

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Seventy-Seventh Session
March 25, 2013**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Joyce Woodhouse at 3:32 p.m. on Monday, March 25, 2013, in Room 2149 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada and to the National Conference of State Legislatures Building, 7700 East First Place, Denver, Colorado. [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.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Chair
Senator Aaron D. Ford, Vice Chair
Senator Ruben J. Kihuen
Senator Barbara K. Cegavske
Senator Donald G. Gustavson

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Scott Hammond, Senatorial District No. 18

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pepper Sturm, Policy Analyst
Diana Jones, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Anne Teigen, J.D., Senior Policy Specialist, Transportation and Criminal Justice,
National Conference of State Legislatures
Joyce Haldeman, Associate Superintendent, Clark County School District
Dotty Merrill, Ed.D., Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards
Stephen Augspurger, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School
Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees
Tami Berg, Nevada PTA

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Craig M. Stevens, Director of Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association
Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District
David A. Byerman, Secretary of the Senate; Executive Director, Nevada Youth Legislature Foundation
Grant Gabriel, Chair, Nevada Youth Legislature
Alex Bybee, Member, Nevada Youth Legislature
Ryan Warburton, Ballard Spahr LLP
Steve Canavero Ph.D., Director of State Public Charter School Authority
Jill Petersen, Administrator, Alpine Academy Charter School
Craig Hulse, Nevada State Director, StudentsFirst
Steve Fowler, StudentsFirst
Janine Hansen, Nevada Families

Chair Woodhouse:

We will open with the introduction of Bill Draft Request (BDR) S-1100 from Senator Debbie Smith, Senatorial District No. 13 and Senator Moises Denis, Senatorial District No. 2.

BILL DRAFT REQUEST S-1100: Makes various changes relating to education (Later introduced as Senate Bill 500)

SENATOR KIHUEN MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR S-1000.

SENATOR FORD SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

* * * * *

Chair Woodhouse:

We will next hear Senate Bill (S.B.) 269 that revises provisions governing education.

SENATE BILL 269: Revises provisions governing education. (BDR 34-892)

Senator Aaron D. Ford, (Senatorial District No. 11):

When reviewing educational accountability, it is important to consider the need for students to take responsibility for their own educations. The Clark County

School District (CCSD) has problems with its truancy rate and with its dropout rate. Because of this, I am reintroducing linking the possession of a driver's license to positive school attendance. Senate Bill 269 includes the need to maintain positive grades. That is not the primary intent of the bill. The actual intent is to focus on truancy and school attendance. There will be a conceptual amendment presented that removes references to the grades qualification in this bill. I will read my written statement ([Exhibit C](#)) to the Committee.

The goal of this bill is to help ensure students take responsibility for their educations. As State Legislators, we are charged with making certain our educational system has the funding, teachers and materials needed for student success. We need to encourage parents and students to realize their responsibilities in this process as well.

Anne Teigen, J.D. (Senior Policy Specialist, Transportation and Criminal Justice, National Conference of State Legislatures):

All legislators and legislative staff are members of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). The NCSL is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization. One of our goals is to provide legislatures with information and research about policy issues at the state and federal levels.

I track traffic safety, including teen driving and graduated driver's license laws. The Committee has received a copy of my presentation ([Exhibit D](#)) providing an overview of state laws that tie obtaining and maintaining teen driver's licenses to school performance. I have also provided the Committee with a list of these requirements by state ([Exhibit E](#)).

Pages 4–6 of [Exhibit D](#) display how driver's licenses are linked to school performance in different states. Fifteen states require proof of enrollment for a teen to obtain a license. Alabama requires documentation of enrollment in a secondary school before a permit or license is issued. In West Virginia, the superintendent of schools is required to report dropouts to the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles for license suspension.

Seven states have academic performance standards that must be met by a teen to obtain or keep a license. Before enrolling in a driver's education course, students in Illinois must receive passing grades in at least eight courses during the prior two semesters. Driver's education is required in Illinois to apply for

a permit or driver's license. Regular attendance in school with a "C" average is required in Arkansas if a teen wishes to obtain a permit or license. Some states, such as Tennessee, require students to maintain satisfactory academic progress, which they define as receiving a passing grade in at least three full-unit subjects or their equivalency at the end of any grading period.

Eighteen states link suspension of a driver's license to habitual school absenteeism or truancy. Georgia law allows suspension of a juvenile's license if he or she has not attended school for 10 consecutive days without permission. In Indiana, habitual truants cannot receive a license until they turn 18 years of age. The definition of habitual truant is determined by each school board, but includes students who have more than ten unexcused absences in a school year. A New Mexico law allows the suspension of a juvenile driver's license by the Children's Court if the driver is found to be truant. Three states require a combination of all three criteria: students must be enrolled in school, they must achieve at an appropriate level and they must have good attendance.

The effectiveness of these laws is referenced on page 8 of [Exhibit D](#). Most information about effectiveness is anecdotal. Two years after its passing, a West Virginia official stated that their law was working like "nothing else they have ever tried." Officials from the Tennessee Department of Education stated that their state law, enacted in 1990 and backed by the effective coordination of education, public safety and law enforcement officials, has had a significant impact on improving graduation rates. In Texas, students felt the law worked, but principals did not think it helped keep students in school.

Many educational organizations are asking for improved data collection. One argument against these laws is that they have the greatest effect on students who have a strong preference for driving. I would argue that most teens have a strong preference for driving. Another argument against this type of law is that truancy and dropout prevention are best handled through counseling.

The "No Pass No Drive: Education and Allocation of Time" study, by Rashmi Barua and Marian Vidal-Fernandez, found that these laws have positive and significant effects on educational attainment, mainly among boys and minority students. This study is referenced at the bottom of page 8 of [Exhibit D](#).

California introduced a similar bill in 2008 that did not pass. This bill would have linked school enrollment and truancy to maintaining a driver's license. Maine introduced a bill in 2012 linking academic performance to obtaining a license. It also did not pass. This year, other states are considering legislation similar to Nevada's. These are listed on page 10 of [Exhibit D](#). A bill being presented in Massachusetts would require students obtain a letter of good standing prior to applying for a license or permit. Texas and South Carolina have laws that require teens to show proof of school enrollment to obtain a permit or license. These states are introducing legislation this year to add attendance requirements to their laws. Legislation in New York proposes to require teens to show proof of enrollment and a certificate of good attendance to obtain a learner's permit or license. The certificate of attendance could be withdrawn by school officials, which would then authorize the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles to suspend the license or permit.

The NCSL Traffic Safety Legislation Database, listed on page 11 of [Exhibit D](#), provides additional information about legislation from previous years and legislation being introduced in 2013. The NCSL can be contacted using the details on page 12 of [Exhibit D](#) to provide additional information or to answer questions.

Senator Ford:

The anecdotal evidence is clear that gaining and holding a driver's license is sufficient incentive to increase school attendance. The "carrot" of a driver's license can be an important tool for schools. The amendments being presented are friendly amendments.

Senator Kihuen:

Many minority and disenfranchised families rely on student family members to help provide income for the family. These students often need to drive to do this. Does this bill provide any exceptions for students in this situation?

Senator Ford:

Yes it does. Sections 12 and 13, beginning on page 29 of the bill, list authorized exceptions. Section 12 refers to issuing a driver's license if hardship exists relative to medical conditions. Another exception relates to driving to and from school in a rural county. The opportunity exists for a parent to provide a written statement excusing a student from compulsory attendance pursuant to

other statutes within the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS). Your example may not be specifically listed, but I am open to a friendly amendment on this issue.

Senator Kihuen:

I represent an area with many underprivileged families. A lot of them depend on the jobs their children have to supplement their family income. Students need to drive to do this. It has been reported to me that students sometimes would miss school because they worked late the day before. I appreciate your willingness to work with me on this issue.

Senator Cegavske:

I am concerned about the students we are not educating well. It is not their fault; it is the fault of our system. We may not have adequate teachers in all classrooms, students may have learning disabilities, or they may learn differently and they become disenfranchised. They do not learn well in our current system. Is there a way to address this in your bill? Are there population requirements in the bill?

Senator Ford:

There is no population requirement in this bill. There are exceptions relative to populations that require transportation to and from school which is further from their home.

Senate Bill 269 speaks only to truancy. I am removing the academic standard from this bill as part of my amendment. It is important to make it clear to students that if they do not go to school, they will not drive. Truancy is not caused by a poor teacher. It is a choice the student makes. This bill should not affect the students you are speaking about any differently than it affects other students.

Senator Cegavske:

It is important to be sensitive to the needs of all of our students, including our gifted and talented students.

Senator Gustavson:

I appreciate that you are removing the academic standard from this bill. My concern is about the rural schools. Some students depend on driving to attend school in these areas, and I want to ensure this is addressed as an exception.

Senator Ford:

On page 30, section 13, subsection 1, paragraph (a), restricted licenses are defined. This may address your concerns. If it does not, I am open to specific amendments that do.

Senator Gustavson:

That is what I was referring to, and it is existing law. How many students would be impacted by this bill?

Senator Ford:

I do not have that data, but I will find it for you.

Ms. Teigen:

Obtaining valid data is a problem. The data component in S.B. 269 is important because it will help Nevada. Data will allow us to identify the students being impacted by the bill. Data will also allow us to determine if the law is effective in improving their attendance.

Senator Gustavson:

There is no fiscal note with this bill, so it appears it will not affect many students; but there may be a lot of reporting required.

Senator Kihuen:

Do you have recent data that shows the effectiveness of this type of legislation?

Ms. Teigen:

The Barua and Vidal-Fernandez study, referenced on [Exhibit D](#), page 8, is the most recent study. It is a complete statistically supported report. It indicates this type of legislation works best with boys and minority students. I am not aware of any specific national or state studies on this topic.

Senator Kihuen:

The fact that a high school student may not be able to apply for a license or that the license might be taken away seems to be an incentive. Having a license is very important to many of these students.

Senator Ford:

The Barua and Vidal-Fernandez study indicates that this type of legislation has a positive and significant effect on years of completed schooling and the probability of high school completion among boys and African-American students, but not girls. The study indicates these laws appear to be effective in reducing truancy. The laws also seem to have an impact on the amount of time students spend doing homework at the expense of leisure and employment activities. Anecdotally, it appears this type of legislation is a positive factor in decreasing truancy.

Joyce Haldeman (Associate Superintendent, Clark County School District):

School districts are often asked what they are going to do about the low graduation rate in Nevada. We need to prepare students with the skills and education needed to succeed, but we cannot do it alone. Many factors impact students that are beyond the control of a school district. Students need to be in school if we are going to succeed. The CCSD has many programs to address truancy. We visit the homes of students with poor attendance and talk to parents and students about the importance of attendance. We work with students at various grade levels to help them graduate. In order to help break the cycle of poverty, we want students who are working to help support their families to complete their education. We want these students to understand education will open doors for them so they do not have to work at low-paying jobs throughout their lifetimes.

The CCSD understands that a driver's license is a strong incentive for many youth. Tying attendance to having a license and identifying someone other than a parent to make decisions about the license can be powerful in keeping students in school. The actions proposed in this bill will let students know regular school attendance is expected. We agree there should be flexibility with this bill at the school level. We support the amendment to eliminate the district court. We also support extending the effective date of this bill to 2015. This will allow CCSD time to implement our new reporting system.

The CCSD reported 1,400 truants in high school and middle school last year. I do not have this information broken down by grade span.

Senator Cegavske:

Would the school police be able to confiscate student licenses in CCSD? Do all districts have school police?

Ms. Haldeman:

Washoe County School District (WCSD) and CCSD have school police. The CCSD does not feel this would be a problem for our school police.

Senator Cegavske:

Is there a statement in the bill that use of school police applies to districts having over a specified number of students?

Senator Ford:

Section 5 of the bill authorizes use of school police or a person designated by the principal or the school to administer sanctions. The latter would apply to counties that do not have school police officers.

Senator Cegavske:

I have a concern about identifying the designee. The language in this area is quite broad.

Senator Ford:

It is important to allow as much control as possible to local school administrators. The principal would be responsible for designating someone if he or she is not personally administering the sanctions. If there are specific individuals to be identified in this bill, I am open to hearing your suggestions.

Senator Cegavske

I am looking for more clarification. Would the designee be a dean, a classroom teacher, a gym teacher or a coach? Who would it be? Sections 4 and 5 are too broad for me.

Senator Ford:

A dean is the person I considered as the probable designee, but not all schools have deans so the principal would pick the most appropriate person for the task. It is important to leave this decision to the local jurisdictions.

Dotty Merrill, Ed.D. (Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards):

The legislative advisory committee of the Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) believes this bill could positively impact student attendance. The NASB has three concerns. Two of these are addressed in our proposed amendment ([Exhibit F](#)). The last is addressed in the proposed amendment ([Exhibit G](#)) being brought by the Clark County Association of School Administrators (CCASA).

The first NASB amendment relates to use of a judicial review process. We feel this would involve costs and expenses that are not needed. We propose to remove this language from the bill as indicated in [Exhibit F](#), section 5, lines 32-26.

The second NASB amendment extends the effective date of the changes. We have three reasons for requesting this change. First, local boards of trustees require time to hold public input meetings before adopting policies and procedures related to implementation of this legislation. Second, students and their families need to be notified well in advance of implementation about the impact of this legislation on applications for a driver's license and other changes that will apply. Third, appropriate staff needs to be trained to implement the new procedures required by this legislation and to keep records regarding its implementation. We are amenable to a later implementation date than the one we have proposed. We appreciate Senator Ford has proposed removal of the academic standard of this bill.

Stephen Augspurger (Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees):

The CCASA supports S.B. 269 with the addition of our amendment, [Exhibit G](#). The WCSD administrators also support this amended language. School improvement occurs one student at a time. Senate Bill 269 provides a way to work with the 1,400 CCSD students who are habitual truants. We are pleased Senator Ford is withdrawing the academic standard. Our amendments focus on the truancy portions of the proposed bill.

In sections 4 and 5 of S.B. 269, we are expanding the language to include a designee of the principal. Schools and classrooms are where the important work of education occurs. We need to ensure our employees are free to spend a significant portion of their time working with students and teachers in classrooms.

At large high schools as many as 900 students a year will become eligible to apply for driving permits. This could have a significant impact on administrative staff. In section 4, subsection 5 of our amendment, we propose to extend the start date to July 1, 2014. After ongoing discussions, we have moved this date to July 1, 2015. This change will allow CCSD and WCSD time to develop internal systems to manage these large numbers of students.

Section 5 discusses sanctions for students who do not maintain good attendance. Section 5, subsection 5 of our proposed amendment changes the language regarding hearings. We think it is inappropriate for a principal to be holding a hearing on what is essentially a legal issue. School police officers can issue truancy citations under NRS. These may result in referrals to the Juvenile Justice Court or referral to an attendance advisory committee that has subpoena powers over the student and parent. We think someone other than the principal should hold the appeal hearing. We support the NASB amendment to delete section 5, subsection 6, which removes judicial review. This would be expensive and would remove educators from schools during times when they should be working with students.

In section 5, subsection 7, if there is not a school police officer, we recommend someone other than the principal designate a person to carry out the requirements of this section. We have modified this from the original amendment to read " ... in counties with populations greater than 100,000, this person shall not be a school administrator." We must protect school administrators' time so they can work with teachers and students. We do not want them sidetracked by the appeal process that could result from this legislation. In sections 11, 12 and 13, we have proposed language to include a designee of the principal.

Senator Cegavske:

Are you removing section 4, subsection 5?

Mr. Augspurger:

No, we are keeping this language. We are extending the date to July 1, 2015.

Senator Cegavske:

Do school districts support having the board of trustees responsible for this? The NASB was requesting an extension to July 1, 2014. Is your extension for the same date?

Mr. Augspurger:

We have worked with NASB today and moved our extension date to July 1, 2015.

Senator Ford:

The CCSD is in the process of implementing a new data system. We are looking at an extension date that allows them to be assured their system is fully operational. I will have this date finalized when the bill comes to a work session.

Senator Cegavske:

Are sections 4 and 5 requesting a population cap? Does this mean that in districts under 100,000 the board of trustees determines the principal's designee?

Chair Woodhouse:

This needs to be clarified in the amendment.

Tami Berg, (Nevada PTA):

The Nevada PTA drafted a similar bill in 1998. We support this bill.

Craig M. Stevens (Director of Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association):

The Nevada State Education Association supports this bill.

Lindsay Anderson (Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District):

The WCSD opposes this bill. Our board of trustees would like to identify the reasons why the 150 habitual truant students in our district do not come to school. We do not think these students are motivated by driver's licenses. We would like to determine the barriers keeping them from attending school. Some of these students are not old enough to drive, and some are from socioeconomic levels that do not make having a car an option. We would prefer there not be a punishment for habitual truants. We are working with the "Juvenile Justice Commission Subcommittee on School Attendance and Disturbance" to develop recommendations for how districts can keep students from becoming habitual truants.

Senator Cegavske:

Are you opposed because this bill involves boards of trustees or because you do not think students should have driving privileges tied to school attendance?

Ms. Anderson:

Our school board is not convinced this type of legislation would prevent any types of habitual truancy.

Senator Ford:

This bill sends a strong message to the youth in our State—if you want to drive, you must attend school. We will work with NASB and CCASA to refine it.

Chair Woodhouse:

The Nevada Youth Legislature (NYL) will present next. The NYL was created during the 2007 Session.

David A. Byerman (Secretary of the Senate; Executive Director, Nevada Youth Legislature Foundation):

I speak today as executive director of the Nevada Youth Legislature Foundation. The NYL is an award winning program. These awards have been given by objective third parties. I have provided the Committee with a list of these awards ([Exhibit H](#)). Two more awards are pending. The best way to learn about the excellence of this program is to hear from those participating in it.

Grant Gabriel (Chair, Nevada Youth Legislature):

The NYL has allowed me to participate in bringing about real and positive change to the students of Nevada. I hope we will be able to pass our legislation in the Senate tomorrow. The NYL encourages democratic participation among young people. I cannot say enough good things about this aspect of the program. I will read my prepared statement ([Exhibit I](#)).

Alex Bybee (Member, Nevada Youth Legislature):

I am the past chair of the NYL. This program has enabled and inspired me to be part of the democratic process in Nevada. Our Legislature is a citizen's legislature and is accessible to the people. This program expands that accessibility to the youth of Nevada. I have grown immensely from the process of serving as chair of the NYL. This organization is creating the next generation of Legislators for Nevada.

Chair Woodhouse:

We will next hear [S.B. 384](#) relating to charter schools

[SENATE BILL 384](#): Revises provisions relating to charter schools. (BDR 34-687)

Senator Scott Hammond (Senatorial District No. 18):

The State Public Charter School Authority was created by the 2011 Legislature to be the primary sponsor of charter schools in the State. It sponsors 16 charter schools with an enrollment of nearly 14,000 students. All practices are aligned with the principles and standards for quality charter school authorizing as prescribed by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. The State Public Charter School Authority recently approved 5 out of the 14 organizations that applied to create new charter schools in Nevada. These schools will start in fall 2013.

Senate Bill 384 changes the statutory name to the Nevada Public Charter School Authority (Authority). It clarifies that charter schools may not be operated for profit, but that they may be nonprofit corporations under chapter 82 of NRS. It revises the provisions governing closure of charter schools and includes provisions related to public notice of the closure; development of a plan for closure and maintenance of insurance coverage and of an office with regular hours of operation; measures to protect the schools assets including a final audit and steps that ensure the proper conclusion of charter schools' financial affairs.

More significantly, this bill enacts the Charter School Financing Law that empowers the Authority to issue tax-exempt bonds and other obligations to fund buildings and facilities necessary to operate charter schools. Public schools in Nevada generally operate in facilities that have been paid for with public funds. They then use their annual per-pupil funding to pay the costs of educating their students and operating their facilities. Charter schools are at a disadvantage because they must use their per-pupil funding to pay for the buildings in which the schools operate. Approximately 13 percent of a charter school's revenue is spent on facility occupancy. Affordable access to appropriate facilities is a significant barrier to the growth of quality charter schools in Nevada. This bill will allow the Authority to issue revenue bonds to fund the cost of charter school facilities. Bonds issued and authorized by the Authority would be special obligations and would not create a general obligation to the Authority or the State. They would be secured or unsecured debt obligations of the end user, who would ensure payment of the obligation to investors in accordance with the bond terms as approved by the Authority. The bond market would ensure that bonds are priced with an appropriate risk premium. It would also assess the value of assets pledged in the reliability of any income streams used to repay the bonds. Most often, these bonds would

be repaid using the annual per-pupil funding of the charter school and any other revenues the school may receive. Bonds would only be used for their stated purpose. Unused portions would be used to repay the principal or interest on the bond or in a way that protects the bondholder.

This bill would substantially reduce facilities costs for our charter schools. It would allow these schools to operate in adequate facilities. Many charter schools operate in warehouses or retail buildings. They do not have easy access to gyms, theaters or other facilities that are vital to a student's school experience.

Ryan Warburton (Ballard Spahr LLP):

I represent the Authority. Charter schools in Nevada cannot own their facilities and must lease them. This does not allow them to develop equity in their facilities or maintain control over them. As a bond lawyer, I have assisted charter schools in other states develop methods to own their facilities.

Steve Canavero, Ph.D. (Director of State Public Charter School Authority):

This concept is important to consider, and we support it. We would like to discuss the complexities of the bill with Senator Hammond so we can fully support this bill.

Jill Petersen (Administrator, Alpine Academy Charter School):

I am in favor of this bill. Our charter high school is located in an industrial business park. The size of our building limits the number of students who can attend our school. Funds we use to pay our lease could be used to improve student learning such as updating our technology, purchasing more textbooks, hiring more high-quality teachers, stocking our library or even buying new student desks. We feel it would be equitable for charter schools to be able to invest in facilities the same way as traditional schools do. This will literally build a foundation for our children's future.

Craig Hulse (Nevada State Director, StudentsFirst):

This is a priority to StudentsFirst. We would like to participate in a working group to finalize the language of this bill.

Steve Fowler (StudentsFirst):

I teach math in North Las Vegas and am speaking for StudentsFirst. I am in favor of this bill. It would help reduce the financial obstacles our charter schools face.

Senator Hammond:

We will work on the language of this bill with those who have asked to be involved.

Chair Woodhouse:

We will now hear S.B. 163 regarding civics instruction.

SENATE BILL 163: Requires certain schools in this State to provide pupils with instruction in civics. (BDR 34-667)

Senator Barbara K. Cegavske (Senatorial District No. 8):

A video developed by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor provides an overview of the need for civics education in the United States. This video can be viewed at the Campaign for the Civic Mission for Schools Website, <<http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/videos/video/21>>.

A 2012 report from the Educational Testing Service (ETS), "Fault Lines in Our Democracy: Civic Knowledge, Voting Behavior, and Civic Engagement in the United States," warns that many students lack acceptable levels of knowledge about civics. In the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), only one-quarter of the students reached the proficient level in civics. Only 2 percent of the fourth graders could identify the purpose of the *Constitution of the United States*. Only 22 percent of the eighth graders could recognize the role played by the Supreme Court of the United States. Reporting for this test uses a national sample, so state-level scores are not available. Eighth grade scores on the 2010 NAEP were flat. Scores for twelfth grade students in 2010 declined from 2006 NAEP scores.

Why is civics education important? According to a report by ETS, knowledge of civics does three important things. First, it promotes support for democratic values. The more knowledge we have of working government, the more likely we are to support the core values of democratic self-government. Second, civic knowledge promotes political participation. The more knowledge people have, the more likely they are to participate in civic and political affairs. Third, the

more knowledge we have of civics, the less likely we are to have a generalized mistrust and fear of public life.

Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor recognized the importance of civics instruction and founded a Website to provide free information to students and others who want to learn more about civics. Justice O'Connor stated that securing our democracy requires teaching the next generation to understand and respect our system of governance. The site is located at <<http://www.icivics.org/>>. It offers 17 interactive videos along with lesson plans, games and other information about government. The activities on this site are free of charge and appropriate for students in fourth grade and up. There are also materials on the site that would be helpful for legislators who participate in the NCSL Back to School Project.

Senate Bill 163 proposes civics instruction be provided in addition to the instruction students already receive about local and federal government. This change is on page 2, lines 10 and 11, where the words "and Civics" are added to the list of topics required for instruction in American government. This bill places the teaching of civics in statute. Civics is a cornerstone of democracy. It promotes support for democratic institutions and values. It builds trust in participative government and elected officials. It contributes to greater public involvement by creating an interest in voting and volunteering. I urge your consideration of this bill.

Senator Ford:

I am a cosponsor of this bill, and I support it. A constituent would like to know why this bill is necessary, as civics is currently taught in our schools. My response is that this bill puts a focus on civics education.

Senator Cegavske

I do not think civics is being taught. If it is, it is not being taught accurately. Former civics teachers who are now school administrators are very supportive of this bill. They do not believe civics is being addressed in our schools. Many teachers believe we are teaching civics out of sequence. It is important to return to teaching American history as it happened instead of in segments that are not in the correct order. The NAEP statistics showing a lack of student knowledge about civics indicate to me that civics is not being taught.

Janine Hansen (Nevada Families):

I support this bill. Civics can be defined as the rights and duties of citizens or the privileges and obligations of citizens. I tell high school students if they are not involved in government, someone else will be making the decisions that affect their lives. I stress how important it is for them to become involved. Many of these students do not understand the process of government. This is an opportunity to include civics in our classrooms and teach students how to become involved. If we want to keep America free, people must be part of the governance process. If citizens do not know how to participate, they will not do so.

Ms. Haldeman:

The CCSD supports this bill. We offer civics at many grade levels. Elementary students receive instruction in "Citizenship and the Law." Courses at other grade levels include "The Federal System," "The Political Process" and "Global Relations."

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Chair Woodhouse:

Seeing no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Diana Jones,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Chair

DATE: _____

<u>EXHIBITS</u>				
Bill	Exhibit		Witness / Agency	Description
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S.B. 269	G	6	Stephen Augspurger	Proposed Amendment
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	I	2	Grant Gabriel	Written Testimony