildfire smoke that lead to significant health problems for people in the long term. We do not want workers to be subjected to those pollutants because they have to work. At air quality index levels of 200 or greater it is hazardous for people to be working outdoors. We want to make sure that OSHA is able to work with industry stakeholders to establish what measures need to be taken at both of those index levels.

We are also asking OSHA to determine at what air quality index level caused by wildfire smoke [should] an employer not allow an employee to perform critical tasks outdoors. At a certain point, it does become extremely dangerous for people to be working outdoors. Something like an N95 mask, that might be considered a financially feasible solution, is not something that provides adequate protection for employees.

In addition to that, we are asking the DIR to establish regulations that an employer must follow to implement a communication system so employees are aware when the air quality index becomes unhealthy and hazardous for employees to be breathing the air, and to establish regulations for providing training to employees on the requirements and the potential hazards of not using personal protective equipment while working outdoors and being exposed to these hazards. We are directing OSHA to create guidance to work with employers so that they have the ability to follow these regulations.

We have listed exemptions in this amendment which include operators of a mine, those who employ commercial truck drivers as a provider of emergency services or businesses who have ten or fewer employees.

SENATOR FLORES:
The other thing we wanted to make clear is that we do not know what these regulations are going to look like. We do not know if monitoring air quality will be OSHA directing them to utilize a website to best achieve that. We do not know exactly what type of protective gear OSHA will determine is best. We do not know how each individual industry will be impacted. For different industries, OSHA may come up with different sets of regulations. At this time, we do not know exactly what this will look like.

We are sending it back to get the maximum input from all stakeholders and all interested parties so that OSHA can come up with the best regulations. We felt this was the best approach given that there are so many different perspectives, and how we interact with different environments differs based on the type of work we are doing. If I am out there putting in cement, that may be different than if I am out there cutting timber or whatever it may be. We want to make sure that we are as transparent as possible with the process.

We did want to say that all but two of the fiscal notes have been removed, and we have not received input specifically on what those fiscal notes look like. But

our push back is that we do not understand how we are determining the fiscal impact now when we are saying we are punting this back to OSHA for them to make the determinations and for them to have the stakeholder meetings. We do not know what air monitoring will look like. We do not know what those protective requirements will be.

I also want to make it abundantly clear that poor air quality is not a new thing, and wildfires are not a new thing. There is not an industry now that does not already operate in these conditions and has not already taken some type of protective measures to ensure that their workers are out there in a safe environment. I do not imagine that there is going to be a scenario where you are having people working in poor air quality—200-plus air quality—that there was not already some type of protective gear provided to those employees. What we are saying is we want to create a standard for that depending on industry. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration will help us create that guidance.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
You said that you had two fiscal notes that had not been removed. Who are those two fiscal notes from?

MS. SPICER:
The remaining fiscal notes are from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Let me ask you one other question. I am most concerned about firefighters for lots of reasons. I totally appreciate what the bill does and what you are asking for. So I can be clear, is the idea that we would give them different protective gear? We cannot just let a fire start burning and walk away from it just because the air quality is bad. That is unfortunate, but that is the job.

SENATOR FLORES:
You are 100 percent correct. In the exemptions we are 100 percent excluding emergency services, so anybody that is working for emergency services now is completely exempt. The reason for that is they have a higher standard that they adhere to than anything OSHA would implement. This is also why we are doing it for the mines. They adhere to a much higher standard or federal standards already. We are not looking to circumvent that process. This is true for anybody providing services during an emergency.

We had this conversation during the policy side of this. We saw what happened in California where, during the horrific fires, we needed to make sure power stayed on, and we needed to make sure water kept moving. These are essential services that need to continue to move even in the middle of fire. So we are not looking to capture them in any way.

MS. SPICER:
May I also add that we have in our proposed conceptual amendment (Exhibit C) that we are including entities that are acting under the directive of a state of emergency or declaration of disaster.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Can you list me some that this would directly impact?

SENATOR FLORES:
Suppose we are constructing a new lot of 50 houses and there is a horrific wildfire that is within the proximity and, unfortunately, the air quality index hits over 150. It could also impact individuals that are further away from that. As we all know in Northern Nevada, particularly those of you who live in Northern Nevada, there are days where the air quality triggers shutting down schools and triggers shutting down government. We are not immediately next to a fire, but it may be miles down the road and the nature of the air quality at the time is too horrific. We know that there are a lot of industries that could be impacted by it. Because of that is why we are sending it to OSHA so that we allow each individual industry to make a determination on what best fits them.

SENATOR NEAL:
You said the fiscal note that is still left is the unsolicited note from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. This is the second one on the first reprint, not on the amendment that you have right now. They are saying that they will have to enter into a contract to implement the program and then train staff. What has been the communication around that? Will it be rolled into potentially another environmental agency that can assist? What are we doing?

SENATOR FLORES:
For the sake of clarity, we were very prescriptive where we originally started in saying we want to ensure that there is a minimum standard across the board, and we were impacting most industries at that time. What we are doing now

here, however, is we are sending it back to OSHA to make that determination. It would be incorrect for me to tell you now exactly what their [Department of Conservation and Natural Resources] role will be, if [any] at all because we are sending this back to OSHA to make those determinations with the input of all industry.

At this point, we are just sending more of a guide. We want to know what happens at 150 and at 200 [air quality index]. When we know we have poor air quality, how do we best address it? [We are asking] OSHA to please give us some guidance. This is what we are doing now versus where we originally started when we were saying, here is what happens at 150, here is what happens at 200, here is what happens for every particular industry. We were not telling them exactly what to do, but we were creating minimum standards at that point. I think that is where those fiscal notes were triggered. At that time, we had, I think, 15 fiscal notes because of that.

SENATOR NEAL:
In the first fiscal note, they were talking about N95 masks, and it seems like they are still talking about protective equipment in the first reprint. So my first thought was those N95 masks are the ones that we used during COVID-19, right? We had all this storage of this COVID-19 equipment that we had. Is that something that is still available that can then be used? It is not like masks have an expiration date, do they?

SENATOR FLORES:
I have two points. Number one, I do not want to suggest that N95 [masks] are going to be exactly what OSHA throws out, although it is a very reasonable requirement that I suspect could potentially be it. Number two, though, is any industry, if you ask them now if they are going to make a worker, to force them, to go out where the air quality is now at 150 or 200, what are you doing now? I can assure you that the industries will tell you they are already providing some type of protective gear.

We are mostly focusing on the bad actors who we believe are not doing that. When we were having the policy discussion, the majority of the industries that came said that they already do this, so why are we [the State] making all folks participate in this if we [already] do it, and some of us do it better than others? I am not pushing back on that. I really do believe that industry is doing a good job

for the most part, particularly the folks that are in the room. It is the folks outside the room that we do not always believe have that type of protection.

We have had individuals come up and talk about how they were working in very poor air quality conditions. It is my position that if you ask them, they will say they already have some type of procedure in place for when they are working in these conditions. It is also my position that they will say they have some type of protective gear that they are utilizing. Beyond that, they will have an opportunity to have direct input during the [regulation] process and the working groups to provide whatever feedback they have. That is my position of how we suspect these conversations will go.

I do not want to fall in the trap here of saying N95 masks are going to become the requirement or a particular type of protective gear because it is going to put us right back why we were at an impasse with negotiations because that is what they did not want. They did not want to hear a very specific prescriptive requirement of what protective gear looks like or when it triggers. We just said at these two triggers, what happens? Please help us make that determination, OSHA. At what point is the air quality so poor that we should not have humans out there working if it is not an emergency service provider? That is what we are saying. Help us figure out what happens at these triggers rather than us telling them this is what we need you to do.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Would you talk a little bit about your proposed conceptual amendment, please?

MS. SPICER:
In the proposed conceptual amendment, Exhibit C, you will see a lot of the first two sections have been taken off. We had initially included that there would be a program that employers must take, and we wanted to make sure that was taken out to ensure that OSHA would be responsible for working with employers on what the safety programs would look like.

Section two has been taken out because this went over how employers could monitor air quality and all the available air quality monitoring sources that are available. We have moved that into the new section 1 so that OSHA can provide guidance on how employers can monitor air quality levels and reduce that exposure.

We also wanted to make sure there is still a requirement for training so that employees are trained on the regulations that would come out of this, but also on the potential hazards if employees choose not to use personal protective equipment. A lot of the feedback we got from industry stakeholders was that during COVID-19, sometimes people did not feel comfortable wearing things like N95 masks for a variety of reasons. At the very least people should be aware of the risks that they are taking if they choose not to use personal protective equipment.

We also wanted to make sure that OSHA would be developing and providing written guidance for how employers could be following the regulations. This is exactly what happened from the heat illness regulations. Guidance documents were created by OSHA on how the employers could follow those regulations, including addressing things like how employees in remote locations could be monitored off-site for how they can still be protected and be aware when temperatures reach dangerous levels to be working outside. We have put that responsibility on DIR and OSHA.

We have also gone through the definitions section and removed phrases that would have indicated the amount of time that an employee spent outside as a qualification for who should be monitored and would fall under these regulations. We have removed the words constantly, frequently and occasionally to perform critical tasks outdoors and clarified that working in an outdoor environment means that it is not enclosed or climate controlled and providing emergency services also includes entities acting under the directive of the State. The definition of wildfire smoke was amended to indicate that the complex mixture of dangerous gasses and particles in the air are caused by wildfire smoke. Lastly, we have included in the new section 3 that this bill would not change anything related to existing workers' compensation laws.

J.J. GOICOECHEA (Director, State Department of Agriculture):
Our initial fiscal note was on the bill as introduced. We have been working on a subsequent fiscal note, and we are prepared to provide that to you. We have been waiting to see what additional amendments may come out before we did.

I will tell you that our subsequent fiscal note is going to be higher. The reason why is, as the sponsor just walked through, we do not know what this is going to do for sure. We do read in there where the administrator must adopt

regulations that the employer will have to comply with. We are pretty sure that is going to limit some of our inspectors.

This committee knows very well how the majority of our inspectors, over 100 of them, are in budget account (B/A) 101-4546.

COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AGRI - Livestock Inspection — Budget Page AGRICULTURE-37 (Volume I)
Budget Account 101-4546

That is always very slim. If we have to put additional inspectors on to limit the amount of time they are out inspecting, or if we have to buy personal protective equipment, or if we have to do something along those lines, it is going to have a significant fiscal impact on us.

We have brand inspectors in the field every day. We also have produce inspectors, entomology—those are out there right now during our surveys. We know what these valleys look like in Northern and Central Nevada when we get a smoke season. We may see that for weeks on end to where you cannot see the mountain from the valley. Yes, it is not healthy air. But we must do those inspections to keep commerce moving, the public safe and our products safe and moving.

That is why we have come up with a fiscal note. We know we have to continue to meet our mission and the mission of the State while protecting employees, whatever these regulations look like.

DOMINIQUE M. ETCHEGOYHEN (Deputy Director, State Department of Conservation & Natural Resources):
Our original fiscal note also was based on the original Reprint 1. There have been significant changes to this bill through this conceptual amendment. It was helpful to clarify that it was not the employer, i.e., the state agencies, that was going to have to develop and establish those regulations. That is a big change.

However, as Director Goicoechea indicated, there are still going to be regulations that are established by the administrator of DIR that the employer

must follow and implement. Our concerns are very similar from a fiscal perspective to those of the Department of Agriculture where we are interested in the protective equipment that will be required.

There is also discussion of communication systems where we need to communicate with our employees in the field, and they need to communicate with us. A lot of our employees are in very remote areas of Nevada where we do not have cell service. A lot of our employees are not provided work cell phones, and they do not necessarily have radios in their trucks and their vehicles. Our concern is from the communications perspective primarily.

I would like to point out that we are a broad, diverse department with a lot of different divisions. Specifically, I think two of our divisions are exempted, and we have taken that into account. When the exemption is provided for providers of emergency services, we view that as being our entire Division of Forestry and our entire Division of State Parks. Even though there are employees in there who are not providing emergency services, we think that the language exempts that entire division as an employer of providers of emergency services.

We are strictly looking at our Division of Environmental Protection, our Division of Water Resources, our Conservation Districts Program, our Sagebrush Ecosystems Program technical team, our Division of Natural Heritage and those others who are out there working in the field sometimes doing permitting that is required for us to achieve our mission.

SENATOR NEAL:
Director Goicoechea, when there is a smoky environment, what is the current practice? If they go out and there has been a wildfire or maybe there's just haze or smog, etcetera, what currently is the practice for protective gear?

MR. GOICOECHEA:
Currently the practice is that we encourage them all to protect themselves. We do not have a threshold. We do not know what. Is it 150? Is it 175? If they are not feeling well or they feel that they are sensitive—are they an asthmatic? Do they have other underlying health conditions? We would send another inspector if they could not do it. But it is really up to that inspector. They are at-will inspectors, and they go and they do that job.

If they are on our produce side, there are days that we can push those back a day or two and wait for that air quality to improve. But predominantly our livestock inspectors are out there on that day because that is the day they have to go, and there is no personal protective equipment provided to them at this time.

SENATOR NEAL:
For the food inspectors, when you say you have to push it back a day or two because it seems like the air quality may be impacted, how do you know?

MR. GOICOECHEA:
If those employees, and we have a very limited employee base, especially in that division, if a couple of those employees are experiencing signs or symptoms because they have been out there for a day or two, then we will not have them go a subsequent day. That is how we know. It is up to that employee. We do not have anyone to backfill for them. That is part of the problem. On our brand inspectors we do, and we can send someone from 50, 60, 75 miles away, and that is what we would have to do, and therefore our fiscal note.

SENATOR NEAL:
A different question related to the comment around not having radios in trucks and having to go great distances. That was surprising to hear because I thought that radios and the ability to communicate was a part of the job and the equipment that has been associated with the agency.

MR. ETCHEGOYHEN:
A lot of our vehicles do have equipment, but those tend to be the emergency response vehicles that are exempted from S.B. 260. We have a lot of other field staff who do not necessarily have that law enforcement communication in their vehicles. We do have a number of individuals who have spot devices and things like that for emergencies. Should they run into trouble, they can send a message back when they are out of service area.

However, in terms of having the ability to follow and implement the regulations that are established, including specifically a communication system, that is the concern that we have. We have no concern with the intent of this. We always work to keep our employees safe and do the best we can. But if it is imposed

upon us to implement a communication system, that is where we think there is still a fiscal impact on our particular department.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:
I think that you did mention this, but I just wanted to be clear about whether or not you are currently monitoring air quality.

MR. GOICOECHEA:
No, we are not currently monitoring the air quality in a monetary sense or as far as any number of what that looks like. We do not monitor that. It is up to those employees. We know when we have smoke in the atmosphere. We know when it is probably unhealthy, and we talk to those inspectors. But we are not monitoring that air on a daily basis. And a lot of these, contrary to what you are going to be told, a lot of these valleys do not have that, and we have to rely on closest available sites. We do not know what that means either.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:
I am just a little bit surprised. I am not an OSHA expert, but I would have thought that would have been already required under OSHA, but you are shaking your head indicating that it is not. So that is new information for me. Are you providing protective equipment at this point?

MR. GOICOECHEA:
We have protective masks available. You heard the N95. They can take those. We have a large cache of those, but that is not something we routinely put in every vehicle.

ROSS KINSON (Northern Nevada Central Labor Council):
I have spent my career working in warehouses and driving package cars. I can tell you up here in Northern Nevada the impact of smoke from wildfires is significant. I have had friends who now have permanent asthma because they continue to go out and work in these conditions day after day without any protective equipment. I have, myself, had to call 911 and have responders come and get me on oxygen because I was put out in these conditions, and we did not get any sort of protective equipment. We did not have the right to sit there and say, we do not feel these conditions are safe. We did not have any of that.

When you look at how many warehouses are in our area, and how fast package delivery in this area is growing because of all the new homes, this is a huge

population that I represent that is impacted and can, ultimately, be greatly affected through this legislation. I do not think that I or any of my friends that I work with should have to now permanently have an inhaler because they were forced to go out into the smoke without any sort of protective equipment. For those reasons and those reasons alone, I believe that this is very important, and I hope that you see that as well.

CARLOS HERNANDEZ (Nevada State AFL-CIO):
We would like to echo the comments made by Ross Kinson and urge the committee to support S.B. 260.

CASSIE CHARLES (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees):
I would like to echo the comments made by my labor colleagues who spoke previously. We also want to make sure we are here in support of keeping public workers safe in situations where there is poor air quality, and we support OSHA in developing regulations to that effect as well.

OLIVIA TANAGER (Director, Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter):
I want to point out that last time, S.B. No. 427 of the 82nd Session, there were no fiscal notes on that bill, and it addressed both heat and poor air quality. I am a little bit concerned about the fiscal notes and some of the testimony that we have heard today from our state agencies.

I also want to point out that I just checked on Amazon and an air quality monitor is 26 bucks. There are options for air quality monitoring for folks that are cost effective. And with that, I urge your full support. I really feel that this is the highest and best use of our State's resources to protect workers in situations where there is poor air quality, and it is dangerous for folks to be working.

ANAHIT BAGHSHETSYAN (Nevada Policy Research Institute):
Today we come in opposition to S.B. 260 as we have in the previous hearings. Unfortunately, we see this as an extra added layer of regulation that might come as a costly investment for business owners. While an air quality monitor might be $26, if this bill is enacted for business owners, this might mean hiring more workers, having scheduling conflicts, having to bear with extra regulations that redefine what being a business-friendly state might mean for Nevada. So

for those reasons, we come in opposition and urge you to oppose this bill as well.

PAUL MORADKHAN (Vegas Chamber):
Regarding S.B. 260, we do appreciate the efforts that were put together that result in this compromise. We appreciate the proponents and understand that some of these things should be down sent to regulations. We appreciate those efforts, and therefore the Chamber of Commerce is now neutral on the bill.

BRYAN WACHTER (Retail Association of Nevada):
We, too, agree with the amendment. We appreciate the long work that we have gone through with Senator Flores and the opponents, and we appreciate moving to neutral.

TOM CLARK (Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce):
The Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce is also in the neutral position. This is a very complicated topic, and if this bill passes, we do look forward to working with OSHA to figure it all out.

MISTY GRIMMER (Nevada Resort Association):
Nevada Resort Association says ditto on that.

SENATOR FLORES:
I wanted to once more echo the remarks that I started my opening remarks with, which is I am very grateful to all the stakeholders for the amount of work they put into getting everybody to a place that we could move forward and ensure safety of all employees, and at the same time allow that industry have their perspective in place. As to the fiscal notes, I wanted to make clear once more that we do not know what these regulations are going to look like. Some have indicated they have some process in place. There may be no impact at all from the OSHA regulations, and OSHA may decide not to impact that particular industry in a certain way. The agency may create rules that say if it is impossible for you to have communication, we are going to create these rules separately for you because we realize that you are working under a different guide.

We understand that there are days when there is poor air quality. The only way to make that determination is by monitoring the air quality. So the idea that nobody is monitoring air now, quite frankly, just does not make any sense

because the only way to make a determination that the air quality is poor is if you have made some type of effort to monitor it. There are multiple websites that we all utilize. A determination may be made by OSHA that we are going to use a website, or several different websites, to determine whether or not air quality is poor in a certain area. My point is that we do not know what that is going to look like. It may not have to involve purchasing any equipment. It may just be going on a website.

It is difficult for us to engage in this conversation when we are allowing OSHA and all the stakeholders to sit down and make that determination. The idea of how we are going to communicate, we do not know what that is going to look like—whether it is a two-way radio system, a text message, an email or driving in and having the communication. It is difficult for us to sit here and argue that point because I just do not know what it will look like.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
The hearing on S.B. 260 is closed. The hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 558 is open.

ASSEMBLY BILL 558 (1st Reprint): Makes appropriations to restore the balances in the Stale Claims Account, the Emergency Account and the Contingency Account. (BDR S-1171)

TIFFANY GREENAMEYER (Director, Office of Finance, Office of the Governor):
Assembly Bill 558 makes an appropriation to restore the balances in the Stale Claims Account, the Emergency Account and the Contingency Account. Section 1 restores the balance of $4,616,752 in the Stale Claims Account. Section 2 restores the balance of $17,000 in the Emergency Account. Section 3 restores the Contingency Account for $17,530,726. There is an amendment that was submitted by the Assembly to add $8.2 million to section 3 making it a total of $25,730,726.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
What was the amendment to add the $8.2 million to achieve?

MS. GREENAMEYER:
My understanding of that amendment was to cover the fines for forensic beds for the Department of Human Services, Division of Public and Behavioral Health.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 558, and we will go to A.B. 563.

ASSEMBLY BILL 563: Makes an appropriation to the Office of the State Controller for the costs of certain consulting services. (BDR S-1182)

ANDY MATTHEWS (State Controller):
Assembly Bill 563 makes an appropriation to the Office of the Nevada State Controller.

JAMES SMACK (Chief Deputy Controller, Office of the State Controller):
Assembly Bill 563 is a one-shot allocation of $1.11 million to pay a consulting team that assists us in several different aspects of our financial reporting. It helps us in preparing some of the more complex portions of the annual comprehensive financial report, which has been something that we have been taking advantage of the last couple of years. We are going to be continuing to take advantage of that, but on a little bit smaller scale this time.

This bill does three things. Number one is the preparation work, especially on notes, on GASB [Governmental Accounting Standards Board] statement 87 and statement 96, and some of the more complex things that we have run into within the annual comprehensive financial report process.

Second, this provides us an option to do some training, not only for our staff, but also for departments that have been giving us sometimes a bit less than standard work. This will help them be educated more clearly on what we are expecting for the annual reporting process. If we get better work coming in the door, we will be able to turn that work around and be able to improve our processes accordingly.

Third, this gives us some legal protection for [Form] 1099s and other Internal Revenue Service (IRS) concerns and that type of thing. Occasionally, we get notifications from the IRS of different fines and penalties. We turn that over to the tax attorneys within this consulting group and generally those fines go away. When Controller Matthews took office there was a fine issued against the State that was almost $750,000. That legal work was able to make that fine go away. It is certainly worth the investment there. If anything like that comes up again, although we do not see anything like that coming up, but it

could, and if it does, we will have that legal work already built into this contract.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 563 and go to A.B. 565.

ASSEMBLY BILL 565: Makes an appropriation to the Supreme Court of Nevada for the costs of the implementation of a statewide trial court electronic filing system. (BDR S-1185)

JOHN R. MCCORMICK (Assistant Court Administrator, Administrative Office of the Court, Nevada Supreme Court):
Assembly Bill 565 is a one-time appropriation of $5,175,367 to allow the Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Court to complete its development and implementation of a statewide trial court e-filing system. This is a project we started initially with COVID relief dollars, and this appropriation will allow us to complete the project and roll that out.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 565, and we will go to A.B. 564.

ASSEMBLY BILL 564 (1st Reprint): Makes an appropriation to the Fleet Services Division of the Department of Administration for the replacement and purchase of vehicles. (BDR S-1183)

ROBBIE BURGESS (Administrator, Fleet Service Division, Nevada Department of Administration):
Assembly Bill 564 is a one-shot appropriation bill to help support buying 173 replacement vehicles and 90 additional vehicles for other agencies throughout the State.

The original bill amount was $11,749,091, and it was amended for an additional $1,382,233 to help support buying additional law enforcement vehicles and to also move forward. We had purchased some vehicles that have not arrived yet, so we are asking for the appropriation money to purchase those vehicles that have already been on order. We are not going to see these vehicles until probably September sometime. That is one of the reasons for the amendment.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Would you repeat that amount, please?

MR. BURGESS:
The original bill amount was $11,749,091. The amendment amount is $1,382,233, bringing the total appropriation to $13,131,324.

SENATOR TITUS:
Did I hear you say you needed money for vehicles that you had ordered that were not here yet? How did you order them without having the money?

MR. BURGESS:
The money that we had from the last biennium was appropriated in the last one-shot bill. We will not use that money for that one-shot, so we will revert back to the General Fund. Then we are asking for it again because we still have the vehicles on order, and we have outstanding purchase orders on them.

SENATOR TITUS:
How much reverted back?

MR. BURGESS:
The dollar reversion back is $1,396,525. We are asking for it again.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 564, and we will go to A.B. 571.

ASSEMBLY BILL 571 (1st Reprint): Makes appropriations to the Department of Education for certain surveys, offsets to decreases in federal grant funding, professional development costs, information technology projects, programs, grants and studies. (BDR S-1194)

MEGAN PETERSON (Deputy Superintendent, Student Investment Division, Nevada Department of Education):
Assembly Bill 571 today is a reprint of the original bill. I will discuss the amendment in just a moment. This bill makes appropriations to the Department of Education for certain surveys to offset decreases due to changes made to a federal grant allocation and professional development. Within the Educator Effectiveness budget account, A.B. 571 appropriates funds for administration of statewide surveys for educators who exit or transfer to another district or

school in the State. The amount is $1.1 million in the first fiscal year and $900,000 in the second fiscal year.

The bill also provides an allocation to offset a decrease in funding due to changes that were made to our Title II grant allocations. This is the amendment that I was mentioning earlier. It had addressed it as For Every Student Succeeds Act funding, and this is actually specific to Title II, Part A allocations. We have appropriations of $1.3 million associated with that in each fiscal year.

The bill includes $500,000 for a contract to support the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education for the biennium.

Under our Office for Standards and Instructional Support budget account is funding of $560,370 in FY 2025-2026 and $495,000 in FY 2026-2027 for the Canvas Learning Management System, which will also provide a micro-credentialing platform for our educators.

Funding is also allocated for several State Seal programs to allow students to acknowledge additional curriculum in education in certain areas: an appropriation of $35,200 for the State Seal of Biliteracy Program, $10,843 for the State Seal of STEM Program and $12,765 for the State Seal of Civics Program.

Within the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning, $50,000 is appropriated in both fiscal years to provide reporting within our student information system related to discipline data. The bill also appropriates $3 million in each fiscal year for support in implementing multitiered systems of support, framework and related training for school districts and the department.

Additionally, $35,000 is appropriated to the superintendent's budget account to provide funding for a study to analyze what changes, if any, are needed to the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan resulting from changes under competency-based education. Currently, we administer funding based on instructional seat time. This would look to identify any changes necessary as we move to competency-based education in some districts.

The bill provides an appropriation of $218,948 to develop and implement a new Nevada School Performance Framework. An appropriation of $348,000 is for our District Support Services budget account to provide grants to local

education agencies who need support in developing financial and internal control procedures within their district.

Within that same budget account, $30,000 is appropriated to analyze and review past practices and programs of the department to ensure operational efficiency going forward.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
You mentioned that you had money in there for the [State Seal of] Civics Program. Can you explain why, when we pass a bill on our side and it has that fiscal note on it, then you have another fiscal note, how does that cross over and why is one not enough? Does that make sense? When we passed the civics bill, we had a fiscal note in there for the seals and for possibly a person, whatever all those entities were, to make that civics seal available to students. Then I hear that you have a fiscal note as well for civics appropriation. How does that work? And why is this needed as well?

MS. PETERSON:
I believe what has possibly transpired here is this was part of an agency request budget which was being put forward under the Governor's recommended budget, and this was following that budget implementation protocol. Whereas when the bill was introduced and the fiscal note was put on it, they were not necessarily contemplated at the same time. We may need some clean up in the request that is put here.

SENATOR NEAL:
You mentioned multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), and we had just had that hearing last week on Senator Rogich's bill. So is this additional money other than what was listed as a fiscal note in her bill? I was arguing over, I think it was like $443,000 or something.

MS. PETERSON:
I believe they are related to different focus areas.

CHRISTY MCGILL (Deputy Superintendent, Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement, Nevada Department of Education):
What you see here is systems-based MTSS, kind of like an operating system on your computer. What you see in the individual bills, like for, let us say specific practices for dyslexia or something like that, is the practices themselves. Those

evidence-based practices usually come with curriculums, trainings, support, those kinds of things. That may be the differences that you are seeing between this ask and some of the other asks.

SENATOR NEAL:
I am trying to pull up that bill, but I know that there was some conversation around having to adjust the system because of what she was asking for. There was not just curriculum, it was more than that.

MS. MCGILL:
The University of Nevada, Reno, is directly receiving the MTSS here to work with each one of our districts on the implementation of MTSS at a systems level—looking at their data and making sure that they are doing school improvement and those kinds of things. I believe the fiscal note that you are talking about directly related to a practice, so that would have had separate training requirements and those kinds of things. I think it was related to dyslexia and so that piece is separate than this kind of ongoing MTSS support to our districts.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 571 and open the hearing on A.B. 573.

ASSEMBLY BILL 573 (1st Reprint): Makes an appropriation to the Department of Education to carry out the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant Program. (BDR S-1196)

MS. PETERSON:
Assembly Bill 573 appropriates $8.7 million to the Department of Education for the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant Program that was created by *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 391A.705. During the pandemic, this funding was provided through ESSER [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund under the American Rescue Plan Act] funds. This request extends funding for that program which focuses on providing financial support to students who are going through the traditional route to educator licensing.

PATRICIA CHARLTON (Chancellor, Administrative Services, Nevada System of Higher Education):
We urge your support of this legislation in support of teacher education and compensation assistance.

MR. BENAVIDES:
Ditto to that. We love IPT [Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching].

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 573, and we will go to A.B. 579.

ASSEMBLY BILL 579: Makes an appropriation to the Department of Education for the replacement of the information technology system for educator licensure. (BDR S-1220)

MS. PETERSON:
Assembly Bill 579 appropriates $1.4 million to the [Nevada] Department of Education (NDE) for the Educator Licensure budget account.

The Nevada Department of Education has undertaken an RFP to replace our aging teacher licensure system. Because this is a fee-funded account and the initial implementation costs of this new contract exceed the amount of funding available, this one-shot appropriation ensures the ability to implement that new system that is desperately needed to ensure teachers can be licensed in a timely and efficient manner.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
I will close the hearing on A.B. 579, and we will go to A.B. 562.

ASSEMBLY BILL 562 (1st Reprint): Makes appropriations to the Office of the Secretary of State for costs associated with the voter registration and elections management system and connectivity of automatic voter registration agencies. (BDR S-1180)

GABRIEL DI CHIARA (Chief Deputy, Office of the Secretary of State):
Assembly Bill 562 is the request from the Office of the Secretary of State for one-shot funding to complete phases two and three of the Voter Registration and Election Management Solution (VREMS) project that was first called for by A.B. No. 422 of the 81st Session.

When Secretary Aguilar came into office, VREMS was not on schedule to be completed by its statutorily mandated timeline. Thanks to hard work from dozens of dedicated staffers, the resources granted by the Legislature and elections administrators in each one of our counties, our office was able to

complete phase one of VREMS prior to the 2024 General Election. This is a far shorter timeline than other states, even states transitioning from top down to top-down systems, instead of the far more complicated, bottom up to top down transition that Nevada made.

In real terms, the system ensured Nevada's elections were more transparent, secure and accessible than ever before. For the first time, election offices across Nevada ran on the same software and used the same hardware. The Secretary of State staff was able to provide direct support to the counties who were administering our elections. The 2024 election was a successful election because of the investment that this Legislature made in our processes.

Phase two, which consists of merging the Clark and State instances of the total vote system, is underway and a successful mock election was completed earlier this month.

Phase three contains several important improvements to the system, like an updated voter portal that would make it easier than ever for voters to learn about upcoming elections, update their information and even complete important electoral tasks like curing their signatures.

One of the most important duties of any democracy is ensuring that citizens can easily and lawfully cast their ballot. Nevada has some of the most forward-thinking election laws in the country, and we have seen that translate to increased civic engagement. This past election, Nevada had some of the highest rates of youth voters in the country, for example, and we have seen incredible growth and turnout in tribal voters across the State.

The accessibility and data transparency of our elections can continue to grow, which would grow our democracy as a result. All of this is only possible with your support and investment. As a result, we ask that you please support A.B. 562.

EMILY PERSAUD-ZAMORA (Executive Director, Silver State Voices):
Today we are here in strong support.

KIMBERLY FERGUS:
I rise in strong opposition to A.B. 562. This bill is asking for $31.2 million more for the Secretary of State's voter registration election systems. In 2023, the bill

allocating the initial allocation for the VREMS phase one was $30 million. In 2025, A.B. 562 section 1, continued replacement of voter registration and management systems is $27,004,162. In section 2, consulting services for implementation is $748,800. In section 3, connectivity of automatic voter registration agencies is $3,487,364.

What I want to break it down to is, yesterday, [section 1 of] S.B. 488 for replacement of IT equipment was $460 million [$460,000], section 2 for voter education outreach was $1,462,864 and section 3 for voter identification was $26,000. So the total expenditures are going to be $80 million.

SENATE BILL 488: Makes appropriations to the Office of the Secretary of State for the replacement of certain equipment and certain costs related to elections. (BDR S-1178)

All I wanted to do is bring it to attention that this body said that the Secretary of State was facing a budget shortfall, and then I am just concerned as a taxpayer that we are writing another blank check. Please vote no on A.B. 562.

MR. DI CHIARA:
I would like to add that the Office of the Secretary of State reverted approximately $4.5 million back to the General Fund. We are trying our best to be good stewards of the State's money.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
I will close the hearing on A.B. 562, and I will open the hearing on A.B. 567.

ASSEMBLY BILL 567: Makes an appropriation to the Nevada System of Higher Education for safety and security equipment and enhancements. (BDR S-1199)

MS. CHARLTON:
Assembly Bill 567 appropriates a one-time allocation of $11 million from the State General Fund to enhance safety and security efforts across our Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions throughout the State.

In the wake of the tragic shooting on the UNLV campus in December 2023, as chancellor I formed an ad hoc Committee on Public Safety to take a hard look at how we protect our students, our faculty, staff and the community members

that visit our campuses. This group included campus leaders, safety professionals and other stakeholders both internal and external to NSHE. The committee conducted a thorough assessment and delivered a series of actionable recommendations to improve campus safety and security. While our overall request for safety and security needs was more substantial, we appreciate the Governor's decision to submit this one-shot appropriation as part of a budget amendment.

This funding, while partial, will still be very helpful in allowing our campuses to make meaningful progress on urgent systemwide needs. We have already made progress with some improvements being implemented using existing institutional resources and grants, but many needs remain unmet. Assembly Bill 567 provides a much needed, one-time investment to support systemwide implementation of these recommendations throughout our NSHE institutions. It ensures that every campus, regardless of size or location, can strengthen its safety infrastructure and be better prepared to prevent, respond to and recover from emergencies. I respectfully urge your support today of A.B. 567.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
You alluded to this; any institution deserves safety. If you were to get this funding, is this spread across the institutions? How does that work?

MS. CHARLTON:
As I mentioned, as chancellor I established an ad hoc Public Safety Committee to look at our needs across the system. In March 2025 we actually formalized that under a Public Safety Council which is chaired by both Chief James and Chief Vasquez. As the university police chiefs, they actually have jurisdiction and responsibility for every square foot on every campus, every location of NSHE; they will be primary in making recommendations on the highest priority needs that will meet the immediate best interest of safety throughout all of our campuses. Any of the funds will come to NSHE with recommendations coming through the Public Safety Council and through the board for finalization on those recommendations.

ERIC JAMES (Chief of Police, University Police Department, Northern Command, University of Nevada, Reno):
I speak in support of this bill. This money will allow us in a lot of places to fill in some of those gaps and holes that are necessary to help secure our students, faculty and staff on an ongoing basis. I absolutely support A.B. 567.

KENT ERVIN (Nevada Faculty Alliance):
This is a priority issue for us, please support.

ARNOLD VASQUEZ (Chief of Police, University Police Department, Southern Command, University of Nevada, Las Vegas):
I am in support of A.B. 567. The funding would provide important safety measures across our NSHE campuses, including strengthening access control, video surveillance and emergency communications. All these institutions are uniquely different and having this funding would be critical in helping us identify and meet those gaps as my colleague has mentioned.

DOUG UNGER (Nevada Faculty Alliance):
We implore you to please approve the one-shot funding allocated by A.B. 567 for needed infrastructure upgrades to support campus safety. Following the December 6, 2023, mass shooting at UNLV that murdered three faculty, two of whom I knew personally, those of us who worked on campus safety and served on the chancellor's ad hoc committee learned a lot. Active shooters assail a school, college or university somewhere in our nation with seasonal regularity. That such tragic violence on a NSHE campus might happen again feels like a matter of if, not when. Our schools are not yet as safe as they should be.

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas has done what it can. Reported expenditures are between $4 million and $5 million, but it is not enough. We need camera systems with a centralized monitoring; website and video upgrades; increased numbers of campus police; renovations to building and public spaces; and doors to classrooms that lock from the inside, so our teachers do not have to risk their lives as they did on December 6 when they stepped out into halls and swiped Marlock cards to lock doors behind them.

The $11 million in A.B. 567 is less than a third of the funding needed, but it is a solid start that can save lives. Please make campus safety a top priority and vote to approve A.B. 567.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 567, and we will open the hearing on A.B. 566.

ASSEMBLY BILL 566: Makes appropriations to and authorizes the expenditure of money by the Division of Museums and History of the Department of

Tourism and Cultural Affairs for certain vehicles, tools and repairs. (BDR S-1188)

DAN THIELEN (Administrator, Division of Museums and History, Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs):
This modest appropriation in A.B. 566 will cover equipment at two museums, [the Nevada State Railroad Museum] in Carson City and the [Nevada State Railroad Museum] in Boulder City. The appropriation will purchase a pickup truck, a utility vehicle and hand tools for the museum in Boulder City. In Carson City, the funding replaces a tractor, purchases a utility vehicle and repairs the electronic sign at the front of the [Railroad] Museum on Carson Street.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
You said the museum here in Carson City and the one in Boulder City.

MR. THIELEN:
That is correct.

VICE CHAIR NGUYEN:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 566 and will open the hearing on A.B. 544.

ASSEMBLY BILL 544 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to certain licenses issued by the Division of Public and Behavioral Health of the Department of Health and Human Services. (BDR 40-1118)

PAUL SCHUBERT (Chief, Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance, Division of Public and Behavioral Health, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services):
Assembly Bill 544 is an agency bill designed to change healthcare facility license renewal dates so that facilities will renew on anniversary dates according to the date on which the facility is licensed. It is a fairly simple bill, and with reprint 1, the bill only has two sections. Section 1 changes renewal dates, [section 2 was deleted] and section 3 makes the change effective January 1, 2026.

While the bill is simple, the impact is large. This bill will do two things. First, it will eventually spread renewals throughout the year, whereas right now, we receive a big bolus of renewals at the end of each year. Second, it allows initial licensees an entire year of licensure prior to renewal, whereas right now, initial

licensees only receive a partial year based on when they were initially licensed. There are no fiscal notes.

VICE CHAIR NGUYEN:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 544, and we will open the hearing on A.B. 560.

ASSEMBLY BILL 560 (1st Reprint): Makes a supplemental appropriation to the Division of Child and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services for an unanticipated shortfall related to the Rural Child Welfare budget account. (BDR S-1174)

KELSEY MCCANN-NAVARRO (Administrative Services Officer, Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services):
Assembly Bill 560 requests a supplemental appropriation in the amount of $444,325 for the Rural Child Welfare B/A 101-3229 to address unanticipated shortfalls in the personnel, travel, transportation and utilities categories.

HUMAN SERVICES

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

DHS-DCFS - Rural Child Welfare — Budget Page DHS-DCFS-38 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-3229

VICE CHAIR NGUYEN:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 560, and we will open the hearing on A.B. 577.

ASSEMBLY BILL 577: Makes appropriations to the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for a certain new website and database and for the replacement of vehicles and computer hardware and associated software. (BDR S-1215)

MR. ETCHEGOYHEN:
Assembly Bill 577 would make an appropriation to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Section 1 would appropriate $257,400 to the Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team for a new website and online database. Section 2 would appropriate $144,032 to the Nevada Conservation

Districts program for the replacement of vehicles per the replacement schedule. Section 3 would appropriate $129,539 to the Division of Water Resources for replacement of vehicles per the schedule. Section 4 would appropriate $15,953 to the Division of Water Resources for the replacement of computer hardware and software per the replacement schedule.

VICE CHAIR NGUYEN:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 577 and open the hearing on A.B. 578.

ASSEMBLY BILL 578: Makes appropriations to the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the replacement of computer and information technology equipment, vehicles and other equipment and for certain projects. (BDR S-1217)

MR. ETCHEGOYHEN:
Section 1 of A.B. 578 is $6 million for the Nevada Shared Stewardship Agreement program in the Division of Forestry of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. That is an incredibly important program. Section 2 is $67,279 for the replacement of computer [and information technology] equipment for the Division of Forestry per the replacement schedule. Section 3 is $2,048,082 for deferred maintenance and repair [in the Division of Forestry]. Section 4 is an appropriation of $2,592,156 for replacement of vehicles [for the Forestry Conservation Camps]. Section 5 is $932,918 for deferred maintenance and repairs in our camps. Section 7 for each year of the biennium is $111,690 for equipment replacement including chain saws, etcetera, [for Forestry Conservation Camps]. Section 8 is $19,270 in fiscal year (FY) 2025-2026 and $13,972 in FY 2026-2027 for computer replacement, per the state replacement schedule.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
I will close the hearing on A.B. 578 and will open the hearing on A.B. 590.

ASSEMBLY BILL 590: Makes appropriations to and authorizes the expenditure of money by the Office of the Military for certain projects, programs, equipment and contractual costs. (BDR S-1203)

DAN WATERS (Adjutant General, Nevada National Guard, Office of the Military):
We are here to discuss A.B. 590 as part of the Governor's budget.

CHERYL TYLER (Administrative Services Officer, Nevada National Guard, Office of the Military):
Section 1 and section 2 of A.B. 590 request one-shot General Fund appropriations and the corresponding federal funds authority for facilities maintenance projects and building asset replacements for the Nevada National Guard facilities throughout the State and for purchasing of facilities equipment. Section 3 is a one-shot appropriation to continue providing the Resiliency Program to service members of the Nevada National Guard. Section 4 is an appropriation for the payout for the State's remaining obligation to the Federal Government for the Carlin Readiness Center.

ANDREW LEPEILBET (State Chairman, United Veterans Legislative Council):
We want our military to have the proper maintenance, programs and materials in place. We support A.B. 590.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
I will close the hearing on A.B. 590 and will go to A.B. 569.

ASSEMBLY BILL 569: Makes appropriations to the Department of Veterans Services for certain vehicles and equipment. (BDR S-1192)

MS. GREENAMEYER:
Assembly Bill 569 provides a one-shot appropriation to the Department of Veterans Services for replacement vehicles and equipment. Section 1 appropriates $67,187 for replacement of utility vehicles and a truck at the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Section 2 appropriates $34,390 for replacement of a mower at the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Section 3 appropriates $120,000 for the replacement of security and safety equipment at the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Section 4 appropriates $194,935 for the replacement of a dump truck and the purchase of a tracked loader vehicle for the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Section 5 appropriates $4,622 for the costs of video conference equipment.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 569. We will now do a BDR [bill draft request] introduction.

WAYNE THORLEY (Senate Fiscal Analyst):
There is one bill draft request that requires committee introduction tonight. Bill Draft Request 18-1252 revises provisions relating to the Office of Nevada Boards, Commissions and Council Standards of the Department of Business and Industry.

BILL DRAFT REQUEST 18-1252: Revises provisions relating to governmental administration. (Later introduced as Senate Bill 507.)

This is a budget implementation bill requested by the money committees when they closed the budget for the Nevada Department of Business and Industry.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 18-1252.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will now go to work session.

MR. THORLEY:
The first bill on work session this evening is S.B. 85, which was heard earlier this morning. It revises provisions related to public safety. The bill was presented by Senator Scheible with support testimony from UNLV. There was no opposition or neutral testimony. There are no amendments presented or discussed at the bill hearing this morning.

There is one fiscal note from the Department of Public Safety, Highway Patrol Division for the cost of one position. However, this is an existing program, so the committees may wish to move the bill as is. If so, the appropriate action would be to do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS S.B. 85.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE. SENATORS BUCK AND STONE VOTED NO.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go to Senate Bill 135.

SENATE BILL 135: Makes an appropriation to Communities in Schools of Nevada to provide integrated student support services. (BDR S-13)

CATHY CROCKET (Chief Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst):
Senate Bill 135 was heard in committee on March 3, 2025. It makes a $4 million General Fund appropriation to Communities In Schools [of Nevada] to provide integrated support services. The bill was presented by Majority Leader Cannizzaro, accompanied by representatives of Communities In Schools. There were a number of comments in support, no comments in opposition or neutral. No amendments were discussed at the hearing.

There have been further discussions on this bill, and the committee may wish to consider a reduced General Fund appropriation of $1 million rather than the $4 million included in the current version of the bill. If the committee wishes to move the bill with the lower amount of money, the appropriate motion would be to amend and do pass as amended.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 135 WITH A REDUCED GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION OF $1 MILLION RATHER THAN THE $4 MILLION INCLUDED IN THE CURRENT VERSION OF THE BILL.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will do Senate Bill 260.

MR. THORLEY:
Senate Bill 260 heard this morning in this committee, revises provisions relating to air quality. It was presented by Senator Flores and Jackie Spicer with the Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition. There was an amendment discussed and presented this morning. That conceptual amendment, Exhibit C, was made available to all the members this morning and is available on NELIS.

There was discussion about the two remaining fiscal notes on the bill from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. After the committee recessed this morning, Fiscal staff did receive an updated fiscal note from the Department of Agriculture indicating, as they mentioned in their testimony, that they still anticipate a fiscal impact related to the bill.

There was testimony presented this morning that, based off the language in the bill, OSHA, which is in the Department of Business and Industry, Division of Industrial Relations, would have to adopt regulations. It is unknown at this time what those regulations might be. Therefore, it is unknown at this time what the cost might be to any state agency.

If the committee wishes to move this bill with the proposed conceptual amendment, Exhibit C, that was presented this morning, the appropriate action would be to amend and do pass as amended.

> SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 260 INCLUDING THE PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT.
>
> SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR BUCK:
Just to clarify that this morning when we heard the bill [the fiscal note] was $150,000 from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and then $256,000 from Department of Agriculture, but now it is unknown. Is that what I am understanding?

MR. THORLEY:
The fiscal notes that we have from the departments are as you stated. The departments have not submitted fiscal notes indicating that it is unknown to

them [what the fiscal impact will be]. Fiscal staff believes that the costs are unknown because the regulations have not been adopted.

SENATOR BUCK:
I will be a no today because it is a lot of unknown. It is unprecedented for us to do something before OSHA. There are a lot of unknowns when it comes to this. I think that we let the federal government work through their thing and OSHA work through their things before we vote yes on this.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE. SENATORS BUCK AND STONE VOTED NO.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go on to Senate Bill 318.

SENATE BILL 318 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to charter schools. (BDR 34-89)

MR. THORLEY:
Senate Bill 318 revises provisions relating to charter schools. It was heard on May 19, 2025, in this committee and was presented by Senator Skip Daly.

Testimony in support was provided by the Nevada State Education Association and the Washoe Education Association. Opposition testimony came from the Charter School Association of Nevada, the Elko Institute for Academic Achievement, a charter school in Elko, and a few others.

There was no amendment presented at the bill hearing, but there is a conceptual amendment (Exhibit D). This amendment would delete sections 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the bill. It would also amend section 4 by deleting the changes to subsection 2 of section 4. Section 10 would be retained in the bill with no changes. Essentially, the amendment would remove all the provisions related to Educational Management Organizations (EMOs). The amendment would retain the provisions that require a charter school to notify its sponsoring organization of any planned construction over $100,000 and provisions that make the charter school sponsoring organization responsible to

ensure that the provisions of NRS 338 are complied with by each charter school.

If the committee wishes to move S.B. 318 with the proposed amendment, Exhibit D, that I just described, the appropriate action would be to amend and do pass as amended.

> SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 318 WITH THE CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT.
>
> SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR BUCK:
It is kind of late in the game; all of a sudden, the whole bill is deleted and then certain sections are kept in regard to the construction. Whether you are an EMO or a CMO [charter management organization], those organizations all support the schools. I saw it as an attack on that, even though those sections were just recently deleted. I am still going to be a no though, because I still feel like it is an attack on charter [schools] in particular because charter [schools] do not have facility funds, and until they get facility funds, how do they make the math work to pay prevailing wage? It is just not—you are not able to do that. I will be a no today because of that.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
They have big, beautiful buildings. Some of them much newer than the ones that our public school kids are in.

> THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE. SENATORS BUCK AND STONE VOTED NO.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will now go on to Assembly Bill 544.

MS. CROCKET:
Assembly Bill 544 revises provisions relating to certain licenses issued by the Division of Public and Behavioral Health.

This is a budget implementation bill that aligns with the budget closing. The bill was presented by representatives of the Division of Public and Behavioral Health. There were no comments in support, opposition or neutral. No amendments were discussed. If the committee wishes to approve the bill, the appropriate motion would be to do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 544.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go on to Assembly Bill 560.

MS. CROCKET:
Assembly Bill 560 was heard in committee this morning. It makes a supplemental appropriation in the amount of $444,325 to the Division of Child and Family Services, Rural Child Welfare budget for unanticipated shortfalls in personnel, travel, transportation and utility costs.

The bill was presented by representatives of the Division of Child and Family Services. There were no comments in support, opposition or neutral. No amendments were presented. If the committee wishes to approve the bill, the motion would be to do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 560.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will move to Assembly Bill 562.

MR. THORLEY:
Assembly Bill 562 was heard this morning. It makes an appropriation to the Office of the Secretary of State for costs associated with the voter registration and election management system and connectivity of automatic voter registration agencies.

The bill was presented by the Chief Deputy Secretary of State. There was one testimony in support, one in opposition and no neutral testimony. There were no amendments. If the committee wishes to move this bill, the appropriate action would be do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 562.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will move on to Assembly Bill 563.

MS. CROCKET:
Assembly Bill 563 was heard in committee this morning. It makes an appropriation of $1.1 million to the Office of the State Controller for costs of consulting services.

The bill was presented by the State Controller and the Chief Deputy Controller. There we are no comments in support, opposition or neutral, and no amendments were presented. If the committee wishes to approve the bill, the appropriate motion would be to do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 563.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will move on to Assembly Bill 564.

MR. THORLEY:
Assembly Bill 564 was heard this morning in committee. It makes an appropriation to the Fleet Services Division of the Department of Administration for the replacement and purchase of vehicles. The bill was presented by Robbie Burgess, the administrator of the Fleet Services Division. There was no testimony in support, opposition or neutral. There were no amendments. If the committee wishes to move this bill, the appropriate action would be do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 564.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go on to Assembly Bill 565.

MR. THORLEY:
Assembly Bill 565 was heard this morning in committee. It makes an appropriation to the Supreme Court of Nevada for the cost of the implementation of a statewide trial court electronic filing system. The bill was presented by John McCormick, Assistant Court Administrator. There was no testimony in support, opposition or neutral. No amendments presented. If the committee wishes to move this bill, the appropriate action would be do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 565.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go to Assembly Bill 566.

MS. CROCKET:
Assembly Bill 566 was heard this morning. It appropriates General Fund monies of approximately $75,000 to the Museums and History Division. It authorizes funding to provide support for various projects within Nevada State Museums. The bill was presented by the administrator of the division. There were no comments in support, opposition or neutral. No amendments were presented. If the committee wishes to approve the bill, the appropriate motion would be to do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 566.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go to Assembly Bill 569.

MR. THORLEY:
Assembly Bill 569 was heard this morning in committee and presented by Tiffany Greenameyer, the director of the Governor's Finance Office (GFO). The bill makes an appropriation to the Department of Veterans Services for certain vehicles and equipment. There was no testimony in support, opposition or neutral. There were no amendments. If the committee wishes to move this bill, the appropriate motion would be do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 569.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go to Assembly Bill 573.

MS. CROCKET:
Assembly Bill 573 was heard this morning. It makes a General Fund appropriation of $8.7 million to the Department of Education to fund the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant Program. The bill was presented by NDE. There were two comments in support, no comments in opposition or neutral. No amendments were discussed. If the committee wishes to move the bill, the appropriate motion would be to do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 573.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go on to Assembly Bill 577.

MR. THORLEY:
Assembly Bill 577 was heard this morning in committee and was presented by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The bill makes an appropriation to the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for a certain new website [and] database and for the replacement of vehicles, computer hardware and associated software. There was no testimony in support, opposition or neutral. There are no amendments. If the committee wishes to move this bill, the appropriate action would be do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 577.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go on to Assembly Bill 578.

MS. CROCKET:
Assembly Bill 578 was heard this morning. It makes various general fund appropriations to the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Forestry Division for the replacement of various IT equipment, vehicles and other equipment and for certain projects. General Fund appropriations total approximately $12 million. The bill was presented by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. There were no comments in support, opposition or neutral, and no amendments were presented. If the committee wishes to approve the bill, the motion would be to do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 578.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
The next bill we will do will be Assembly Bill 579.

MR. THORLEY:
Assembly Bill 579 was heard this morning in committee and presented by Deputy Superintendent Megan Peterson with the Department of Education. The bill makes an appropriation to the Department of Education for the replacement of the information technology system for educator licensure. There was no

testimony in support, opposition or neutral. There are no amendments. If the committee wishes to move this bill, the appropriate motion would be do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 579.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will move on to Assembly Bill 590.

MS. CROCKET:
Assembly Bill 590 was heard this morning. It makes General Fund appropriations and authorizes expenditures of money by the Office of the Military for certain projects, programs, equipment and contract costs. The bill contains approximately $6.9 million in General Fund appropriations as well as various authorized funding. The bill was presented by the Adjutant General. There was one comment in support, no comments in opposition or neutral and no amendments were presented. If the committee wishes to approve the bill, the appropriate motion would be to do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 590.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We are going to hear Assembly Bill 398.

ASSEMBLY BILL 398 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing compensation for certain employees of public schools. (BDR 34-189)

ASSEMBLYMEMBER STEVE YEAGER (Assembly District No. 9):
I am thankful that you are allowing me to present Assembly Bill 398 in its first reprint to you this evening.

With me at the table is John Vellardita, Executive Director of the Clark County Education Association (CCEA). After I tell you about the motivation behind the bill and what we are trying to achieve, I will hand it over to him to share the data underpinning this concept, or at least one of the concepts in the bill, and why we believe it is going to make a significant difference in filling our teacher vacancies.

Assembly Bill 398 is a bill that directly addresses one of the most significant and crucial challenges facing our schools, teacher shortages and hard to fill positions. We know that too many of our schools and critical subject areas are struggling to attract and retain talented teachers. This bill provides a targeted solution by offering additional compensation to the educators who step up to teach where they are needed most in some of the most challenging environments. We know having a qualified educator in every classroom is crucial to educational achievement. Without that, we may never achieve the results we all desire and expect.

Let me take you through the mechanics of the bill. First, to the extent money is appropriated, the bill provides a mechanism for NDE to provide money to school districts, to provide additional funding for hard-to-fill positions. The bill provides a definition of hard-to-fill positions on page 3, line 41 through page 4, line 16.

For this biennium, the program would be run through the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) and would then go to NDE for distribution to the school districts. Going forward, the school districts would need to report to IFC and to the GFO the number of hard-to-fill positions by December 1 of each year and the amount of money which the district would be seeking to provide for such positions. Money would be distributed when a hard-to-fill position is filled. It would be subject to collective bargaining. Any money not spent would revert to the General Fund. This would be one-time funding, but there is a requirement that the Governor include an appropriation for this program, to the extent practicable, in each fiscal year in the future. For this coming biennium, this program would be funded at the rate of $45 million each fiscal year, for a total of $90 million. This would be a General Fund appropriation as detailed in the bill.

Back to the $90 million dollars, this is the best estimate of how much money it would take to provide roughly $5,000 of additional pay for hard-to-fill positions statewide. This is based on a recent snapshot for the Clark County School District (CCSD) that showed 5,250 hard-to-fill Title I [Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965] positions and 1,905 special education vacancies, for a total of right around 7,100 vacancies. At $5,000 [per vacancy] each fiscal year, this amounts to a total of about $71.5 million for the biennium. We then multiplied that number by 1.25, to approximate the cost for the rest of the State, and that got us to the $90 million, broken into $45 million each fiscal year [of the biennium].

I have made the decision not to include charter schools or education support professionals within the parameters of this portion of the bill when it comes to hard-to-fill positions. Were our financial situation better, I might have made a different decision. A future legislature can of course, always decide to include them, but I did not think it would be fiscally responsible for me to include them now. I don't want to spread the funding too thin so that it does not work. Now, you may hear some opposition because of that, but hopefully we are in a situation where we have folks opposing a bill simply because they are not included in it, especially since they may be in the future.

Finally, as this committee is well aware, both the Senate Majority Leader and I have committed to work on the issue of increasing charter school pay. Thus, this bill creates a process through IFC, similar to what we did with S.B. No. 231 of the 82nd Session from last session, to provide for pay raises for charter schoolteachers and education support professionals. The amount of that appropriation in the bill is nearly $39 million, which aligns with the best data we have to ensure that there is adequate funding to provide raises equivalent to what we are able to do for traditional public schools—approximately $6,500 per educator or education support professional last session. That data was provided by our Fiscal staff and so those numbers come directly from the closing reports that we had for the education budget.

I believe going through the IFC process is important because it will ensure transparency and accountability—the same that we asked from our traditional public schools, before providing this funding. So chair, with your permission, I would like to hand this over to Mr. Vellardita from the CCEA, to tell you about the hard-to-fill positions concept in this bill, what it means in the real world and why we believe it will be effective.

JOHN VELLARDITA (Executive Director, Clark County Education Association):
So first, I just want to put this into context. There is a lot of discussion, and rightfully so, about how do we improve outcomes and have higher standards of accountability in these schools, particularly the public schools. What we have shown, and what we will share with you tonight is, there's a real correlation with outcomes as to whether or not there's a teacher in a classroom.

For example, there are roughly over 220 Title I schools in the CCSD; 115 of those schools are systemically underperforming schools that are one star and two star, and [they] rank in the bottom quartile of proficiency levels in reading and math. In Clark County, 92 percent of all the vacancies are in those schools. This means there is not a teacher in a classroom.

In 2023, we started and ended the school year with over 30,000 students that did not have a full-time qualified educator in the classroom. So what did we do about this? This has been an issue that we have been trying to address for some time; this was not all of a sudden. We are not trying to make a change based on no evidence or factual data. We had been experiencing this for years. For years, these schools have had systemically high vacancies and been systemically underperforming.

We did not use dollars from S.B. No. 231 of the 82nd Session, the bill that was moved by the Majority Leader, for baseline increases for all 18,000 salaried educators in Clark County. We used it specifically for something like this. We earmarked money to try to say, if a school has 5 percent vacancies and they are a Title I school, let us give them a $5,000 incentive on their base pay, not a bonus—but on their base pay, and see if we can recruit and retain educators.

In addition, we said for our other area of high vacancies—our most vulnerable population—our special needs students, let's put $5,000 on their base pay to recruit, as well as retain, special education teachers. So what were the results of that? We had a finite bucket of money to work with, and so we tried to project $5,000. Will it attract people, and will it retain people?

Here are the results. In 2023, at the start of the school year, after your legislative session, after you passed all this money and you passed S.B. No. 231 of the 82nd Session, there was close to 1,400 vacancies in CCSD. All of these numbers are in these Title I schools that I am talking about. By the time we

moved the $5,000, that number was reduced to a little over 600. There was a 53 percent reduction in vacancies as a result.

Special education was even better. At the start of that school year, we had 310 open vacancies and by the end of that, or I should say by May of that school year, because that is when we took a snapshot, we only had 51 vacancies left. We had an 84 percent reduction in vacancies in special education. The point is, this application of money on the base pay, for educators to either stay in those positions or go to those positions, had a direct impact.

What were the conditions under which an educator would receive this money? One, they had to remain in that school, or if they are special education they had to retain being a special education educator. Now, these positions weren't just exclusively for classroom teachers. We recognize that there were also other licensed professionals that spent the majority of their time related to the classroom; they received that additional $5,000. In special education, we had self-contained and non-self-contained educators that would receive this.

So at the end, what we found was over 11,000 educators in Title I schools were eligible for this, and over 3,500 special education teachers were entitled to this. Over 14,000 educators were entitled to this and received $5,000. Teachers who were special education teachers and who also went into a Title I school, received $5,000 twice, [once for their] special education, and [once for their] Title I [status, totaling] $10,000.

That money ran out in March and April of this year, but it had an effect. For us, as an organization to address within our ranks, that says we have to recognize that there are differences in these classrooms, different challenges, and so therefore compensation should be different because of those challenges. Our organization's membership supported that position moving forward, and that is how we applied S.B. No. 231 of the 82nd Session.

The results outside of the vacancies being reduced, what we're going to see if we're able to maintain it, I go back to how I started this. There is a correlation to low proficiencies and not having an educator in a classroom. The more we put educators in these classrooms, particularly in these Title I schools, the more we are going to have an opportunity to try to raise proficiency levels where

these kids have a chance to learn. Is that the only solution? Absolutely not, it is not the only solution, but this is the first time we have done this.

We very much acknowledge the fact that the Majority Leader and the rest of the Legislature passed S.B. No. 231 of the 82nd Session, and we did not use it just for bonus payments for people or just spread it out to all 18,000 educators. We were very surgical and very prescriptive in this application for the reasons that I said. What's before you in this bill is we have upped the level, the threshold of opportunity. It is not just 5 percent universal now in elementary, middle and high school. It is 10 percent, 12 percent and 15 percent. And why is that? That targets the most needy schools that have the highest vacancies, with the limited amount of money that is being proposed in this legislation.

If this is passed, we hope to be able to show in the next legislative session, not just that we are on the road of continuing to reduce the vacancies, but we would then have had three successive years in these schools that are underperforming or systemically have been underperforming—three successive years. Madam Chair as an educator, you know this, and Senator Buck, you know this, you do need that amount of time to determine whether or not there is real growth in terms of a student's education.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER YEAGER:
That concludes the presentation on the bill. We want to be respectful of your time but are happy to answer any questions that you or the committee members may have.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Thank you very much, and thanks for getting on the pulpit. It's an important subject. You do not have to use school names, but can you give us an example of what sort of that school might look like, and why it would be 10 percent, 12 percent or 15 percent.

MR. VELLARDITA:
The pages of our presentation (Exhibit E) are not numbered, so it is like page 9; that shows you schools. The title on [the page] is 53 Percent Vacancy Reduction. We are highlighting three categories: elementary, middle and high school, and we are specifically targeting one star and two star [schools] in those categories. In one column for the 2023-2024 school year, you will see their vacancies. Then in the next column you will see how they were reduced

with the $5,000 application for this past school year. These are the schools [that] made incredible gains, but, at the same time, still have vacancies. So they would then probably meet that threshold of whether it is 10, 12 or 15 [percent]. That's what I mean by surgical; we haven't turned the corner.

Here is the one exception, Western High School. If anybody knows anything about Western High School in Clark County, that's a very tough and challenging school. It is urban core, a lot of working-class kids. At the start of the 2023-2024 school year, Western High School had 24 vacancies. By the time we took the snapshot in May of 2024, they had one vacancy. The principal there, Antonio Rael, and I had a conversation. He told me that $5,000 made a difference. He asked what happens when that goes away? Do I have an exit? And that is part of the challenge that we face, trying to make this program sustainable moving forward.

So, I hope that answers your question in terms of why we are focusing on 10, 12, and 15 [percent]. First, it is the pot of money that we are working with; we do not have enough money for 14,000 people anymore. So surgically we go at where still there's high vacancy.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
That helps looking at the schools and understanding where they are at, and I agree with you, [that] is what is important. Mr. Rael is a wonderful principal, and that helps as well. I have taught at a couple of these schools, so I also get the dynamics in those.

SENATOR BUCK:
Thank you for including public charter schoolteacher raises in the bill. I was with the district for 18 years, and as you saw in these Title I schools, the experienced, awesome teachers would flock to suburbia leaving them [the Title I schools] without teachers. So I love the solution. Actually, I think it is genius.

It is a little disappointing that charter schools are left out again. So I am just wondering, because there's only a few Title I charter schools, if you would even just consider a surgical, including just Title I schools. Because right down from Western High school is Mater Academy, right outside your district, Speaker Yeager. So that way we could prove this in inner city Las Vegas where, yes, we need excellent teachers in all schools.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER YEAGER:
I appreciate the question. I think we are just at a point financially where I am not comfortable recommending that in the bill. I understand the concern. I have had conversations with the charter schools about that as well, but as I noted, my hope would be we come back in the next legislative session and, hopefully, we are in a little bit better financial position. To the extent that we are going to have an opportunity to really prove this concept, I think at that point, it would be up to whoever is here in these seats. It really would be up to the governor as well, because there is a mandate that he would require the recommended funding in his budget to the extent practicable. So I do not think I am comfortable doing that at this time, but it is something we could look at going forward.

SENATOR TAYLOR:
What a really innovative way to think about this. We can't get all 14,000 teachers, but what can we do now across the State? So thank you for that. I have just a couple of questions. You mentioned it was not just the full-time classroom teachers but other licensed professionals who were assisted, and they are part of what you did after the last session. Are they included in A.B. 398 as well?

MR. VELLARDITA:
The definition of teacher is in there. If they spend over 50 percent of their time assisting in the classroom, whether [or not] they are in the classroom, they then would be eligible.

SENATOR TAYLOR:
Clearly the results speak for themselves. Do you know of any other place in the State, or any other district, that took this approach to kind of pilot this as well?

MR. VELLARDITA:
No, I do not.

SENATOR NYUGEN:
Thank you for this information and this PowerPoint, Exhibit E. I see several schools, including Western High School and Cashman Middle School, that are both in my district. [Looking at] some of these numbers, a 25-teacher vacancy down to 9 is just so significant. I know that time and time again, we hear that the key to having more success in the classroom is having those licensed

educators in the classroom. So I really commend your ability to take a limited pot of money and have an impactful change within our education system.

With that being said, I don't really have any questions. I look forward to seeing what kind of actual results occur. I know we will see this in student achievement because, like I said, I know that the key to student achievement is having those licensed teachers and educators in those classrooms. I can't wait to see that. Hopefully, we will be able to expand this so we can cover all 14,000 teachers.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
One of the observations I had is, when I look at these schools, they are all around Clark County; they are not just in one area. I think there is a misnomer that all schools that are Title I schools are in one area. I was just telling somebody the other day, a school that I am familiar with, Harvey Dondero [Elementary School], which is off the corner of Tropicana Avenue and Jones Boulevard is a Title I school. It is off Tropicana Avenue and Jones Boulevard; it's not off Washington Avenue and Eastern Avenue or wherever. These schools represent the county as a whole, and that is what I think is important.

The other thing that is important is that a school like Silvestri Junior High School is very close to Gehring Elementary School. Gehring is a five star school, a very blue ribbon school, and we have Silvestri Junior High, not very far away, that is a Title I school. So, I think it is important to understand that having teachers in schools is important because a blue ribbon school probably has every one of their classrooms filled, and Silvestri for example, obviously has 15 vacancies, or had 15 and is down now to 5. I think that tells part of the story as well.

Speaker Yeager, when you were talking right at the beginning you had some numbers of teachers. Can you give us those numbers again in your testimony?

ASSEMBLYMEMBER YEAGER:
We could provide this information. I did not provide it for the record, but I had asked Mr. Vellardita, when we were considering this concept if he could give me a rough number of how many positions this would encompass to help figure out what the appropriate funding level was. This was a snapshot in time in the CCSD, maybe about 30 to 45 days ago. In the hard-to-fill Title I positions, the number of vacancies was 5,250. Then when we moved over to the special

education vacancies, which is a part of the bill, that was a total of 1,905 special education vacancies that would be hard to fill. So the total vacancy number at that snapshot was 7,110 [7,155].

When Mr. Vellardita talked about the program that they used the S.B. No. 231 of the 82nd Session money for, it was about $5,000. So we simply did a multiplication of 7,000 times $5,000, and that came out to about $71.6 million for the biennium, and that would be just for Clark School District. We did not have this information for all 17 school districts, but I basically did a multiplier of 1.25 thinking that would probably cover the rest of the State by increasing that about 25 percent. So that is how we got to the $90 million.

Of course that is a snapshot in time and the way the bill is structured. This appropriation will be made to IFC and then there are some reporting dates in the bill that actually are very soon—just a couple of weeks from now—where we would get this information from all the districts to be able to figure out how many positions are there. Then at IFC, we'd be able to figure out how we want to divide that money up among the school districts. Our hope is it would be right around $5,000. We can verify that math and should the bill pass, and be funded, we'll have a chance to verify that. I believe chair, you will be the chair of IFC at that point, so we will have a chance to see if the math works out or not.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Thank you very much. I appreciate those numbers.

SENATOR NEAL:
Looking at the slide, Exhibit E, where it says, "Differential Pay Produced Results" and then in the bill, is there any data that we are also going to collect related to whether or not there's actually been an improvement in academic achievement because those vacancies were filled in Title I schools?

MR. VELLARDITA:
We are tracking it, and it also has to be tracked, obviously, by the employer, the school district. But what I said before, in terms of if this program is extended another two years, we would then have this current year and two more school years to determine growth. Right? Growth and proficiency levels, that is really how you kind of measure. That kind of time frame gives you a better benchmark as to whether or not there's been progress. The X factor in all of that is, was

there a classroom and a teacher throughout that entire time for that student population that would be affected?

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:
I appreciate this bill. We had many conversations about S.B. No. 231 of the 82nd Session and whether or not if we were able to facilitate raises for teachers would that assist in vacancies? Would that assist in being able to either fill those vacancies or to retain current teachers? And I think one of the things that members of this committee have heard me say in IFC, in the education accountability subcommittee and in this committee, is that I think we answered that hypothesis with yes. I think with being able to disperse funds and to demonstrate it, not just in the very particular case where we saw exceptional results with these hard-to-fill positions, but sort of across the State.

In all seventeen school districts, or all the districts that came to us in IFC to request some additional funds, where those funds were met with the district's monies, there was a decrease fundamentally in vacancies and in retention—keeping those teachers in our classrooms and educating our students. I obviously am supportive of the policy to fill these seats because they are tough to fill and because I do think you need very dedicated educators, which I know we have, and being able to compensate them for the job that they do is important.

I just always like an opportunity to kind of illustrate that when we invest in education, we get real results, and those results are not just that a teacher stayed in a job or that we kept somebody employed; those results are that when every single one of those kids sat down in that classroom, they had someone in front of them who was teaching them. And someone that is making a difference in their educational journey and giving them an opportunity to succeed. So I think it is a real demonstration of what this body can do in a very positive way, when we think about different ways to enact policy in a new fashion to deliver for students. I believe that by investing in this particular policy, we certainly will see increased retention and vacancy filling by being able to address some of those things. I love talking about this from a policy standpoint just because we have been able to kind of watch it work.

I think along those same lines, and I know Speaker Yeager has been there for many long conversations about charter school raises, which obviously, I think this committee, this body, the Assembly, and certainly, the Speaker, has been

committed to ensuring that we talked about charter school raises and making sure that we had some accurate data. Certainly, it is not included in the budgeting process because I think, again, we want to be able to see that this is actually working and to be able to allocate those monies appropriately.

This is an important piece of this as we go into this next biennium, should A.B. 398 ultimately pass and get signed. But this is something that I think you are again seeing a commitment from this body, and certainly from leadership, to invest in charter school raises for teachers and for staff. Because again, I think the important piece of this is, when you do invest in those folks, it is not just keeping a job, it is giving everybody an opportunity.

I appreciate the Speaker having an additional bill that shows that we are committed to charter school raises. Obviously, there's legislation in this House that also was intended to ensure that there were multiple vehicles so that this would get done. To demonstrate that commitment, to show that just because something did not pass in a K-12 budget bill because of how it is that we budget things in the money committees, there are additional pieces of legislation that can go to fund important things in education in a variety of other places that we can pass independent of that to ensure and deliver on that promise.

I want to just thank you for including that in this bill, as part of that recognition that we can do both of those things, and that there are ways in which we can say yes, we are going to do raises for these additional charter schools. Yes, we can also pass a K-12 budget that demonstrates all the different parameters that fall within that and hopefully of course, that this would then be able to be incorporated once we are able to ensure that this money for raises actually goes to teachers and to students, rather than flowing it through a model or increasing a per-pupil funding where you just don't know if that money ultimately makes it to a teacher.

Mostly that was a comment, a lengthy one I know, but obviously a topic that is important and known to the Speaker, certainly to myself and, hopefully, to the members of this body. So thank you, Madam Chair, for allowing me the time to just sort of say thank you.

SENATOR STONE:
On the slide, Exhibit E, Systemically Underperforming, 97 percent of chronically underperforming schools were Title I without a teacher. Can you just elaborate

on that a little bit? Is the incentive that is going to be coming with this program going to be enough to fill a majority, if not all, of those spots?

MR. VELLARDITA:
It will not be enough money to fill all those spots, you know, given the fiscal limitation. But what we're trying to do is go to where the greatest need is, and that is why we increase the threshold levels to 10, 12 and 15 percent.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
I had a question that came to me after Senator Neal's question about what you are doing to track these schools. I turned over to my trusty expert here to my right, our chair, about all things educational, and she kind of answered it for me, but I think it is probably good to put it on the record. I think you had kind of alluded to it. When you are collecting information on whether or not the student outcomes are being positively affected by this policy change in providing these bonuses and base pay increases, would you be able to do this with two years of data? Is there any data point where you are really going to see that? Is it after three years? Is it after five years? I know our chair has mentioned that you can look at three years, but probably six years is a better indication of how you are seeing that progress. Is there any number that you guys are using internally in gauging this information so when we come back here, we'll know kind of what you are looking at?

MR. VELLARDITA:
Senator Nyugen, you are right, and the chair is right most of the time. So that really has to go in partnership with CCSD. We've had discussions with the new superintendent, Jhone Ebert. I am not going to represent what she feels about it, but I can tell you, in our conversations, she knows that this program makes a difference in the long run. She will be monitoring the results of a qualified educator in a classroom that has systemically underperformed because there has been no teacher in the classroom. There are metrics; there are benchmarks to do that, but I am not going to represent that. I am not the employer; the school district is.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER YEAGER:
This kind of goes to Senator Neal's question. I forgot to mention a part of the bill that is easy to overlook, and that is section 8.3 of the bill on page 10. I think the committee members here know that is the Subcommittee on Education Accountability of the IFC that gets to meet and talk to any of the 17 school

districts as well as the Charter School Association. You'll see there at the bottom that I added something that the IFC subcommittee can examine. I will just read that from line 38, "The compensation paid to teachers at public schools to determine whether such compensation is sufficient to ensure competitiveness with other states and optimal educational achievements and outcome for pupils."

The reason I put that there partly goes to those questions. Of course the school districts have a lot of data; they report a lot of data; you can get lost in the dashboards online. I want to have the Legislature have the ability to ask these questions. The IFC may be able to look at the positions, but I want this subcommittee, if they choose, to be able to ask the districts, "How did you use this money? How many positions? Do we see long-term educational achievement?" So that's the reason I put that here, is so that the Legislature, at least the subcommittee, would have the ability to ask those questions and that we do not have to rely on data that is necessarily collected by the school districts.

I wanted to point that out, because I think that does give us the chance, or whoever is going to serve on that committee in the future, to look at this program and not just look if it is working now, but how could we make it better. Should the compensation be more? Should it be extended to charter schools? This is, I think, the legislative piece of this when it comes to accountability.

I will just note we talked about it a lot, but this needs to be a long-term investment. We did some great things last legislative session, but I don't think it is realistic to think we're going to be here two years later, and every school is going to turn things around. This has to be a long-term commitment, and I think this will allow us to track that.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
When we had a little sidebar here, I said five or six years. The reason I said that is because, if a child has a consistent teacher in the classroom in an elementary school, they go to middle school and high school prepared. Right? If a child came to Nevada or didn't have that and then had some consistency maybe in middle school and the first two years of high school, I feel like that has provided them some consistency to move forward in that piece. That is why I always feel like it is not just this little three-year stint.

We think of elementary school as [grades] K through 3 and then maybe 4, 5 or 4, 5, 6, depending on where that school lies. I really think we kind of need this five years and that is why it is important for us to, if you will, stick with a program. It is so easy and especially in a legislature, where we meet and then we don't and we meet and then we don't. It's so easy if something does not work after two years to throw the baby out with the bathwater. We do that really well in education with materials, teachers, kids. I don't care what it is, we just sort of move on and I think we need to stop moving on.

I think we need to have some real commitment to what we're doing and know that when we do this, we're going to stick with it. We're going to stick with it because we can't go backwards and, by the way, there's no way for us to go backwards; we can only go forwards. I say that as someone who loved, loved, loved teaching. I mean, when people say to me, would you go back now knowing what you know? I would go back in a heartbeat, because kids need us. That's exactly who kids need. So we need to stick to this for the kids. That's who we are sticking to it for. That's my soapbox, Mr. Vellardita.

MARIE NEISESS (President, Clark County Education Association):
This is my thirty-second year in CCSD, and my entire career has been dedicated to working in Title I schools. I have seen firsthand the detrimental effects of high teacher vacancies on a child's education. On more than one occasion, third-grade students I once taught had a revolving door of substitutes from kindergarten through second grade. I was the first licensed teacher many of them had ever had. Sadly, this is not an isolated case. This is the reality in too many of our urban core schools.

This crisis affects not only general education students, high teacher vacancies also disproportionately impact our special education students. As CCEA president, I often hear from educators working in high-needs schools. They're stretched thin, constantly stepping in to support classrooms without a licensed teacher. This is unsustainable, and it is unfair to our students and educators.

I am here to emphasize that we will continue to struggle with low proficiency rates in reading, math and science without persistent progress in placing qualified teachers in our most underserved classrooms. In 2023, we addressed this; you addressed this, by recognizing the need to pay teachers more. The S.B. No. 231 of the 82nd Session investment had a significant impact on retention and recruitment in Title I schools and on special education positions.

However, that funding has ended. We must maintain and expand the support if we are to continue making progress.

More than 7,000 CCSD educators signed a CCEA petition calling for the continuation of funding established during the last legislative session. We cannot afford to lose the momentum we've gained. If we are genuinely committed to delivering a high-quality education for all students, we must invest in the teachers who make that possible. Assembly Bill 398 continues the vital work by providing targeted compensation to help recruit and retain licensed teachers in hard-to-fill roles. I thank Speaker Yeager for bringing A.B. 398 forward. I urge you to support A.B. 398.

MR. CLARK:
I am calling in on behalf of the Nevada Association of School Boards. I have also been given authorization to support A.B. 398 on behalf of the Nevada Association of School Superintendents. We are very much appreciative of the work that has gone into this bill. We love that it is statewide. We love that it is going to benefit the students and the schools that really need it and bring teachers on board that we really need.

GIL LOPEZ (Charter School Association of Nevada):
The Charter School Association of Nevada is in support of A.B. 398. We want to thank the Speaker for bringing it forward and also Mr. Vellardita for the work on the bill. We do appreciate charter schools being included in raises and look forward to conversations around hard-to-fill positions.

SARAH ADLER (Coalition of Independent Public Charter Schools of Northern Nevada):
I have to say that of the public charter schools that I represent in Northern Nevada, three of the six are Title I. We 100 percent commend CCEA for the way that they utilized S.B. No. 231 of the 82nd Session funds and for their continuation of this targeted, game-changing work with A.B. 398. We also deeply appreciate Speaker Yeager's amendment to the bill to bring in charter salary equity. We could listen to wonky leadership comments from the Majority Leader, from you Madam Chair, from John Vellardita and Speaker Yeager all night long. This is terrific policy that is really going to help all of the children in our State, and we thank you very much for it.

ALEXANDER MARKS (Nevada State Education Association):
While this bill is a step in the right direction, it unfortunately and deliberately excludes other critical educators. Through our Time for 20 [and] Red for Ed campaigns, NSEA has been a consistent leader on educator compensation; for anyone to suggest otherwise ignores the depth and consistency of the work we have done and undermines the urgency of this statewide issue. We would urge just all elected officials to approach this conversation with thoughtfulness and respect and avoid rhetoric that seeks to divide unions and marginalize the voice of educators.

We would love to support this bill, and since its introduction, we have engaged in good faith offering amendments, trying to hold meetings. Our amendment is rooted simply in fairness. Our amendment is about expanding to all educators in hard-to-fill positions including education support professionals (ESPs) and other licensed professionals.

These are educators who serve on the front lines of our schools, often in the most challenging environments. These are special education aides, parapros [paraprofessionals] and Title I school bus drivers, many of whom face the most persistent and severe staffing shortages, and they are left out of this bill today. Some of these ESPs spent their workday diapering students; being spit on; scratched and hit; and that is just a Wednesday. These are the folks being excluded from the very support this legislation seeks to provide. While these roles remain vacant or unsupported, the impact is felt across the school. Shortages in these roles make it harder to recruit and retain classroom teachers, compounding the very crisis this bill is trying to address. And what is particularly disheartening is the presentation did not include the cost to expand the support to ESPs.

With $90 million on the table, why not provide a number on what it would be to include everyone? Without that information, the message to our hardworking ESPs and OLPs [other licensed professionals] is, essentially, you are not worth it. Try again in two years, if you still work for a district. That message is almost as demoralizing as the $2 budget increase we saw this year. This decision that will be a de facto education cut and risks undoing much of the progress we fought for in the last two years.

Every single role matters when we're supporting our students and keeping our schools strong. Nevada State Education Association fights, not just for our

members, but for the entire public education system. That's the work of a real union. We do not leave folks behind. Solidarity forever includes all 120 days. Please amend this bill to reflect the full breadth of hard-to-fill education roles. The resources exist and the need is clear.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
I will close the hearing on A.B. 398. We are going to work session the bill that we just heard, A.B. 398. So with that, I will turn it over to Mr. Thorley and let him give us some instructions.

MR. THORLEY:
Assembly Bill 398 was just presented by Speaker Yeager and John Vellardita with CCEA. There was testimony in support from the CCEA, Nevada Association of School Boards, Nevada Association of School Superintendents, Charter School Association of Nevada and the Coalition of Independent Public Charter Schools of Northern Nevada. Opposition testimony was given by NSEA and there was no neutral testimony. No amendments to the bill [were] presented or discussed. If the committee wishes to move this bill, the appropriate action would be do pass.

SENATOR NGUYEN MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 398.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR TITUS:
From what I can understand and listening via the phone app, which actually is not too bad, I am going to vote yes to get this bill out of the committee. I think it is a work in progress. There has been a lot of discussion regarding multiple bills in this session for education, and we are going to support this and get it out of the committee.

SENATOR BUCK:
Again, I am going to vote yes today. I am grateful that we showed salary equity with the raises, the public charter schoolteacher raises. However, I think there's still work to be done. If we are going to give extra dollars to Title I schools in the traditional public [schools], we should give to Title I schools in charter school public. Again, [give] additional dollars for those hard-to-fill positions because there can be schools right next to each other: one charter, one magnet

and one traditional, and all may have hard-to-fill positions. They should be treated with equity.

So I will be a yes today, and I am grateful again to the bill sponsor and to the presenter. I think just looking, every child deserves to have a qualified and excellent teacher in the classroom and especially in center Las Vegas. I like that this is moving toward that, but I think we need it across the board.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR NEAL WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

Remainder of page intentionally left blank; signature page to follow.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will go to public comment. Hearing none, we are adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Marie Bell,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair

DATE:

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	**Exhibit Letter**	**Introduced on Minute Report Page No.**	**Witness / Entity**	**Description**
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
S.B. 260	C	9	Jackie Spicer / Nevada Environmental Coalition	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 318	D	38	Wayne Thorley / Legislative Counsel Bureau	Conceptual Amendment
A.B. 398	E	51	John Vellardita / Clark County Education Association	Prescriptive Funding for Hard to Fill and High Vacancy Schools