



NEVADA POLICY
Research Institute

Testimony in Opposition re: Assembly Bill 458
Senate Committee on Revenue & Economic Development
Thursday, May 2, 2019
1:30pm

My name is Daniel Honchariw. I serve as senior policy analyst for the [Nevada Policy Research Institute](#).

NPRI opposes AB458 in the strongest terms. During a time when the State of Nevada should be prioritizing the proliferation of alternative educational options for our state's struggling students, this bill proposes to do the precise opposite.

There are nearly half a million Nevada students enrolled in public K-12 statewide, yet this proposal suggests that providing choice for a few thousand struggling, low-income students — which amounts to a mere rounding error in terms of total education funding — is not worth doing.

But let's put these numbers in context. Supporters of this bill have called the 10% escalator "unsustainable," even though it would cost the state less than \$1 million in additional funding next year. Meanwhile, the assembly just approved a prevailing-wage bill that will increase the costs of public-school construction by tens of millions of dollars, per its fiscal notes. These developments stand in stark contradiction to each other. They indicate we are prioritizing the interests of organized labor over student learning.

We must ask ourselves, what kind of message are we sending to our youth by denying these deserving students an escape from their local schools which aren't working for them, where they aren't succeeding, and where they aren't learning? Opportunity Scholarships provide a better path forward for these students, a path more likely to lead them towards success and prosperity. Not to mention, such school-choice programs in fact generate a fiscal savings to the state in the long run. Such programs should be embraced, not shunned.

I urge this committee to retain the 10% annual increase on Modified Business Tax credits which can be used to finance these scholarships by opposing AB458. Let us please give these students a real chance for life success.

Respectfully submitted,

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