

**COMMENTS FROM CHRIS DALY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS,
TO THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (1.23.20)**

Chair Miller and Committee Members,

My name is Chris Daly, representing the Nevada State Education Association, the voice of Nevada educators for over 100 years.

First, we congratulate Assemblymember Miller on this post as Chair of the Legislative Committee on Education. It is noteworthy that, as an active classroom teacher, you bring your experience with the day-to-day realities of our school communities to bear on this position. Today's agenda reflects this experience and the work being done to ensure every Nevada student has access to a high-quality, public education.

As you know, NSEA strongly opposed SB543 during the legislative session. Since the passage of this flawed bill, we have turned our attention to working to Fix 543 at the Commission on School Funding. Heading toward next legislative session, NSEA believes we need a do-over. But it's not just us. Many legislators supporting SB543 did so with serious concerns and reservations. Let me quote a handful of comments from legislators on SB543.

"It was a process that legislators and stakeholders felt was not sufficiently transparent and inclusive."

"It had some language that I thought would be problematic in its implementation."

"A more inclusive discussion of the bill would have been helpful."

"I had (and still have) some serious concerns about the methodology that underlies the budget formula."

"I had hoped for a more robust and inclusive conversation about SB 543 prior to the last days of session."

Other education stakeholders and community advocates share these concerns. NSEA has partnered with Mi Familia Vota, who is asking the Funding Commission to grandfather our most successful education equity models, Zoom and Victory Schools.

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Educators in Douglas County, who have not yet received the promised 3% or any raise, have engaged the Commission about how the threatened funding freeze is already impacting them.

And public-school advocates have warned the Commission about the multi-million-dollar giveaway to charter schools.

A year ago, NSEA was the organizational sponsor of AB462, which proposed a moratorium on new charter schools until proper accountability and controls could be put in place. AB462 was amended to require the Charter School Authority to adopt a 5-year growth management plan, and the moratorium was discarded. As you hear the presentation from the Charter Authority about their “Growth Management Plan”, you should be aware that the same Charter Authority approved nearly 5000 new charter slots last year alone. And let me read from their plan about overall growth.

In the prior three years, the SPCSA has received 21 application and approved six of those applications, approximately 30%. Going forward the SPCSA anticipates a similar rate of approximately 1 out of 3 applications receiving SPCSA approval.

While there is some movement in this plan to begin to address the baked-in biases against students with disabilities, English learners, and low-income students in the charter system, there is no effort to slow the growth of charters or address the structural inequity that is built into the system of charter schools vis-a-vis their relationship to neighborhood public schools. And the mechanism of siting new charters in zip codes with 1 or 2-star schools is rendered nearly moot by the fact that an overwhelming majority of zip codes, even many of the wealthiest ones, meet this test. NSEA believes that charter school growth should be further limited, and they should be held to the same standards as our neighborhood public schools.

NSEA appreciates the work of this committee on the Teachers’ School Supplies Assistance Account, teacher evaluations, teacher recruitment and retention, and class-size, which remains the most vexing issue facing Nevada schools, and we look forward to working with you on these items. Thank you.