

**ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION IN NEVADA**

HEARING
BEFORE A
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

SPECIAL HEARING
APRIL 5, 2002—LAS VEGAS, NV

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ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NEVADA

FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2002

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Las Vegas, NV.

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m., at Western High School, 4601 West Bonanza Road, Las Vegas, NV, Hon. Harry Reid presiding.
Present: Senator Reid.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HARRY REID

Senator REID. This U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee is called to order. I would first like to recognize Jerry Bath and Sarah Brown who will be the sign language translators. We also have Margarita Vandermere, who is going to be the Spanish to English interpreter.

We are fortunate to have with us today three members, I hope that's all I saw, if I missed anyone, I'm sorry, three members of Clark County School Board who are here with us, Sheila Moulton, Mary Beth Scow and Susan Berger Welman. We also are fortunate to have with us today Senator Harkin's chief of staff on the Appropriations Subcommittee. This hearing is being held under his auspices of the subcommittee as the ranking member.

We are fortunate to have with us Ellen Murray who is, as I've indicated, Senator Harkin's chief of staff. We also have with us Carolyn Slutsker, who is my personal staff representative on this subcommittee.

We will begin this program, I do this with pleasure, and I very much appreciate the Western High School Junior ROTC being here. Would everyone please stand.

[Whereupon, the U.S. Flag was presented and the Pledge of Allegiance was said.]

Senator REID. Good morning again. This hearing is being held under the auspices of Senator Harkin's subcommittee, and I appreciate everyone being here for this very important Senate Appropriations field hearing.

One of the things we try to do with the Senate and, focusing with the Senate, as we travel to our States, we try to gather information to take back to Washington. We have here, of course, an official court reporter of the Senate. Every word that's said here today will be taken down and transcribed and submitted to the Senate.

There are things, of course, that I will convey orally to Members of the Senate. We are now entering into the appropriations process stage of our Congress. We have already held a number of hearings, and they will get hot and heavy very soon. I'm chairman of one of the subcommittees. We have already had a number of hearings in that regard. This is a committee with wide-ranging jurisdiction. This committee is responsible for appropriating approximately \$120 billion every year of taxpayer money.

It goes without saying what we do here is important, and takes a lot of your dollars, so we want to make sure that we try to do the right thing.

One of the most important functions of this particular subcommittee of which I am a member, and that subcommittee is titled Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee, is a funding of education programs, wide-ranging programs from Early Head Start to programs for colleges. This hearing today will focus on elementary and secondary education perhaps and their significance to Nevada.

The people you will hear from today are experts on education, students, parents, and other individuals who are on the front lines of education in Nevada.

All of these witnesses can attest to the critical role that the Federal Government plays in helping Nevada. I'm pleased that these witnesses, many of whom have never testified before anyone, let alone a Senate hearing, some have not spoken in a public setting like this, have agreed to share their experiences with us.

The hearing will be divided into two parts. As I have indicated, all of your statements are on the record, taken down by our court reporter. First we will hear from our panel of witnesses. They are assembled here with me today. Once they have completed their testimony, we will open the room for questions, comments or suggestions. The length of the testimony you hear from us will be in varying fashion, but the length of the testimony has nothing to do with the importance of the testimony.

After we have completed this testimony we are going to open the room for questions, comments or suggestions. That's why we have those two microphones. Once a person wishing to speak has been recognized, speak into the microphone and begin by stating your name. This is for purposes of the court reporting. As I've said before, everything will be taken down.

Make sure that you limit your comments, your questions, or your statements to just a couple minutes. I am really used to people talking for long periods of time, serving in the Senate. So we would like to keep this as brief as possible and still give people opportunity to speak.

Before I introduce our first witness, I would like to say a few things myself. Our Nation was founded on the ideal that no matter who you are, no matter where you are, no matter where you are going, no matter how much money your parents have, no matter your race, religion or your ethnic background, if you're willing to study, work hard, you can be a success. This is the American dream. This is one of the things that makes our Nation so great.

I was born 60 miles from here and I recently built a home there to replace my mobile home in Searchlight. And as I look back on

my public education, which I'm very proud of, it was I am sure, difficult for the teachers.

I started there in first grade. We had two teachers, two-room schoolhouse, still there, even though the kids have moved out to another school, and I was looking forward to getting into the fifth grade with great anticipation.

But when I got to fifth grade there weren't enough kids for two teachers, so from grade five on, one teacher named Mrs. Pickard taught all eight grades. As I look back on Mrs. Pickard, I do it with such reverence; she was so good. I cannot remember a single thing she taught me, but I do know that Ms. Pickard instilled in me a desire to learn, to read, and to appreciate school.

So I believe that someone like me, I tell kids at elementary and secondary school and colleges all the time that if I can make it, anybody can from an education perspective. So I think each of you here should understand this is a great country we live in.

Today the American dream, though, I believe is being threatened by a lot of reasons for a lot of reasons: One is the high dropout rate we have in school, overcrowding in classrooms, teacher shortages, and inadequate State funding.

While these problems are occurring across the Nation, they are particularly severe in Nevada because of the growth we have. We lead the country, as I understand it, in dropout rates. We no longer lead the country in teenage pregnancy, but we are close. One out of every 10 high school seniors in Nevada drop out of school. In Clark County, two-thirds of our high schools have been told to reduce their class sizes or risk accreditation status.

The State of Nevada underfunds education by almost \$1,000 per student per year. As a result, students do not have the school supplies they need and many other inadequacies.

This past fall Congress passed and the President signed a law called "No Child Left Behind." In my opinion this is a valueless name for a legislation if it does not have resources to back it up. This new law sets high standards for all teachers. It also helps communities to recruit highly trained teachers, hopefully, if they need to improve, and face consequences if they fail.

Parents with bilingual children who need extra help, under this legislation are supposed to get help. Communities who require help for disadvantaged students are supposed to get help.

But the problem is with this legislation, as with many things we do in Washington, we authorize, which sounds good, and then we appropriate. And appropriations are always behind what we authorize. I am terribly disappointed. This law does not fully fund the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, as we call it. This would have meant as much as \$706 million more for Nevada schools.

We have made a commitment more than 25 years ago to provide 40 percent of the cost for special education and we have failed miserably. The Senate budget committee recently took an important step in the right direction when it included full funding for IDEA for fiscal year 2003. We will take this up 2 weeks after we get back starting next week.

While the No Child Left Behind Act provides a blueprint for education reform, real reform cannot occur without real resources,

which brings me to the purpose of today's hearing. Last year the Congress and President tried to show how serious they are by passing the No Child Left Behind Act. So we are going to expect battles with education funding, because later this year they are going to see how serious we are about making these funding decisions.

Just a month after signing the No Child Left Behind Act into law, President Bush issued his proposed budget for fiscal year 2003, which is the one we are going to be working on now. In this budget he is proposing cuts of almost \$100 million in the No Child Left Behind Act. This means that the communities like Clark County would have insufficient resources to implement reforms in this bill.

The President also proposed freezing or cutting programs that are vital to the success of Nevada's children. For example, the President has proposed level funding for teacher quality bilingual education, and the budget provides insufficient resources to modernize schools and address overcrowding.

I know our Nation's at war. Many believe it's time to tighten our belt and incur budget cuts in our education programs. I can personally think of no better way to invest in our national security than to dedicate precious resources to the future of our Nation's children. Having a secure Nation is more than putting uniforms on people and building things that explode.

One way to invest in our national security is to invest in education. So I'm going to return to Washington I hope armed with more information than I now have to ensure we work to provide resources to guarantee that truly no child is left behind.

**STATEMENT OF CARLOS GARCIA, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS,
CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, NEVADA**

Senator REID. I am going to ask Carlos Garcia now to speak. He has a tremendously important job. He's someone that doesn't receive the notoriety that others of us do, but his job is just as important as any other job in the State of Nevada. He has responsibility for about 240,000 children.

I see back here in the audience a little 4-year-old boy. I talked to him when I came in. Bashful little kid, handsome little boy. This is what this is all about, making sure that this little boy is properly educated.

Carlos, that's what your job is all about. I admire and respect the work that you're doing with such inadequate resources, and there isn't a time that I see one of these little children in Nevada and in my mind's eye I see my grandchildren who are being educated here in Nevada, that I don't worry about the resources that you have to help them get a good education.

Carlos Garcia.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Senator.

Obviously when you're in the fastest growing school district in the country where we can grow anywhere between 12,000 and 15,000 students a year, we have issues that we have to deal with all the time.

We are currently the 6th largest school district in the Nation, and so some of the issues that although we are very, very happy with the new legislation in terms of the spirit that it's trying to

capture that all students can and will succeed and the accountability, that all of us are responsible for the education of our children. And in our public schools we are very excited about that. We believe in the spirit of it.

But as the Senator mentioned, our biggest concerns are whether or not we are going to have the resources to truly implement and assure that no child will get left behind. Not only are we \$1,000 below the national average on per pupil expenditures here in Clark County, we are actually several hundred dollars below the average of the State per pupil expenditure. So when they do the average, we are actually below that average, so it really puts us in a bind in trying to deal with the growth issues here.

There are a couple issues I want to highlight when it comes to the No Child Left Behind. The legislation requires massive data gathering, and data gathering that no one ever dreamed of. We are going to be testing in every single grade level from 3rd grade to 8th grade. So as a result how are we going to collect and make sure that data becomes user friendly and user friendly for the teacher in the classroom, and that we can do something with that data so that in the future we not only record third grade scores, but actually compare that to how kids, those same 3rd graders do in 4th grade, 5th grade, and as they move up in the system.

That's going to require a huge system, and my biggest fear right now is that school districts are not ready in any way to deal with that much data collecting and storing the data. Our infrastructure alone in Clark County as it currently stands, we are having to do a lot of those things manually because our systems are so obsolete.

In order to gear up our systems to be able to truly do an effective job with the data, we calculate that we would need about a \$15 million investment in our infrastructure so that all the systems we have are connected and talk to one another and we actually utilize that data every day in the classroom. That's the big concern of ours.

We also are a little bit concerned with the legislation that still exists on holding States harmless. I always hear that. I always say well, if somebody else is held harmless, that means somebody else is getting harmed. And the people getting harmed are people like Nevada that are the fastest growing places in the country and have some of the poorest kids coming in the Southwest, and when we don't get our fair share of the pie because the States in the east want to maintain their level to be held harmless, we are among the fastest growing places, and yet the money is not following the children at that same pace. That's an extreme circumstance here and throughout the Southwest.

Special education, the Senator mentioned, obviously when you're a big school district like ours, we take the hit of about \$94 million, an encroachment into the general fund, of trying above and beyond what we provide for our regular students. The legislation, when it was passed, the IDEA, as the Senator knows, there was supposed to be a level of, I believe, 40 percent funding, and yet we have never even come close to that.

That keeps—just kills the school districts throughout the country because we are—if there is a law passed, then we believe that we are not having an unfunded mandate. Those are the things that

really take a part of our meager budget and make it even tougher, and then it pits parents against parents, regular ed parents with special ed parents, and that should never be happening, because truly if we don't want any children left behind, then all of these children, regardless of disabilities, are our children, and we should fund appropriately to give them the programs that they so deserve.

Another big issue is the bilingual education issue. The fastest growing segment of our population throughout the southwest and particularly here in Clark County are our limited English proficient students.

Just think, we are doubling every 10 years with that population. We estimate that it's going to get bigger and faster, that growth. Currently we are serving about 42,000 limited English proficient students in the Clark County School District, and we don't get additional funding in order to meet those needs.

And add on top of that we estimate that in the next 3 to 4 years we will go from 42,000 limited English proficient students to almost 90,000 students. And yet how is that classroom, how is that teacher supposed to be able to serve that population?

It's unfair to those children whose parents made the decision to come here. We should never penalize students because of whatever act, whether their parents are here illegally or whatever. As the Senator knows, Horace Mann said it best, the founder of public education in this country, he said that public education served everyone, regardless of gender, race, religion or socioeconomic factors.

If that's truly the case, then we need to step up and start funding bilingual education and immigrant education, because the States that are affected the most by those issues are the States that get the least amount of money to address those types of issues.

In the Clark County School District, if you went into the average classroom, the average classroom will have between three to five limited English proficient students in every classroom in our elementary schools. And yet our teachers, who are trying to deal with overcrowded classrooms, where actually Nevada ranks—there is only five States that have larger class sizes than the State of Nevada. And yet how are we supposed to deal with the issues when we have so many limited English proficient students?

I could go on for days because these are topics of a lot of passion. We have a big concern with the H.R. 1, No Child Left Behind, in terms of the time line. Although we agree on taking on that challenge and we are ready to meet that challenge, we are concerned that the time lines that are supposed to be implemented by September 1, that we—how would we be able to meet those time lines when even the regulations haven't been written in terms of how we are supposed to implement some of these things.

And September 1 for all of us in the school business is just around the corner, and if we are going to meet those challenges, we urge that those guidelines, the regulations, come immediately so that we will have some time. And I really worry that some time doesn't mean just 2 or 3 months. When you're a huge institution like ours, we usually need at least a good year to prepare and get our systems in place to address those things.

Last but not least, I want to address that Clark County is working diligently with UNLV, the State Department of Education in

Washoe County, because we think that all these programs like No Child Left Behind are great programs to have, great laws. But what we really need in public education is we need centers developed that evaluate programs and determine what it is that truly works in education.

Why keep investing millions and millions and billions of dollars every year since the inception of Title I and Chapter 1, when the money just keeps going and our results aren't changing significantly.

What we need is centers to be developed, and we are encouraging the Senator and everyone to please fund places like a resource evaluation and assessment center that can do the entire western States that can put together the top programs in the Nation, what is it that works in educating our students.

If we are truly going to close the achievement gap between minorities, who incidentally are now the majority in the Clark County School District, that we are truly going to close that gap, we need the resources to study and evaluate what works.

PREPARED STATEMENT

We can no longer continue to rely on vendors, publishers, to tell us and share with us their data. Their data, no offense to them, is a little skewed. What we want is we want to determine, using our own students, and make the determination whether or not things work.

Please support us in developing such centers so that all our children will truly not get left behind.

Thank you.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARLOS A. GARCIA

On behalf of the 244,684 children of Clark County School District, Las Vegas, Nevada, I am pleased to present testimony to this committee. Our district is the fastest growing school district in the United States. It includes urban, outlying, and rural areas of the county. Within the district, we are divided into five geographic regions, with approximately 50,000 students per region.

To house our students we have a building program unlike any in the United States. During the 2001-02 school year, Clark County School District has opened sixteen new schools. It is relevant to note that each month approximately 1,000 new students register for school in our district, many who speak little or no English.

In presenting a brief overview of Clark County School District, I must tell you that the challenges we face on a daily basis are exacerbated by the need to cut over \$84 million from our budget over the past two years. While the cuts have increased our creativity in providing program resources for our students and staff, the budget conditions have also inhibited our ability to help our students achieve their full potential.

In our district, at-risk schools did not happen overnight, and they will not go away overnight. Resolving the issues that plague our at-risk schools will take time and a constant improvement effort by staff, students, parents and community in supplying the many resources needed to remove the stigma of the "at-risk" label.

While the challenges are great, the philosophy of this remarkable district mirrors the value of the legislation, H.R. 1, *The Leave No Child Behind Act, 2002*. Our district appreciates the increased funding provided and the focus on the neediest of America's children. We also are thankful for the flexibility provided in the legislation.

While our district is ready to meet the challenge, I believe that to fully implement this legislation we face some concerns regarding the impact of this legislation. Specifically, *The Leave No Child Behind Act, 2002* requires a great deal of reporting. Our district does not have the technological capability to provide the types of reporting required. At the present time, our data is kept in many pockets of technology

and the reporting requirement would be largely labor intensive. We ask that you consider allowing the funding resources to be used for the purchase of the infrastructure needed and flexible implementation timelines for districts to be equipped to supply the type of useful and relevant data required

In addition, I ask that you review the impact on funding for students with disabilities. The same formula is used for students with mild disabilities, as well as the severely disabled. Clark County School District received \$18,000,000 in federal funds to support students with disabilities and yet, the encroachment on the CCSD general fund for 2001 is approximately \$94,000,000.

The following represents expenses above the basic per pupil support now provided:

A Resource Room student requires:		
Cost:		
Teacher @ 1:22	52,000/22	\$2,360
Aide @ 1:22	17,000	775
		<hr/>
Total cost		3,135
		<hr/> <hr/>
A student with severe disabilities:		
Cost:		
Teacher @ 1:8	52,000/8	6,500
Aide	20,000/8	2,500
Speech Therapist	52,000/50	1,040
OT/PT	52,000/40	1,300
APE	52,000/40	1,300
Assistive Technology		5,000
		<hr/>
Total cost		19,850

Autism: Autism is the fastest growing disability in the U.S. Research recommends 30 to 35 hours of engagement for preschool age children. The number of hours often dictates a partial home program at district expense. CCSD autistic students grew from 89 students to 879 in five years.

A preschool child with Autism:		
Cost:		
Teacher @ 1:8	52,000/8	\$6,500
(2) Aide @ 1:8	40,000/8	5,000
Speech @ 1:18	52,000/18	2,888
OT/PT @ 1:20	52,000/20	2,600
APE	52,000	1,300
LRE Assistant 1:1 (as needed)	22,000	22,000
Assistive Tech		2,500
In Home Program		20,000
		<hr/>
Total cost		62,788

Full funding for special education is at the top of our wish list. If we cannot have that wish, then the second item would be to fully fund the support needed for our students with the most severe disabilities.

TITLE I

H.R. 1, *The Leave No Child Behind Act, 2002*, is very child focused. I must reiterate our appreciation of the amount of effort that went into this bill to provide for our students with the greatest needs. The district received \$22 million in 2002, while serving approximately 36,000 students in 40 schools. Next year we will receive \$29 million and serve approximately 45,000 students in fifty-one schools.

While the bill's focus on our children requires an immediate response, the January 8, 2002 expectation for implementation is not realistic. For example, the mandate is to hire new aides in Title I with two years of college or an associate's degree and/or pass a rigorous test. It is left to the district to find qualified applicants and to fund higher salaries to aides with an associate degree.

Please consider that our large district will require additional funds to meet qualification standards due to the large number of employees needed. Paramount consideration must also be given to the scarcity of teachers nationwide, especially in critical areas of expertise.

Furthermore, due to our current economic situation we ask that full funding be considered to purchase all testing materials so that all our children can be assessed annually. This is an expense that we are ill-equipped to provide without great damage to all but the core subjects. We believe the mandate of HR1 is to provide our students with a full education, not partial instruction in limited subject matter.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

At the present time, we serve 67,026 Hispanic students and approximately 53,428 are receiving English Language Learning services. The program receives \$250,000 a year for teacher training and \$225,000 for three years to implement a Dual Language Program.

There is a tremendous need for additional funding to support ELL programs in our district.

In summation, we believe HR1, The Leave No Child Behind Act, 2002 is the building block for public education for the future. It provides direction, accountability and most of all, security for our children. We ask that the direction for this bill include realistic funding resources and a pragmatic timeline of implementation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the needs of students in Clark County School District.

Senator REID. We are fortunate to have with us today the person who represents the teachers in the State of Nevada, Ken Lange. Thanks for being here.

We are now going to hear from Tammie Carter. Tammie is a parent who currently has a child enrolled in Title I prekindergarten program at Kermit Booker Elementary School. She was chosen to represent the parents and the students enrolled in the Title I pre-K program because she is active in the parent involvement component, and she's familiar with classroom procedures and learning activities in which children engage. She has firsthand knowledge of the benefits and growth that her child has experienced as a result of her enrollment in the program.

Tammie.

STATEMENT OF TAMMIE CARTER

Ms. CARTER. Thank you, Senator Reid.

I can honestly say that I'm proud to say that I was born, raised and educated in the State of Nevada. So it's not hard for me to speak on the importance of education. My personal best, I have a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling from UNLV. So I know the importance of an education and I continually strive for educational arenas and I'm proud to be here today.

However, education must have a starting point. The starting point should be best at home. It starts at home, daycares, and when that does not happen, unfortunately that falls on the burden of our Clark County School District.

The Title 1 program is not a day care. I'm an active parent for Title 1 programs. Nor should they be considered a daycare program. Specifically your Pre-K programs, 3-year-old and 4-year-old programs, they offer some things to children that they never receive at home if they don't get it before kindergarten, for a 2½ hour period.

This exposure to education early will open doors later for those children, get them interested in education at an early age. Children can learn at 3-years-old, 2-years-old, 1-year-old. They can learn.

As a parent of a Title 1 attendee for Kermit R. Booker, I am very pleased with the template that has been given to my daughter. I sent my daughter to Kermit R. Booker with the concerns of a speech impediment that I saw.

I was later spoken to by a speech therapist and she said she just has the knowledge, but not the basis to get that knowledge out. So she eased my concerns about the Title 1 program of what it offers to my child. She just didn't have the knowledge to know what she wanted to say. So I thought she was stuttering. Come to find out she was just overactive in her mind.

I was later offered psychological counseling for my daughter, not that anything was wrong, but she was shy and timid. She is an only child. So she is used to playing by herself. That psychological counseling helped me and my daughter to help her with her outgoing in classrooms and other students of similar background, ethnic background, religious background, and I'm happy for that.

My initial concerns with the program were involvement, what did I need to do. It is mandatory that parents must spend at least 30 minutes in the classroom program with their child. The parents and the teachers work together, the parents go to their homes to see not only the home environment, but do the parents have the background, the basis, the foundation that they need in order to educate the child at home, also.

It doesn't make sense to have a teacher send homework home and the parent not know what to do with it either. So they have the home visits. It's very needed. I have the background. Some don't.

The Title 1 program is a stepping stone for children, economically, socially, to be exposed to reading, writing, social skills, communication, and self expression. With the mandatory involvement for parents, it also advises parents on what they also need to do in the community to help the school district educate these kids.

The Title 1 program needs the funding. Some of these children would never receive some of the things that Title 1 provides, books, crayons at home, scissors at home, glue at home.

Unfortunately, I do understand that funding probably is not available for Pre-K to be in all school districts, all school areas. You have to live in a certain area for Title 1 to be provided for your child. But if we cut the funding for Title 1 programs, we are also breaking our foundation for making these children highly educated individuals, breaking the foundation that you have laid for Pre-K going into kindergarten will not only hurt the State of Nevada, but Clark County as a school district itself.

We need to start early. I am going to do everything I can as long as my child is in this program, and after she is out of this program, to see that this program continues, no matter what I need to do. I need to get involved as a community member, as a voter, to be a part of these programs.

PREPARED STATEMENT

To the Board, and to all those that are present, this enriches our community, not only communities where children are in need, but other communities so that we can all interact together. There is no

more biased background anymore. We need to all come together on one accord and educate all of our children in these programs.

I thank you for your time.
[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TAMMIE CARTER

It's not hard to speak on the importance of education, my personal best is a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling and I continually strive for educational arena's. However, education must have a starting point. That starting point should be home and daycare, seeing that it is not always possible the public school system bares this burden. My child is presently enrolled in the Title I Pre K program at Kermit R. Booker Elementary School.

Title One Program is not day care, nor should it ever be considered as such. Title One Program (specifically Pre-K) offers the foundation that some children will not be exposed to. Exposure that will open doors later!

As a parent of a Title One attendee, I am very pleased with the beginning template that has been offered to my daughter at Kermit R. Booker. I would only hope that Kindergarten programs will mirror this fine program and uphold such high standards of learning. My initial concerns was a noticeable stuttering problem, that turned out to be the active mind of a child not having the vocabulary to express herself. My daughter has been taught to slow down while I was taught not to rush the thought process. Speech therapy and Psychological counseling were offered to solve those issues.

Title One is a stepping stone for children of all social and economic backgrounds to be exposed to reading, writing, social skills, communication and self expression. The mandatory involvement from parents encompass the responsibilities to educate at home too!! Teachers and the Family Aides make monthly home visits bringing parents activities to do with the children, reinforcing what they have learned in school. Twice a month, parents attend meetings at school where guest speakers may be used to discuss parenting skills, enrichment activities, health issues, nutrition and job skills.

Unfortunately funding probably doesn't allow Pre-K programs in all schools or 4 hour kindergarten classes but if funding can increase to provide such resources perhaps a decrease in Clark County's education woes will be evident. Finding qualified, dedicated employee's within the community is also a challenge that Nevada is facing, but if we break that foundation and cut back on programs for the children we decrease our chances for growth, not only as a community but as a state.

Senator REID. I want to say, if any of you have any questions of any of the witnesses here, save them because we are all going to remain here and respond to questions if you have any.

Karen Taycher, co-founder of Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents, Nevada's Parent Training and Information Center, Parents with Children with Disabilities. She's served as director for the past decade.

At its inception Nevada PEP, as it's called, which is a small parent support group in southern Nevada, has more than tripled since she started.

Karen is inspired by her 18-year-old son who has multiple disabilities, and by her enthusiastic 14-year-old son.

Ms. Taycher has been a strong advocate for family support and community collaboration from the time her eldest son was born.

She's been honored for development of Challenger Baseball, nominated for Distinguished Woman of Southern Nevada, and nominated for Peacemaker of the Year from the Southern Nevada Mediators Association.

Through her work with PEP and through her experience with her son, Karen understands firsthand the importance of funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Would you please proceed.

**STATEMENT OF KAREN TAYCHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEVADA
PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS**

Ms. TAYCHER. Thank you, Senator Reid. Thank you very much for inviting me to participate in this special field hearing.

I'm honored to be given this opportunity to, on the record, support full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and to show why that act and funding is so important.

I'm the proud mother of two sons. My older son, Kenny, a senior in high school, has visual and hearing impairments, learning disabilities and neurological involvement. He is my inspiration for being here today, and for the work I do every day as the executive director of Nevada PEPS.

Our parents center is partially funded by Part D appropriations. Nationally there are 105 parent centers like Nevada PEPS that support families and provide training and information.

In Nevada there are over 42,000 children with disabilities, and it's estimated that it's 6.2 million children nationally. Parents Centers nationally serve over 2 million families and professionals.

In Nevada our Parent Center reaches 6,500 families and 3,800 professionals. We believe strongly that when families and dedicated educators work together and learn from each other, the opportunities for school, community, and home success dramatically increase with children with disability.

The information that I have personally received from the Parents Center have encouraged me to advocate for my son that he receive a free and appropriate public education.

Throughout his school career Kenny has had access to general curriculums, attended the neighborhood schools, and participated in a mixture of regular and special education classes all based on his individualized strengths and needs.

National outcome data shows that 88 percent of parents who receive support from the Parent Centers feel more confident in their abilities to work with schools and participate in their child's education.

Joining many other States, recently Nevada Assemblywoman Barbara Cegavsky spearheaded the Assembly Joint Resolution urging the President and Congress to increase Federal funding for IDEA.

Most recently Nevada school districts reported spending annually \$250 million on special education. The Federal funds to Nevada was \$27 million. Special education revenue in Nevada comes from 10 percent Federal funds, 26 percent State share and 64 percent from our local districts, which is a significant amount of money.

IDEA appropriations do successfully impact outcomes for children with disabilities. When Kenny was 2, a neurologist shared with my husband and myself that he would probably never walk without an aid such as crutches or a walker.

In his freshman and sophomore years of high school he ran the half mile for his track team, and now he proudly wears a State championship track ring. So IDEA funds made a difference. It was the early intervention, the physical therapy, his adaptive P.E. and the many special educators in his life that helped that to happen. It is just one personal example that if we keep our commitment to children, the successes that we will see.

With the national focus on improving education, it is now more important than ever to increase the Federal commitment of funds for Part B, Part C and Part D of IDEA.

We are facing a national shortage of qualified special education personnel. Programs and centers and improved education for new teachers must be financed to successfully accomplish the goal of educating our children. Parents, professionals, and related service personnel also need education programs and activities to learn to adopt the research-based best practice. Part D of IDEA supports national activities such as statewide improvement, research and innovation, technical assistance, personnel preparation and Parent Centers.

Today I join with the Parent Centers across the Nation, and including the executive director of the Iowa parent center where Senator Harkin is from, and strongly recommend the increase for Parent Centers in the Part D appropriation.

For example, Nevada's allocation as a parent center is \$210,000 annually. We are responsible for 42,000 children statewide. This is the fastest growing urban community, and the variable needs, to our most rural communities, such as Esmerelda, that serves fewer than 10 children with disabilities. This makes it very difficult for us to reach all families in Nevada on that appropriation.

Documented outcomes from Parent Centers are important and prove that parents' involvement works. The National Alliance of Parent Centers data shows that Parent Centers help improve educational outcomes, reduce systemwide reliance on costly litigation, and ensure that parents and schools work in partnership. Research clearly demonstrates that parent involvement is key to student success.

I can provide the outcome data for the Senators, as well.

The IDEA reauthorization debate has begun. Many issues of concern are circulating through the education community, such as the lack of qualified teachers, too much paperwork, and the narrowing of eligibility criteria.

As a parent and an advocate, I believe the protections of IDEA are crucial and that the answer is not to eliminate those protections, but to plan more effectively and use the increase in Federal funds to fully implement IDEA.

I believe the recently passed Senate Budget Resolution to fully fund IDEA by 2008 using a phase-in method, would allow for effective planning by the State to implement IDEA.

In talking a little bit about Part C of IDEA, in Nevada there are 1997 infants and toddlers receiving early intervention services. However, studies indicate that 3 percent of babies are born with disabilities. This is an estimated 700 children in Nevada that are not receiving early intervention services.

On top of not identifying children for early intervention service, Nevada programs for several years unfortunately have retained a waiting list of over 100 children. Although the quality and range of early intervention services has improved since Part C has been adopted, there are an inexcusable number of infants and toddlers in Nevada not receiving any early intervention services. An enhancement of funding for Part C is essential.

Senator Reid, I thank you for inviting me to speak today. I'd like to take this opportunity as the mom of an 18-year-old almost out of school to thank all that are involved, the, educators, policy makers, local, State, and national, who have made it possible for my son to go to school, to live, learn and work as a member of his community, when 25 years ago that would not have been possible.

PREPARED STATEMENT

So we have to celebrate our successes and continue moving forward. I urge the committee to support the full funding of IDEA to fulfill America's promise to all of our children with disabilities.

Thank you.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KAREN TAYCHER

Chairman Harkin, Senator Reid and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies.

Thank you for inviting me to participate in this special field hearing. I am honored to be given the opportunity to support full funding of IDEA, and to share with you why the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act appropriations are critical to the success of our children.

I am the proud mom of two sons. My older son, Kenny, a senior in high school with visual and hearing impairments, learning disabilities and neurological involvement is my inspiration for being here today and for the work I do every day as the Executive Director of Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP). Parents Encouraging Parents is Nevada's Parent Training and Information Center, funded, in part, by Federal IDEA Part D appropriations. IDEA Part D funds support nationally 105 Parent Training and Information Centers and Community Parent Resource Centers. There is at least one Parent Training and Information Center per State to provide support, training, and information for families of infants, children and youth with disabilities. Both the Parent Training and Information Centers and Community Parent Resource Centers will be referred to as "Parent Centers" throughout this presentation.

There are over 42,000 children with disabilities birth through 21 years old in Nevada, and an estimated 6.2 million nationally. Parent Centers nationally serve over 2 million families and professionals, and in Nevada our funds have allowed us to reach only 6,500 families. In addition to serving families, Nevada PEP provides information and training services to over 3,800 teachers, related service personnel, and paraprofessionals. Believing strongly that when families and dedicated educators work together, and learn from each other, the opportunities for school, community, and home success dramatically increase for children with disabilities. National Parent Center data shows that 368,574 parents and 147,840 professionals in 2001 together attended training workshops offered by Parent Centers.

The information and support I have received as a result of the Parent Training and Information Center encouraged me to partner with the schools, advocating that my son receive a free appropriate public education. Throughout his school career, Kenny has had access to the general curriculum, attended neighborhood schools and participated in a mixture of regular and special education classes based on his individualized strengths and needs. National outcome data from Parent Centers shows that 88 percent of parents who received services from a Parent Center feel more confident in their ability to work with the schools and participate in their child's education.

Joining many other States, recently Nevada Assemblywoman Barbara Cegavske spearheaded an Assembly Joint Resolution urging the President and the Congress to increase federal funding for IDEA. The Resolution calls for a strong partnership between local, state and federal governments in order to fully meet the needs of children with disabilities.

In fiscal year 2001, Nevada school districts reported spending approximately 250 million from all revenue sources on special education. Federal grants to Nevada for fiscal year 2001 special education were 27 million. For fiscal year 2001 the special education revenue in Nevada comes from 10 percent federal funds, 26 percent state share and 64 percent local which is a significant amount to each school district's general fund. The average per pupil expenditure in Nevada for special edu-

cation students is approximately 2.5 times the average expenditure for a general education student.

The federal fiscal year 2001 and 2002 IDEA increases have helped but the federal appropriation is still well short of the 40 percent originally promised. The recent appropriation increases to Nevada have provided for additional training of teachers, parents and administrators. More children with disabilities have received the specialized equipment and assistive technology necessary for them to access and meaningfully benefit from their education. The additional funding supported the provision of related services, special education bilingual services, extended school year services, and teacher assistants to support children with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment.

IDEA funds do successfully impact outcomes for children with disabilities. When Kenny was two years old a neurologist told us that he would probably never walk with out crutches or a walker. In his freshman and sophomore years of high school he ran the half-mile for the school track team and now proudly wears a state championship ring. This is a direct result of IDEA funds. It was the early intervention, physical therapy, adaptive PE, vision specialists, dedicated special and general educators who helped to make this happen. This is just one personal example of the success children with disabilities can achieve if we keep our commitment. It is important to recognize that great progress has been made, however current research shows a need to continue improving outcomes in such areas as graduation and employment rates. With the national focus on improving education as a whole, it is now more important than ever to increase the Federal commitment of funds for Part B, Part C and Part D of IDEA, to improve academic achievement and successful outcomes for children with disabilities.

There is a national shortage of qualified special education personnel. Programs, incentives, and improved education for new teachers must be funded to successfully accomplish the goal of providing a free appropriate public education for children with disabilities. Parents, paraprofessionals, related service personnel and administrators also need access to education programs and activities to learn and adopt research based best practice. Part D of IDEA supports national activities such as statewide improvement, research and innovation, technical assistance and dissemination, personnel preparation, and Parent Information Centers.

I join with the Parent Centers across the country who are strongly recommending an increase to the Parent Center Part D appropriations, for a total of \$64 million in fiscal year 2003. For example Nevada's allocation of Parent Training and Information funding is only \$250,000 annually. Nevada PEP is responsible for the entire state which has over 42,000 families from the fastest growing urban community in the nation, Las Vegas, to the small rural county of Esmerelda, which serves fewer than 10 children with disabilities. The heartbreaking complaint I continually hear about Nevada PEP is that parents are upset that they did not know about us sooner. They wish they would have had access to the support and information when their children were younger. Additional Parent Center funding would help us to reach more of the 35,000 families who currently do not receive Parent Center information or support

Documented outcomes prove that Parent Centers are an integral component of the special education process. Data shows that Parent Centers help to: improve the educational outcomes and life skills of students with disabilities; reduce system-wide reliance on costly litigation to resolve problems; improve parent involvement and satisfaction with educational programs; ensure that parents and schools work in partnership and raise long-term employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. Research clearly demonstrates the parental involvement is key to student success. I have copies for you today of the Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (Alliance) 1997 through 2001 Parent Center Outcome Data.

The IDEA reauthorization debate has begun. Many issues of concern are circulating through the education community, such as a lack of qualified teachers, the suggestion of too much paperwork, and the narrowing of eligibility categories. As a parent and an advocate, I believe the protections in IDEA are crucial and that the answer is not to eliminate the protections but to plan more effectively, and to use the increase in federal funds to fully implement IDEA. For example paperwork reduction would occur if special education teachers had smaller caseloads, more contact with their students, clerical support and the opportunity to build trusting relationships with families. Kenny is now in the transition phase of his education, learning about adult services and requiring community based instruction. His Transition Specialists covers youth with disabilities at over five largely populated high schools in our community. Our special educators are sometimes expected to do the impossible, not because of the IDEA law and regulations but because of the lack of funding to support an appropriate number of qualified personnel. I believe that the

recently passed Senate Budget Resolution to fully fund IDEA by fiscal year 2008, using a phase in method, would allow for effective planning by states and districts to address many of the concerns now being debated.

I join with the National Coalition of Parent Centers to recommend that the Parent Information and Training program funded under Section 303 of title III of the Rehabilitation Act be increased \$7.5 million to include funding for every Parent Center to have transition/rehabilitative staff available to help families and students transition from the world of school to work and community.

Nevada is currently providing 1997 infants and toddlers with early intervention services. Studies indicate that 3 percent of the birth to 3 population is born with disabilities. Consequently, it is estimated that over 700 infants and toddlers in Nevada have not been identified and are not receiving early intervention services. Early intervention programs in Nevada for several years have unfortunately retained a waiting list of over 100 infants and toddlers statewide. Many research studies show that children with developmental delays are healthier and learn better when they receive services as early in their lives as possible.

When Kenny was two years old, Part C had not been passed yet. Nevada did have an early intervention program but it was difficult to get in. It was a medical model. You took what they had, and it did not include family supports. Now families experience much more supportive services based on their individualized needs, and families continue to receive support through the transition into the public school system.

Although the quality and range of early intervention services has improved, there are an inexcusable number of infants and toddlers with disabilities who are not receiving early intervention. An enhancement of funding for Part C of IDEA is essential.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Reid and Members of the Subcommittee, I thank you for inviting me to speak to the Subcommittee today. I would also like to thank the thousand of advocates, educators, policy-makers, including local, state, and national leaders who have made it possible through IDEA for my son with multiple disabilities to live, learn and work as a member of his community. I urge you to fully fund IDEA to fulfill America's promise to all of our children with disabilities.

Senator REID. Our next witness, Albert Maldonado.

He didn't speak any English when he came to Las Vegas from Mexico City when he was 15 years old. By his senior year in high school, thanks to the intensive English program at Las Vegas High School, he won awards for attendance and scholastic achievement, and served as vice-president of the student organization of Latinos. Mr. Maldonado is going to share with us the impact of English language learners programs has had on his life.

Alberto.

STATEMENT OF ALBERT MALDONADO

Mr. MALDONADO. First of all, thank you, Senator Reid, for giving me the chance to be here. Thanks to all of you for being here.

Can everyone hear me? I'm sorry.

When I came here to the United States 9 years ago I felt lonely and afraid knowing that I had to learn a new life, a new language, a new culture, how to walk on the streets, even how to ride a bus.

I remember clearly I arrived on Saturday morning and by Monday morning I was in school. I had very strict parents, as you can see. I didn't know anything, zero, nada, as we all say. I was afraid that everyone wants to—was going to speak English to me and I was not going to be able to respond, or I just didn't know what to do. I was terrified, if you will.

That first day I met my teacher, Ms. Hernandez. I remember I would not say a word. Of course, I didn't know how to speak English. I listened to what she was saying. I didn't know that she could even speak English. She is actually fluent in English—Spanish.

I felt more comfortable at the end of the class knowing that I had found someone that could speak my language and I was actually able to communicate.

After that, I found other teachers who would help me to learn English. One of them was Mrs. Williams, that taught me everything from my basic words like window, door, hello, and how to make sentences and talk to people in English.

Mr. Luna taught me my U.S. history, helped me to learn my new culture. After my first year Mrs. Leoni helped me to learn and how to read independently English so I could learn more and do research.

Mrs. Monroy helped me to learn to write correctly in English and how to read more advanced material. I began to speak more English and joined the student organization of Latinos where I made friends and worked on community services projects.

When I passed my proficiency test, which it was actually the second year that I was here, my junior year, I felt I had made a big challenge and I could finally achieve all my goals. I was the first person in my family to graduate from high school, believe it or not. They have been here for quite a long time, and I was the first one to graduate from high school.

My family just looked up to me to accomplish things that they couldn't do. I knew I had the chance to go to college where I can develop my skills. I am so thankful for my school my teachers and, first of all, the EOL program, because without it, I wouldn't be here today. I wouldn't be able to speak to you in English. I wouldn't have a chance to even go to school or go to work without knowing my second language, which now, thanks to my wife and all my friends, it is my first, first language now. I believe that I am an example of what can happen when schools and teachers really care.

Last but not least, I want to thank you for having the EOL program, because without it, once again, people like me that come from a different place, not knowing anything, wouldn't have a chance to succeed.

I had a dream. I had an ambition. I had the eager desire to be here, to learn. But without the chance, without programs like EOL, I wouldn't be here. So today I want to thank all of you. I want to thank Senator Reid and everyone else who is here for fighting, if you will, towards our goals, helping us all to have programs, going all the way to Washington to speak for us.

PREPARED STATEMENT

So I thank you all, and I thank all the parents. And I do ask to please help their children at home, because I believe that—and I think, my parents were strict, I believe if they help us at home, we can do better at school.

Thank you, Senator Reid.
[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALBERT MALDONADO

When I came to the United States nine years ago, I felt lonely and afraid, knowing that I had to learn a new life—a new language, a new culture, how to walk on the streets. I arrived on a Saturday, and Monday morning I was in school. I didn't know anything, and I was afraid everyone was going to speak English to me, and I wouldn't know how to act or respond to those people.

That first day, I met my teacher, Ms. Hernandez. As I remember, I would not say a word. I just listened to what she was saying. I didn't know that she could speak Spanish. I felt more comfortable at the end of the class, knowing I had found someone who could speak my language. I could communicate!

After that, I found other teachers who would help me learn English. Ms. Willems taught me everything, from basic words like "window" and "door" to how to make sentences and talk to people in English. Mr. Luna taught me U.S. history and helped me to learn the culture. After my first year, Ms. Leone helped me learn to read independently in English so I could learn more and do research. Ms. Monroy helped me learn to write correctly in English and to read more advanced material. I began to speak more English and joined the Student Organization of Latinos, where I made friends and worked on community service projects.

When I passed my proficiency tests, I felt like I had met a big challenge and could finally achieve all my goals. I was the first person in my family to graduate from high school, and my family looked up to me to accomplish things in life that they couldn't. I knew I had the chance to go to college and have a career where I could help others and develop my skills. I am thankful for my school, my teachers, and the ELL program. I am an example of what can happen when schools and teachers really care.

Senator REID. English is pretty good, isn't it?

Mr. MALDONADO. Thank you.

Senator REID. I guarantee you his second year was better than my Searchlight English.

Jennifer Parmeley and her son have participated in Early Head Start Programs for over 2 years. As a teen mother, Jennifer is working hard toward her goal of being a good mother and a good college student. But where others may have given up, Jennifer has not. She has worked hard to achieve these goals and has maintained a 3.8 grade point average in University of Nevada Reno honors program.

Although Early Head Start and Head Start programs are funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Jennifer can explain how they helped to advance not only her son's education, but her own education.

Please proceed, Jennifer.

STATEMENT OF JENNIFER PARMELEY

Ms. PARMELEY. Before I start, I just want to say how grateful I am to be given this opportunity to talk about a program that has changed my life.

My goals appeared impossible. I was pregnant and I was devastated. Forget college; I wasn't sure I could graduate high school, but I did and I had my son in January of 2000. When he was 4 months old we moved from Las Vegas to Reno. I was going to make use of my scholarship and attended the University of Nevada at Reno. But with only my scholarship I still wouldn't have been able to afford to go to school. Where would I have found quality child care I could afford? The Early Head Start program gave me that opportunity.

Every step of the way Early Head Start has supported me. If I've needed anything, the staff has been there to assist me. When my car broke down and I couldn't get to class, staff members picked me up and drove me to school. When I have a question about nutrition or discipline or safety or healthcare or any of the millions of things that new parents wonder about, there's someone knowledgeable to answer it. They've given me referrals to WIC, food stamps, Medicaid and rental and energy assistance programs.

When I couldn't afford immunizations they helped me find a place to get them for free. Out of things I have at home, I've learned to make toys that reinforce what my son is learning in school. They even give us a book every month. There are parent meetings and family support groups that give me the opportunity to interact with other parents and to develop self-assurance.

I am able to volunteer in my son's classroom; I'm involved in the policy council. They've helped me evaluate my goals and break them into small, manageable steps, so I can see how to achieve them. But it's not about them helping me. It's about me learning how to help myself, and that makes all the difference in the world. I not only have confidence as a parent, but also as a person, because of this program.

Early Head Start is more than just a day care. My son has had his hearing checked, his vision checked, and his teeth fluoridated onsite, while I was at school. When my son is there, I know he's not just being supervised, he's being educated.

I am consistently amazed at the new things he's learning. Not just cognitive or language development; he's learning how to interact with adults and other children. Even when our home has not been stable, I know his classroom has. He's had the same teachers since we came to the program, and most of the same classmates.

His routines are familiar, the people are kind, interested and involved, and the place feels like home. I know he'll have a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snacks. They provide the diapers he uses at school, and since diapers cost about 25 cents each, that's a tremendous help.

Not only does Early Head Start help with my educational goals, I know the opportunities he's getting right now will stay with him forever. I know that he won't trail behind more affluent children in kindergarten. He'll be more likely to graduate high school because of the program. He's being read to, not just left in front of a television. He's learning to put puzzles together and learning to build towers so tall that in the future, he'll reach the sky.

My son is now 6 months from graduating from the program and they're helping me find a new child care arrangement. I could enroll him in the Head Start program, but it's only available for half days 4 days a week, not enough time for me to go to school and work. So Early Head Start referred me to a subsidy that will help me pay for childcare. I'm sorry to leave the Early Head Start program, and I wish that there were a Head Start that could meet our needs.

Because this program exists, I've been able to pursue my degree, and I'm hoping to attend law school, and eventually become a lawyer or even a lobbyist. Because this program exists, the dreams that were impossible when I first learned I was pregnant are now attainable.

PREPARED STATEMENT

Early Head Start gives so many families like mine the ability to find self-sufficiency through education. My only wish is that more families could be served. Imagine what would happen if every impoverished child had a head start.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JENNIFER PARMELEY

My goals were impossible. Forget college; I wasn't sure I could graduate high school. But I did, and then I had my son, and in January of 2000, when he was four months old, we moved from Las Vegas to Reno. I was going to make use of my scholarship. But with only my scholarship I wouldn't have been able to afford to go to school. Where would I have found quality childcare I could afford? The Early Head Start program gave me that opportunity.

Every step of the way Early Head Start has supported me. If I've needed anything, the staff has been there to assist me. When my car broke down and I couldn't get to class, staff members picked me up and drove me to school. When I have a question about nutrition or discipline or safety or healthcare or any of the millions of other things that new parents wonder about, there's someone knowledgeable to answer it. They've given me referrals to WIC, food stamps, Medicaid and rental and energy assistance programs. When I couldn't afford immunizations they helped me find a place to get them for free. Out of things I have at home, I've learned to make toys that reinforce what my son is learning in school. They even give us a book a month. There are Parent Meetings and Family Support Groups that give me the opportunity to interact with other parents and develop self-assurance.

I am able to volunteer my son's classroom; I'm involved in the Policy Council. They've helped me evaluate my goals, and break them into small manageable steps, so I can see how to achieve them. But it's not about them helping me. It's about me learning how to help myself, and that makes all the difference in the world. I not only have confidence as a parent, but also as a person, because of this program.

Early Head Start is more than just a day care. My son has had his hearing checked, his vision checked, and his teeth fluoridated on-site, while I was at school. When my son is there, I know he's not just being supervised—he's being educated.

I am consistently amazed at the new things he's learning. Not just cognitive or language development; he's learning how to interact with adults and other children. Even when our home has not been stable, I know his classroom has. He's had the same teachers since we came to the program, and most of the same classmates. His routines are familiar, the people are kind, interested and involved, and the place feels like home. I know he'll have a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snacks. They provide the diapers he uses at school, and, since diapers cost about 25 cents each, that's a tremendous help.

Not only does Early Head Start help with my educational goals, I know the opportunities he's getting right now will stay with him forever. I know that he won't trail behind more affluent children in kindergarten. He'll be more likely to graduate high school because of this program. He's being read to, not just left in front of a television. He's learning to put puzzles together, and learning to build towers so tall that in the future: he'll reach the sky.

My son is now six months from graduating from the program and they're helping me find a new childcare arrangement. I could enroll him in the Head Start program but its only available half days four days a week not enough time for me to go to school and work. So Early Head Start referred me to a subsidy that will help me pay for childcare. I'm sorry to leave the Early Head Start program, and I wish that there were a Head Start that could meet our needs.

Because this program exists, I've been able to pursue my degree, and I'm hoping to attend law school, and eventually become a lawyer or even a lobbyist. The dreams that were impossible when I first learned I was pregnant are now attainable.

Early Head Start gives so many families like mine the ability to find self-sufficiency through education. My only wish is that more families could be served. Imagine what would happen if every impoverished child had a head start.

Senator REID. Nationwide there are more than 11 million children left alone and unsupervised during the after school hours. The juvenile crime rate is the highest between the hours of 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. After school programs like the 21st Century Learning Centers Program takes kids off the street kids, out of these houses and away from drugs.

Through her daughter's experience, Paula Pressley has seen firsthand the impact the 21st Century programs on our children.

Ms. Pressley.

STATEMENT OF PAULA PRESSLEY

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you, Senator Reid.

I'd like to thank Sheila Moulton and Mary Beth Scow for inviting me here to speak on behalf of 21st Century Community Learning Center Program.

My daughter's name is Jamie, and she is in 8th grade. She's been in the after school program since it's been started 2 years ago. This is her second year with the Future Teachers program. It's one of the many activities that she really enjoys during the after school programs. The Future Teacher's goal is to go to the elementary schools 4 days a week to tutor the younger children.

She also participates on Saturdays when they have the art classes and the many events that they offer with this program for the 21st Century—excuse me, people. I'm very nervous, can you tell?

Okay. And I know this program has impacted her life in a positive way. She cares more about school than she ever had before. She hates to miss school at any time and she hates to miss any of the after school programs that she's attended.

This program has helped her in many ways and it helped her feel good about herself. She's continued to work with the children inside school, outside school, all around.

She has applied to several of the high school magnet programs. One of the programs which does offer the Future Teachers, I am sure the after school program has a positive effect on the younger students at Sunrise Acres School, also.

PREPARED STATEMENT

When Jamie sees them at the store or they see her, they say "Hi, Miss Pressley," with a big smile on their face. It gives me great pleasure to know that there are opportunities like this program for my daughter and children like her to be able to make a difference.

Thank you.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAULA PRESSLEY

My name is Paula Pressley and one of my daughters is very active in the 21st Century Community Learning Center at Roy Martin Middle School in Las Vegas, NV. Jamie is an 8th grader. She has been active in the afterschool programs since they began two years ago. This is her second year as a part of the Future Teachers program, which is one of many activities held during the afterschool program. The Future Teachers take middle school age kids to Sunrise Acres Elementary School four days each week to tutor younger students. She also participates in the Saturday art classes and other events held through the 21st Century Community Learning Center program. I know that this program has impacted her life in a positive way. Since starting the program, she cares much more about school. She does not want to miss school. If she has a doctor's appointment, she says it must be after her future teachers program, because she doesn't want to miss tutoring the younger kids. The program helps her to feel good about herself. She wants to continue working with kids in some way even after she leaves middle school. She has applied to several high school magnet programs. One of the programs is for future teachers. I am sure the afterschool program has a positive effect for the younger students at Sunrise Acres Elementary School, too. When they see Jamie at the store, they say, "Hi Miss Jamie," with big smiles on their faces. It gives me great pleasure to know that there are opportunities like this program for my daughter and children like her, to be able to make a difference.

Senator REID. Carlos, Tammie, Karen, Alberto, Paula, Jennifer, we appreciate very much your addressing us here today.

One thing that's not on the program, but I'm going to take the liberty, I've always been a big advocate for the Federal Government

programs to help local school districts keep kids in school. It's the right thing to do for the children. It's the right thing to do for everybody that is paying taxes, because it saves money.

We've struggled. Senator Bingaman from New Mexico and I have worked on this program for a number of years. We finally got a little bit of money last year for high school dropout programs. We know we have to move down lower than high school dropouts, but at least we need to work on these dropout programs. Even though it's not on the program because I see him here, Terry Lizotte is here. I may not pronounce your name right; how do you pronounce your last name?

Mr. LIZOTTE. You did it correctly.

Senator REID. Terry, would you come forth and tell us a little bit about the dropout programs and why we need more resources, and the resources we have, how much good they do.

Please give your name for the reporter, and spell it.

STATEMENT OF TERRY LIZOTTE, DIRECTOR, GRANTS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION, CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mr. LIZOTTE. Terry Lizotte.

Senator REID. Something is not working. Maybe it's me.

Mr. LIZOTTE. Terry Lizotte, L-i-z-o-t-t-e. I'm the Director of the grants development administration department for the school district. We have a variety of dropout programs. Each of them—quite a few of them have already been mentioned here today. I would like to take a couple minutes on some of them.

Back in 1991 we began a program called "The Las Vegas Program." That was a grant program which was probably one of the very first dropout programs that we applied for. It was a \$3 million program that helped us start a Horizon High School program. That was specifically a program designed for credit deficient students. We have a variety of those since then. Since that program started we have over 1,800 students who have graduated that would not have graduated.

So as far as money goes, as far as funding goes, those are one of the more important programs.

You mentioned the 21st Century programs. We have a concern as far as that goes. Our district right now has a competitive grant and we have an earmark grant of about \$1.1 million total. That's a terrific program. Susan Bonnar, who runs the program for us, is here and can provide more information about the individual activities, but one of my concerns is that the State of Nevada is only going to get \$1.5 million this next year for the 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs.

We know that Washoe County and several other counties have programs they would like funded, but that's a concern. We realize that the funding is not going to be available at the levels we would like to see it.

In smaller communities there is also another program. As we all know, large schools are a standard in this county. We are working—again, another program that we got \$250,000 planning grant for, we have just applied for \$2.5 million to help our high schools, at least eight of them, develop smaller learning communities that are specifically designed to bring students in closer with the staffs,

with the teachers, with the whole community, and help cut down, that is, to cut down on the dropout program or dropout problems that we have experienced.

There is a lot of research that says smaller learning or smaller schools are able to respond better. With our tremendous growth of smaller schools, it is a challenge. So this is one of the programs that we are looking to try and help our large schools become smaller within the same walls.

Another program also that we have found very successful as far as helping control the dropout program is our Indian education. Our Native American Indian students have been challenged probably more so than many.

In the last 5 years we have had approximately 500 students graduated, 500 hundred Native American Indian students graduated. Easily a third to half of those students would not have graduated without Federal funds.

Senator REID. Is that Clark County figures?

Mr. LIZOTTE. Yes, that's just our county. But easily a third to half of the students would not have graduated without the help of Federal funds. So we have a variety of programs that are working, unfortunately underfunded.

Senator REID. Each of these programs that you mentioned to us that are meritorious, according to you, but you could do a lot better you if you had more money, perhaps?

Mr. LIZOTTE. Absolutely, sir.

Senator REID. Do you have any questions about that?

Mr. LIZOTTE. No, there is no question in my mind. I don't think there is any question in anyone's mind who is working in the program.

Senator REID. Don't you think in the long run, as I mentioned to you, that it would save the taxpayers money if we gave more money to these programs to keep kids in school?

Mr. LIZOTTE. Yes, sir.

Senator REID. Keep children and adults out of the criminal justice system, out of the welfare system, right?

Mr. LIZOTTE. Definitely. Especially the programs like the after school programs, the 21st Century Community Learning Center. There are lots of students who are begging and lining up waiting for those programs.

Senator REID. Thank you very much.

Mr. LIZOTTE. You're welcome.

Senator REID. Now, we would like to hear from those of you in the audience who, as I've indicated earlier, have a statement, a question, or short speech. Don't be bashful. Come forward.

STATEMENT OF CHOPIN KIANG, NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mr. KIANG. Senator, my name is Chopin Kiang, with the Nevada Department of Education.

I extend good wishes from Superintendent Jack McLaughlin, as well as member of the State Board of Education, Theresa Malone.

Senator REID. Please spell your name for the court reporter.

Mr. KIANG. C-h-o-p-i-n, K-i-a-n-g.

I would like to read a short statement that is a conveyance of the sentiment of both Ms. Theresa Malone as well as on behalf of the superintendent and myself.

Senator REID. Please proceed.

Mr. KIANG. Please continue to appropriate education funds that would allow Nevada to receive the maximum amount possible for these programs. Additionally, Nevada continues to seek Federal funding to push forward the A-plus project entitled Center for Academic Student Achievement, CASA.

This effort has been the work of three educational entities, the Nevada Department of Education, the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, UNLV, and the Clark County School District, under the leadership of Carlos Garcia.

Together they are developing the future template to increase student achievement. We need this research center not only to serve Nevada students but also to serve the Nation.

The best formula to provide student achievement is the desire of every educator. This A-plus research project will provide that formula, train educators, and track the successes of student progress. That's the verbatim quote from the document that has been submitted officially to this panel through your staff.

I would also like to add two other comments. First, the testimony of Alberto Maldonado, sir, I would like to tell you that 40 something years ago I, too, experienced your experiences in the new country that I came to. And today English is my first language as well, and I'm proud to be an American.

Thank you for saying what you said today.

Mr. MALDONADO. May I address him?

Senator REID. Alberto wanted to respond to you.

Mr. MALDONADO. I wanted to respond to that. Actually, I just wanted to ask, don't you think that, I don't know if when you came over they had this kind of program, but now that they do, don't you think that without this program, okay, without the programs you and I wouldn't have the chance to be here.

So with this program we have a great, greater chance for us to be better to our community. So I thank you and I admire you for being here. And I want to say once again, thank you to everyone that supports every program for this district, school district, if you will.

Thank you.

Mr. KIANG. Thank you. And also, to piggyback on that statement, and it is really my second point as well, I want to point out in response to Karen Taycher's testimony, when I came to America I, too, was also placed in a special program for the speech impediment human being, as well, for a person who couldn't speak English.

And as a result of a special ed program, and without the help of ESL program in those days in 1950s, I actually became an educated person today. So please support both the issue regarding limited English proficient students as well as students with disabilities which are whole heart, Senator, because I really think we all deserve to be treated equally.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF MARSHA WASHINGTON, NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ms. WASHINGTON. Good morning.

First of all, my name is Marsha Washington. I'm with the State Board of Education. I'm a State Board of Education member. I'm also an employee with the Clark County School District.

I have a number of questions. The first question is, I know that there is a literacy problem in this country, and I know that there is a new H.R. 1 bill that's supposed to assist with children, with No Child Left Behind.

What I am trying to figure out is how is it the Federal Government bails out savings and loans, bails out airlines, but they can't bail out education? That's one of my serious concerns. We can find money for every other cause, but we can't find money to educate our students. And that's my big concern.

Thank you.

Senator REID. Marsha, that's what this hearing is all about. We have to do everything we can to focus attention. I think we've done that here today on programs. You know, people are afraid to talk about programs. I think we need to do that. Let people know these programs are not just numbers on a chart. We have lots of charts you can see. But actual human beings.

You know, I don't know how the rest of you felt, but when Karen talked about her boy running, what did he run, the mile, half mile?

Ms. TAYCHER. Half mile.

Senator REID. Half mile, that brought tears to my eyes. That's what this is all about. This is a program that cost a lot of money. These programs cost money. But they wind up helping people, and they wind up in the overall scheme of things saving us money.

Listen to what Jennifer had to say. I mean, gee whiz, look at what we have here, because of programs, and I think it's a sad commentary on what we're doing in Washington in not fully funding Head Start. Her little boy should be in the Head Start program. He's not going to be in the Head Start program. That's too bad.

So Marsha, you're absolutely right, and I appreciate your focusing on this again. Anyone that will listen and those that won't listen, just scream a little louder, we have got to take care of education, and it doesn't come on the cheap. You can't educate people by putting a fancy name on a bill. I'd rather have an ugly name on a bill and money that goes to school directly. Leaving no child behind and having no money is leaving the child behind.

STATEMENT OF ISAAC BARRON, TEACHER, RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL, CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mr. BARRON. Good morning, Senator Reid, members of the panel. My name is Isaac Barron. I am a teacher at Rancho High School.

Senator REID. Spell your name for the reporter.

Mr. BARRON. I-s-a-a-c, last name B-a-r-r-o-n.

I'm happy to say I'm a product of the Clark County school district and UNLV. I have been teaching at Rancho High School for 5 years now. It's more than a question, mostly a commentary. Over at Rancho High School I have 2,800 students. And of those 2,800

students, about a little over 600 of them are ESL students, okay, about 22 percent of the population of our high school.

We have eight ESL teachers. Very easily we have the largest program in the, probably in the school district, but only eight teachers to serve them. Last year there were some rumors that there might even have been some staff reductions in the ESL department at Rancho High School, but through a little bit of creative staffing there, right, and redefining our positions, we were allowed to have more ESL teachers.

I know our State, to this point, they have not put their money where their mouth is. They say they are really for education, but we haven't seen the money yet. We need help from the State and we need help from the Federal Government. If I need to go down to Washington with you, Senator Reid, I'd be happy to. I'd be happy to.

But getting away from the rhetoric, quite honestly, it is very difficult as a teacher to do a great job, to produce a Mr. Maldonado, someone that we can really be proud of, a successful, productive member of society when we have 40 kids in our classroom. Okay, four classrooms, 40 kids in a classroom, it's really hard to get down to each individual person and give them the individual attention they need.

You know, at Rancho High School I can honestly say that I'm really happy with the staff we have there. We have a great diverse staff, people of many ages, various ages and racial backgrounds. We have a very dynamic staff, great administration. The students are wonderful. We can get the job done if we give them the tools. During World War II, that was a very popular statement, give us the tools, we will get the job done.

We are in a battle right now. This is the same thing. We are in a battle right now. We have a real war, a student war going on right now. We have a battle right now. We are losing part of our generation. There are some kids who are always going to be helped, some kids who are always going to have access to education. Unfortunately not everyone can have that. Instead of cutting, we need to be backing.

Senator Reid, I hope you do everything that you can. And I, myself, I can honestly say I'm behind you, and any backing that you need from me, well, you can personally give me a call at Rancho High School, I'd be happy to help you, and I hope everyone else here feels the same way.

Senator REID. You're a little short for that microphone. There you go. Perfect.

STATEMENT OF MARY GREENE, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

Ms. GREENE. Can you hear?

My name is Mary Greene, G-r-e-e-n-e, and I am a teacher in the Gifted and Talented Education Program here in Clark County. I'm also the president of the National Association for the Gifted and Talented.

I wish to say thank you to Senator Reid in person and in front of people. For the record, in February I was in Washington and scheduled a meeting with Senator Reid to ask for his support for

increased funding to an act that we have that helps to provide research and development for the gifted and talented population.

That is a population that is just as needy as any other. If you look at the record, 18 to 25 percent of our dropout rates comes from our gifted population. They are our children that underachieve in school, and they are our little lost souls that are sitting in classrooms not being challenged.

This historic part of the reason we are asking for increased funding is because we now have as part of the data back State grants which is money that's available for States to compete for. But the money that was available now is \$3.5 billion for 50 States to compete for, which is not a lot of money.

It's the first time that money was to be put into the hands of programs that do exist, and it is the first time that programs would be able to be brought into States, and so our request was for an increased funding of \$14 million so we could have that much money available for States to compete for.

I want to thank you, Senator Reid, for your support. He agreed to co-sign a letter that we have circulating to the Senate now, and also Congresswoman Burke has co-signed too, we have both of you on board. I just appreciate your support, your patience, your kindness, your generosity, and your support for the children. They are most important.

Senator REID. Thank you very much.

I was going to mention, I didn't know you were in the audience—could you, Carlos—this was a dramatic meeting I had in Washington where these women came to talk about what this Gifted and Talented is, it means smart kids, kids who have very high IQs, 130 IQs. These kids are being lost just like kids who are not very smart. Both ends of the spectrum we have problems. These smart kids deserve some attention just like the other kids.

The statistics just sear your soul. Half the kids that drop out are gifted and talented?

Ms. GREENE. Between 18 and 25 percent.

Senator REID. 25 percent of them. Can you imagine, these are people who could be an engineer, who could be a college professor, a doctor, a lawyer, or whatever they want to be, and they are out with no financial assistance.

So I appreciate your being here today. This education thing is very, very serious, especially when you keep in mind these numbers. Last year at this time we had a surplus over the next 10 years of \$4.7 billion—\$4.7 trillion. One year later that's all gone. It's all gone.

We are now spending Social Security trust fund monies, Medicare trust fund monies, and about 25 percent of that is related to the war, the other 75 percent is related, in my opinion, to this goofy idea of tax cuts, and, you know, it's not easy to vote against tax cuts, but I never had one of these rich people come to me, and I'm serious as I can be, I've never had one of these rich people come to me and say would you cut my taxes. I haven't.

And so anyway, I don't want to belabor the point. But we are really hurting for resources, and we have got to do something for education, and Nevada is the poster child of what's wrong with education because of lack of money, in my opinion.

STATEMENT OF FERNANDO ROMERO

Mr. ROMERO. Buenos dias.

For the record, my name is Fernando Romero, F-e-r-n-a-n-d-o, R-o-m-e-r-o. Senator Reid, Superintendent Garcia, the panel members and distinguished audience. I, too, identify with Mr. Maldonado and Mr. Kiang. I started first grade without knowing the language. And I come from the great nation of El Paso, Texas.

I realize the need obviously for bilingual education programs. Thirty years ago a small group of us got together with Superintendent Kenny Guinn, and we pushed very hard for what is now the bilingual education program. I'm proud to say I was the first president of the Bien Benito Program in 1975 of the bilingual program.

It is sad to know that the Spanish community has increased 186 percent since 1992 in Clark County, and that the program, as hard as the various superintendents have tried, and as hard as Superintendent Garcia is trying now, we are falling behind.

You go to the four DMV areas in Clark County and you see 75 percent of people standing in line to pay for their registration, to pay their taxes, to do what has to be done are Hispanic. And yet we are criticized for wanting our school districts to expand on bilingual and ELL programs.

And this is to urge you, Senator, and your colleagues, to think about our children, think about a growing community, to know and realize that the Hispanic is now not only a subculture of, but very much a part of the main culture of education of this country, and that money is spent to allow our children to learn, to grow, to prosper and to contribute.

We are also a part of the No Child Left Behind, because there is no parentheses on children's program in the bill that excepts undocumented immigrants or children of undocumented immigrants or anything like that that excepts the Spanish children. We are part of all of this.

We, as Mr. Kiang pointed out, also have children who are gifted, and I am proud to be the father of a daughter who is gifted, as you know, Senator Reid. I'm very glad to know that we try to get the programs going. At the time it was the gate program where she could take advantage of that. However, the funds are limited. And I'm here basically to speak on behalf of funds for our children who are wanting the language, who are wanting to give of themselves to this country.

I do want to make a comment on a columnist that writes for the major newspaper in Las Vegas, that constantly uses the term "illegal immigrants" and refers to our children and makes fun of our children as such, not realizing perhaps, I'm hoping he doesn't realize, the effect, the negative effect that he has on our children where they go to school and have other kids refer to them as "illegals" or "undocumented."

And I'm hoping that this particular newspaper will view that or view this very seriously and have that individual stop ridiculing our children, stop ridiculing the children who are trying to pledge their allegiance to this country in their own native tongue because they can't in English. They are trying to learn. And yet they are

being ridiculed for demonstrating their patriotism in a language that is the major language of the western hemisphere, in Spanish.

Again, Senator, I hope you're able to successfully deliver the message of most of us that are here to your colleagues. Thank you very much.

Senator REID. When you ladies finish, I want to make sure that we call upon someone who represents the teachers. Ken, I'm going ask you, when these two ladies complete their statements, come forward and give us your view as to what's facing Nevada's education from a teacher's perspective.

STATEMENT OF LINDA RIVERA

Ms. RIVERA. Hello, my name is Linda Rivera, R-i-v-e-r-a, and I'm an advocate for education and for children as a whole.

As a community leader, we have put together a group that coalesces together to try to bring about change with the Clark County School District. We need the support of the programs, the resources that are funded through the 21st Century, the ELL program, and all the others in order to coalesce to bring about change.

We are here in the community. We have spirit. We have passion to bring this change, for the betterment of our community. But without the funding, without the resources available to us through general funding, we can't do that. Please take the word back they must continue. We cannot shortchange the future of this country, our children.

Thank you.

Senator REID. For those of you who for various reasons don't want to say anything, but you do have something on your minds, there are some cards around that the staff, if you haven't picked one up, the staff will give one to you. We will make your comments part of the official record.

Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF DENISE HEDRICK, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE OF WASHOE COUNTY

Ms. HEDRICK. Thank you.

My name is Denise Hedrick, D-e-n-i-s-e H-e-d-r-i-c-k. I am the interim executive director for the Education Collaborative of Washoe County, which is a business and education partnership that is in business to improve education for all students, and that's P through 16. First of all, I want to thank you for bringing this hearing to our State so that your constituents can have an opportunity to respond and take that information back to Washington.

I would like to go on record in support OF full funding the IDEA, and to do whatever is possible in a State and national level to decrease the disparity in the per pupil spending that Nevada that has available to them.

Thank you.

Senator REID. We are going to hear from Mr. Lange and the lady over here, and that will be all the time we will have.

Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF KENNETH LANGE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEVADA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Mr. LANGE. The other microphone is too tall; this one is too short.

Senator REID. The microphones are just right. You're just not the right size.

Mr. LANGE. My mother keeps telling me to grow up.

Senator Reid, members of the panel, Supervisor Garcia, thank you for the opportunity to address you today, and for all of the efforts that all of you have put into your children, into your lives, into your goals.

Senator REID. Spell your name for the record.

Mr. LANGE. I'm sorry. My name is Ken Lange, last name is spelled L-a-n-g-e. I'm the executive director of the Nevada State Education Association.

Nevada educators work hard, they do well with our kids, and yet they've been asked to do more with less every year. And the No Child Left Behind Act is another example of downloading more responsibility without the necessary resources.

The concept of leaving no child behind is not new. It's been a value in the hearts of teachers long before Mrs. Pickard, and will exist long after we have left, because that's what teaching and education is all about. That's why we are all here.

The needs are many. We live in a complex society and also we would like to simplify it into norm reference test scores and put kids in boxes and limit them, limit their achievements ahead of time are dead wrong.

We have in a complex society that requires many programs to address multiple needs. And many of those needs can only be addressed by broad growth plans that come from the Federal Government and empower to us do the job that we need to.

Senator Reid, from our organization and the members we represent, we would like to thank you for your continued support of public education. It's been long, it's been deep and strong, and we appreciate that. We would like for you to carry the message back that we need to fully fund public education.

And if I could, I have the great privilege of working as part of the team. I'm the executive director of the Nevada State Education Association. I'd like to introduce, if we could, have our president bring a few words as well, Mr. Terry Hickman.

Thank you.

Senator REID. Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF LORETTA EVENSON, NEVADA STATE PARENT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Ms. EVENSON. I'm Loretta Evenson and I am here representing Nevada State PTA. And I, on behalf Nevada State PTA, would like to encourage you to support the programs.

You need the spelling of my last name? E-v-e-n-s-o-n.

As evidenced by your panel today, these programs really do not only affect children, but their parents, and we just really appreciate everything you do. We want you to know you can count on Nevada PTA to support you in any way we can. Thank you.

Senator REID. As I proceeded through my career I've had a couple of interesting, difficult experiences. One of them was being a PTA president when my daughter was in school. The other was being a team mother for my boy's little league baseball. No one else volunteered, so I was the team mother.

STATEMENT OF TERRY HICKMAN, PRESIDENT, NEVADA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Mr. HICKMAN. Good morning, Senator Reid, distinguished panel. My name is Terry Hickman and I am president of the Nevada State Education Association. My last name is H-i-c-k-m-a-n.

To summarize, I guess, how I feel is very simple, Senator. The rhetoric abounds—

Senator REID. You are a teacher; is that right?

Mr. HICKMAN. I am president of the Nevada State Education Association. My last employment was Clark County School District. I was a counselor at Centennial High School. Moving on—my mother is in the audience.

If I could, sir, for just a minute explain a little bit about Centennial, I'm very proud to have been a counselor at Centennial. I was the first teacher hired at Centennial and I worked there 6 months prior to the beginning of the school. But it became evident as the school began to open we had a beautiful school—\$35 million of the taxpayers' money here in Clark County was there, and it was a great building.

But when it came to textbooks, we had 1,700 students, and we didn't even have 1,000 textbooks in some areas. We had classes and a brand new school where they shared textbooks because there wasn't sufficient money to buy them. And that is not the Clark County School District's fault, it was simply symptomatic of what the rhetoric—how important public education is here, but we don't match it with the resources.

We live in a time when nothing is more important than education. I was thinking a few months ago as I listened to President Bush talk about the need for a strong America, where is the strength of America? I believe it's in our public schools. Over 90 percent of the students in Nevada are in our public schools. They are the future. And if they do not have the resources, we cannot tell them to look back and say sorry, we couldn't afford it. You really weren't a priority.

If education, if our future is that important, then we need to fully fund it, whether it be special ed or the other programs that we have talked about here. An opportunity lost is lost forever. We do not need in this State to hear further rhetoric about how important education is and yet in this State we rank 45th in per pupil expenditures. We are nearly \$1,400 per pupil behind the national average.

As a counselor, if I were to tell a parent your child is average, I would have a very tough time maintaining my relationship with that parent. No one wants to be just average. But in this State we fall below average except when it comes to the efforts of our teachers and support professionals, because they work hard and do more with less.

The Federal Government, as I would say to our own State government, the time to match the rhetoric with resources is now. We cannot lose a generation to tax credits and other issues which seem to be so important. Vouchers and other programs which seem to help just a few, are not the answer, and they are wrong.

What is important is the opportunity for every child, whether they come to this country from another country or are born and raised, every child deserves that opportunity, and I implore you when you go back to Washington to stay firm and to stand fast and to say if public education is our priority, then let us match those resources to the rhetoric.

Thank you.

Senator REID. We have had the opportunity here today to say things that have been constructive in nature as far as the legislation that's pending and also being critical of that legislation, that talk about the needs of this very large school district and the needs of the State of Nevada generally.

Part of the greatness of this country is we are able to do that. We are able to talk about things that people may not want us to talk about. We are able to disagree with others. I can walk out of here today and you can walk out of here today and not be worried about someone beating you up because of your comments or doing physical harm to your home or your house or your family.

That's really good. I think that we have to stop and think about what a great country this is. I have said on a number of occasions, and I certainly don't hesitate in saying it today, my father never graduated from the 10th grade, my mother never graduated from high school.

But in this country it doesn't matter the color of your skin, your religion, your economic background. And as a result, this country that we have, that we live in, which is imperfect, but I've been able to get a really good education. But we have so many problems in our public education system that I don't think we had when I was growing up.

I would hope that we would all keep our eyes on the prize, and the prize are those children that we see every day, whether they are in our family, or wherever they might be, walking down the street. This is the future of this country.

Our country is not going to stay great just because we want if to, it's going to stay great because we are willing to make sacrifices, speak out, educate our children. Education is what it's all about.

So I would hope you would go forth from this congressional hearing more enthused and determined so that people who want these programs to be part of our system, and that Carlos Garcia has some tools, some revenues, some resources, to help these kids that he's responsible for taking care of.

CONCLUSION OF HEARING

Thank you all very much for being here, that concludes our hearing.

[Whereupon, at 11:52 a.m., Friday, April 5, the hearing was concluded, and the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

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