

Gilbert A. Yanuck
4100 Lakeview Road
Carson City, Nevada 89703

TEL: 775-841-3675

FAX: 775-841-6547

gilcalif@att.net

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Assemblywoman Marilyn Kirkpatrick, Chair
Committee to Conduct an Interim Study Concerning
Community Colleges' Subcommittee on Academics and
Workforce Alignment (S.B. 391, 2013)

Madam Chair and Members of the Subcommittee:

Many of us spent several weeks last month watching the Olympic events in Sochi, Russia while for the past few years Nevadans have experienced their own type of Olympic challenge trying to lure businesses to Northern Nevada.

For Nevada to reach the podium and take home the Gold Medal we need to be able to demonstrate to prospective employers we can provide them with a steady supply of employees able to provide the skills and abilities that they require to operate efficiently. One would think with Nevada's unemployment averaging nine percent, this would not be an issue; however, looking further into the statistics of the unemployed we see a picture crowded with semi or unskilled workers. Where do these individuals go to obtain the training or skills to compete in today's job market? Obviously their first opportunity lies within our system of community colleges.

My purpose for appearing before you today is to convince you of the important role that community colleges play in the effort to attract businesses to Nevada. As I see it, community colleges have become the primary source for skilled workers whether they are engineers, machinists, construction managers or factory workers. Certified welders and auto mechanics who graduate from the programs at Western Nevada College have quickly moved into high paying positions with local companies.

Since Nevada is known as the "Hospitality State", who knows better than the operators of Nevada's hotels and restaurants how to train individuals for careers in this field? The Carson City Chamber of Commerce worked with the Carson City Hampton Inn & Suites, the Carson Valley Inn and the Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce to develop a Hospitality Skills Workshop to be offered through Western Nevada College. A grant was obtained with the help of the Hilton Corporation and the program was off and running. Graduates of the program earn their Certified Guest Service Professional designation with opportunities awaiting them throughout the State.

EXHIBIT H - COMMCOLLEGESACADWORK Document consists of 3 pages. Entire exhibit provided. Meeting Date: 03-12-14

Western Nevada College and Truckee Meadows Community College continue to work closely with companies already here or who are contemplating moving to Nevada to design courses to teach new hires the specific skills needed by the companies. These courses vary from computerized order entry systems, welding of specific materials to programming complex numerically controlled machinery.

Nationwide, the average age of the factory worker is 57 years old. This means that skilled replacement workers are going to be needed everywhere as retirement of those currently on the job approaches. There has been much praise in our community heralding the collaboration between local manufacturers, government officials, the Carson City School District and Western Nevada College in educating the next generation of industrial workers.

Referring to a recent news article about Nevada Copper's Pumpkin Hollow mine in Yerington which is investing \$330 million dollars to drill a 2200 foot deep mine to recover valuable copper ore, we learn that they are working with Western Nevada College and "Job Connect" to train workers for the site where employment is expected to reach 400, and rapidly grow to approximately 900 workers. Many of these workers will come from the surrounding communities in Lyon and Churchill counties and will also be well paid.

The "Dream It, Do It Nevada" Program brought to Nevada by Collie Hutter of Carson City's Click Bond Incorporated, recently aired on the CBS news program 60 Minutes and credited Western Nevada College and Truckee Meadows Community College for their willingness to work with employers on specific training needs. This fast track training program has connected scores of Nevadans with Northern Nevada employers as operators of computer numerically controlled machines. Western Nevada College has the only certified National Institute for Automotive Excellence program in the State. Truckee Meadows Community College's Applied Technology Center in Reno trains individuals for careers as diesel technicians, HVAC repair, welding and renewable energy and geothermal plant operations.

I would like to paraphrase a recent article that appeared in the Nevada Appeal in which Mr. Gordon Gagnon, Vice-President of Rubber Engineering and Development Company, doing business in Carson City as REDCO, praised the Carson City School District and Western Nevada College for its "Jump Start" program that allows high school seniors to attend their final year of high school at Western Nevada College, earning both high school and college credit. Mr. Gagnon further cited computer assisted design, various engineering courses and computer numerical control classes as being a very large contributor to the future growth of companies in Nevada.

The implementation of the Affordable Care Act brought with it a much greater need for medical and dental technicians and medical office workers. The Dental Assistant program at Truckee Meadows Community College prepares individuals to take the Dental Assisting National Board Examination to become a certified Dental Assistant

while Western Nevada Colleges' Nurse Associate Degree Nursing Program is approved by the Nevada State Board of Nursing and is intended for individuals seeking a career as a registered nurse. One hundred percent of the recent graduating class of student nurses from the program passed the Nevada State Board examination.

The community college is a place to continue one's quest for life-long learning. Workers already in the job market realize that they must continue to enhance their skill level if they are to advance. Attending a community college can provide the least expensive and most convenient path to accomplish these goals. While on the subject of expenses, a recent Wall Street Journal article extolled the financial benefits of attending a community college for the first two years to those seeking a university degree. By attending a community college, a student or their family can save over \$40,000 in education expenses. Also, we should not overlook the fact that the faculty and staff of our community colleges generally live, shop, send their children to our local schools, pay taxes and support their local community.

The mission of the Carson City Chamber of Commerce is to advocate for pro-business issues and policies that create jobs and grow our economy and advance the business community's interest. As such, attracting new businesses to the local area is of primary importance.

Finally, our community colleges are important to our overall quality of life and provide educational opportunities not found at the university level. When it comes to attracting new businesses, Western Nevada College and Truckee Meadows Community college play a very important role and they need to be permitted to continue this most worthy and important effort. Despite severe resource shortfalls and their huge geographic responsibilities, the importance of community colleges to the State's economy should not be overlooked.

Gil Yanuck
Chair, Carson City Chamber of Commerce