

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING - SB 81

March 12, 1969

Public hearing was called to order by Chairman Monroe in the Senate Chambers at 9:30 a. m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Monroe, Chairman  
Senator Dodge  
Senator Hug  
Senator Swobe  
Senator Bunker  
Senator Christensen  
Senator Young

TESTIFYING GUESTS

Rev. Al Engelman, First Baptist Church, Carson City  
Fr. Robert G. Pumphrey, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Carson City  
Rev. John Emerson, First Methodist Church, Carson City  
Rev. Robert Truesdale, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Rev. Richard Engeseth, Reno, Nevada  
Rev. Minnie Orcutt, Glory Temple Church, Reno, Nevada  
William Goni, Ormsby County Clerk  
Alex Coon, Deputy Washoe County Clerk  
George Wright, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Ernest Newton, Carson City, Nevada  
Mrs. Robert Brown, Carson City, Nevada  
George Flint, Owner Chapel of the Bells, Reno, Nevada  
John Eaton, General Manager, Chapel of the Bells, Reno, Nevada

CHAIRMAN MONROE: We have called this hearing to listen to further discussion from proponents and opponents on SB 81 and to take up another matter of interest.

Who would like to be heard for the proponents first?

REV. AL ENGELMAN: Members of the Committee, I am Al Engelman, Pastor of the First Baptist Church here in Carson City.

We are particularly concerned with one item of quotations you have that was made at a hearing we had on February 18th. I believe you have this in writing by one Mr. George Flint. I have a series of communications concerning these and I believe you have all of them. I don't know if you want to take the time for me to read them all to you.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: Reverend, if you would go ahead with your presentation regarding SB 81 we can take up this matter you are referring to after the proponents have been heard.

REV. AL ENGELMAN: The second item has to do with an amendment many of us proposed to you beginning under SEC. 3, paragraph 3 between (b) and (c), page 2, line 18:

(c) Give a verbal affirmation of intention exchanged between both man and woman as follows:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you \_\_\_\_\_, as my legal husband (wife) and promise to fulfill all civil obligations hereby incurred, as your legal wife (husband) according to the laws of the State of Nevada.

(d) The County Clerk, or his deputy, shall then accept and acknowledge their contract in the following form:

By the power vested in me by the State of Nevada, I declare that you are now legally husband and wife according to the laws of the State of Nevada

(e) Each personally sign, etc. -----

In the presentation that was made on February 18th there was reference made as to the image of this industry and it was termed an industry. We pastors in Carson City had not sought to talk about industry but it was brought up in this way. We would like to add to your file a picture that was taken in Las Vegas and was run in one of the papers showing an image that was presented here. I have copies for each committee member. We have a series of newspaper articles that begin with wedding chapels asking the Chamber to drop the marriage plan, etc. These were all from the Carson City paper about a year ago. They are all dated.

We would also like to call to your attention that when we came here it was to join with Senator Carl Dodge and others in a judicial reform that was being proposed. We have studied and studied the reform recommendations that were being made on this particular matter. With one amendment that would add the vow being given between the couple in the Clerk's office, we too concur there needed to be a judicial reform and this needs to improve our State by having the justices in the justice business and then the clerk taking care of the legal part of the marriage contract and the marriage civil ceremony. The ministers would then be given the freedom to exercise their own discretion as to what we would do in a responsible society that we are a part of.

We understand that AB 273 is being proposed as an idea for moving the justices out. We would only say that we are adding more problems to an industry with the bill as it is written now, but we will have more to say on that at the hearing this afternoon.

We particularly thank you for the courtesy you have given us individually as committee members and then in letting us come and tell you as men locally that we are behind what the judicial reform committee is wanting to do in that particular area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: Are there any questions by the committee? Are there further speakers?

FATHER ROBT. PUMPHREY: I am Father Pumphrey, St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Carson City.

First, thank you again gentlemen for the opportunity to be heard.

This judicial reform bill SB 81 seems to have some opposition against it based on economics. I wish to speak on that in particular. The evidence given so far is that the wedding industry of Nevada is an approximately a 60 million dollar industry and that this judicial reform bill would damage that industry quite considerably or destroy it. To me the evidence is not born out. If we assume that approximately one half of all marriages are performed by the justice or other civil authorities in this State, then to continue a civil authority marrying people means a 50% of this industry is going to be uneffected. So instead of talking about 60 million dollars damaged we have said that 30 million of this is totally safe.

Another aspect of the wedding industry is that of the jewelers. Most of the people that come to Nevada to be married have planned their marriage and it is reasonable to assume that most of these people have also bought their rings in their home towns. For those that come here for the Nevada quick marriage it is also reasonable to assume that they will continue to want rings and so regardless of who will marry them or where they are married, they will continue to buy their rings from local jewelers, so the jewelry industry of Nevada will probably be uneffected.

The same can be said about our clothing stores for those who come here or who are already citizens of Nevada and have planned to buy wedding gowns and other items of clothing, or rent clothing for their marriages. Those who come here for the quick marriage are not apt to take the time to purchase a wedding gown or rent men's clothing, so this part of the industry will be quite uneffected by the judicial reform bill.

For the florist, for a great many coming into town, will stop and

purchase a corsage or even purchase more flowers, so I would like to state that the florist industry will be effected unfavorably by this.

Economically, the data presented to us does not show that the wedding industry in Nevada is going to be effected. When they talk about 60 million dollars being damaged or destroyed the evidence does not bear up. This relates to the evidence that had been presented to us.

Quite separately we tend to really lack any data whatsoever. This is as of this Monday afternoon. The University of Nevada, Department of Economics states they have no such data on the wedding industry. The University of Nevada Bureau of Economic Research on Monday afternoon stated they had no such data. The State of Nevada Department of Economic Development and also the Department of Economic Opportunity both state they have no such data on the wedding industry, so we are dealing with some unproven assumptions, but even with these assumptions on economic data we do not see any sort of damage for this industry.

Thank you again, gentlemen, for the opportunity to testify.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: Any questions?

REV. TRUESDALE: I have one question. Sir, you say that you assume what these people think. I understand that you do not marry in a Wedding Chapel whatsoever. You do not make yourself available. Then all of these are asumptions on your part, and not fact. Is that right, or am I wrong.

FATHER PUMPHREY: Wrong. Many of these people come to me before going to a Wedding Chapel, so I am not totally ignorant on this.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: Any other proponents that wish to testify?

MR. GONI. Mr. Chairman and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am William Goni, Ormsby County Clerk and Chairman of the Legislative Delegation of the Nevada Fiscal's Officers Association.

I would like to state that our Association is divided on this bill. The large counties are for the bill and the smaller counties are against it. We have numerous changes to suggest if the bill is adopted and we would request they be made and if the Committee is going to take up some of the changes, I have with me today Mr. Alex Coon, Deputy County Clerk of Washoe County, and he has written down all of the changes. If it is a matter of a decision, we would be glad to come back another day and present these we will be very happy to do so. The large counties are for it and the smaller ones are against it. This is their position. The smaller ones feel that by doing away with the ceremony it will probably hurt the image of Nevada and also the marriage business here. If they have to be married again, they may wait the three day period in California and be married there.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: If you will have those suggested amendments submitted to us we will consider them.

ALEX COON: I am Alex Coon, Washoe County Clerk's Office.

Mr. Chairman, I have eleven changes, rather changes in eleven sections here and it is the mechanical affair that we are concerned with. You recall that in 1967 we had a law to certify ministers with a commission to perform marriages and this year we have AB 600 which takes the County Recorder out of the picture. We offer these changes to sort of comply with the laws we have to live with now. In particular it is to take the County Recorder out of the picture. Do you want these details now?

CHAIRMAN MONROE: If you will submit them in writing we will study them.

GEORGE WRIGHT: I am George Wright, Las Vegas. I have a question. When you say you contacted the County Clerks did you pole Clark County Clerk? I spent many hours talking to the lady and she said she is not in favor of this.

WILLIAM GONI: I talked to her yesterday afternoon. If you are talking about SB 81, she definately is for it.

ERNEST NEWTON: Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Ernest Newton. I present the following statement as a citizen of Nevada for the past seven years. I am employed as a tax counselor, economist and budget analyst in the State of Nevada. My training in the field includes a bachelors degree, masters degree and doctorate and thirty years of experience in economics and law.

One of our former Congressmen distributed a quotation from Bernard Baruch, which reads" Every man has a right to his opinion but no man has a right to be wrong on his facts."

In considering the pending legislation I suggest a careful examination of the testimony with that thought in mind. Here are some facts of the marriage industry. Nevada has about 75,000 marriages per year. This is a figure which has been reducing each year since 1964. Of these marriages 67,500 couples were non-residents of Nevada. This is in calendar year 1967. A survey in 1967 is the basis of the estimate that each wedding coming from out of the state was composed of 3.68 people on an average and that the total number of people coming to Nevada for weddings was slightly less that 337,500.

The Department of Economic Development, as a result of series of interviews in 1967 has estimated that each visitor in Nevada, arriving by automobile spends \$27.00 per day for all purposes. The average wedding party spent 2.2 days in Nevada, thus a total spending in Nevada by wedding parties is \$20,047,500.00 for all purposes. To this must be added the spending of those wedding parties which arrive

airplane. Visitors arriving by plane spend in Nevada \$81.00 per day more than people who travel by automobile, however almost wedding parties arrive by motor vehicle.

To quote "marriage industry" then is a \$22,000,000.00 industry not a \$60 to 100 million industry, but Nevada would reluctantly turn its back on the 22 million dollar industry. The question arises then as to what, if any, effect the adoption of SB 81 or a similar proposal would have on the attractiveness of Nevada as a place to get married.

What then are the reasons couples come to Nevada to get married. I suggest there are three, and probably the only three. 1. Nevada requires no waiting period, no blood tests. 2. Nevada has so many weddings that any one is the subject of very limited publicity. 3. Nevada provides a honeymoon trip and a wedding site all within a two day holiday period from almost anyplace in California or other neighboring states.

Whatever the procedure for joining a couple in matrimony my own investigation indicates the average visiting wedding party will continue to spend 2.2 days in Nevada. In addition to the time I suggest they will spend whatever money they will have, and that is about \$27.00 per day per person. I suggest also they will be married by whom they choose, whether it may be by a minister or in a wedding chapel, just as some couples do now. Thank you.

SENATOR DODGE: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask Mr. Newton whether the \$22 million industry he speaks of is the industry in total.

MR. NEWTON: That is the total spending by couples coming here to get married, not the industry itself. Total spending for gasoline, hotel or motel rooms, food.

SENATOR DODGE: This would also include the couples or percentage of people who are married by the justice of the peace?

MR. NEWTON: This would be all couples.

GEORGE FLINT: You said this was based on 1967. 1968 read 91,000 marriages in the State. That is the total for last year. I have a list county by county. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: Any further proponents?

REV. JOHN EMERSON: Chairman Monroe and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My name is John Emerson, I reside at 406 South Tacoma Avenue, Carson City, I am an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church. I wish to thank you for allowing me to bring some brief remarks in support of SB 81, currently before your committee.

A bill which I hope will come out of committee with an amendment providing for a verbal exchange of a contract before the clerk or such other person designated by him. Such amendment has been previously recommended and is in the hands of your committee.

Let me say from the outset that I consider the privilege of speaking before a legislative committee a serious matter, demanding the highest level of integrity without which you could not possibly place any significant weight upon testimony brought before you. I suspect that is why the legislature some years ago enacted section 218.590 of the Nevada Statutes which states in part "every person who shall attempt, directly or indirectly, by menace, deceit, suppression of truth or other corrupt means, to influence such member of the legislature to give or withhold his vote or to absent himself from the house of which he is a member or from any committee thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than 10 years, or by a fine of not more than \$5,000, or by both." I trust that members of the legislature in an effort to illicit reliable testimony are intent upon enforcing this statute. By the same token, we citizens have a grave responsibility to be candid and trustworthy when we are privileged to speak before such a committee as this, or when we speak in behalf of the legislature or any member thereof. Please be assured that I take this responsibility most seriously and would encourage you to determine for yourselves the veracity of my statement.

Why are the pastors of churches of a great many denominations united in support of the intent of SB 81? Why are we so vitally interested? It is not because we are wilfully bent upon destroying private enterprise or forcing any individual out of business. We pastors have people within our congregations whose livelihood is dependent upon commerce. We feel strongly that private enterprise is an essential part of the American economy and even more basically the American way of life. I say this not from an academic posture for I was engaged in apprenticeship in retail pharmacy and was preparing for that profession in college before I made the decision to enter the ordained ministry. Neither is our concern about the proposed legislation motivated out of a selfish desire to protect some vested interest, except the vested interest we have in the well being of the Nevada citizens and the individuals who come to us for pastoral care for whatever reason. We hope this point requires no further elaboration.

We are urging your passage of SB 81 with the suggest amendments because it is a sound component part of a larger judicial reform package designed to relieve justices of the peace of performing marriages so that they may devote more time to the very pressing and important matters of justice. If we are to have a responsible society we must do all within our power to insure responsible marriage and family life, therefor we do not view marriage as a business but as a sacred commitment between two persons. We do not consider marriage as a private

contract for the reason that we all have something at stake in each new family unit. There are some things too precious in life to be written in a profit and loss statement.

We believe as Nevadans that this measure will also serve to enhance the image of our State. We believe in Nevada. We are also in support of SB 81 because it differentiates between a civil marriage and holy matrimony. This legislation would free ministers to continue that which has always been our prerogative. To unite in holy matrimony those who desire the blessing of God.

We believe there is a basic principal at stake in SB 81, so much so that we are committed to this issue for keeps, not just for this legislative session.

I wish to express my gratitude to you for this opportunity to speak and I will be happy to answer any questions.

I would like to introduce several ladies who are here this morning. My wife, Janice Emerson, Mrs. Donald Weed, Mrs. Chris Jones, Mrs. Robert Brown who would like to say a few words to the committee at this time.

MRS. ROBERT BROWN: Thank you for letting me appear. My name is Mrs. Robert Brown, I live at 325 Tahoe Drive in Carson. We have been residents of Nevada for approximately four years. My husband is Dr. Robert Brown a practicing physician here in Carson.

I was raised in the Methodist Church from childhood and am an active member of the Church. I feel there is a difference between holy matrimony and civil matrimony. I was married in the church because this is the way I was raised. I feel this is my right. A civil ceremony is the State's position and I would be perfectly happy for my children to be married in a civil ceremony and then their choice to be married in their church.

I feel that some of you that are lawyers know more than I do how the justices of the peace have a lot of work to do and should be released from this particular thing would be a great help to our judicial system in Nevada.

I do urge the committee, and this is my own belief, to amend to that the couple not only sign the contract for the civil ceremony but give verbal consent to their taking each other as lawful husband and wife. I think this will fulfill a certain need that every couple has but I don't feel that it has to go outside the civil ceremony. If they want it they can go to their minister. If they want to, they will go. I feel this is a good bill and as such, I have asked to appear here simply as a concerned citizen of the State. I feel that when we have a good bill before the legislature an ordinary housewife like myself should come and appear! Thank you very much.



CHAIRMAN MONROE: Are there any other proponents to speak?

GEORGE WRIGHT: Chairman Monroe, I would like to say just a few words. I am from Las Vegas and operate a wedding chapel. We had over 42,000 weddings performed in chapels last year and I think that is some indication what people want. They have their choice to be married by a minister or a judge.

We all want just what you want for the good of the people. A better home life, better morals and a better relationship between two people, the basis of this is a marriage in a church and I will back you up there. But the thing is there are many people who come here that once they know they are married by just signing their name will never go to their own church and there are many who do not belong to a church, so they come to us and have a chance to get a little bit of morals preached to them. Whether you believe it or not, I have seen thousands of people that have come to us and when they come out of that ceremony they have tears in their eyes, they have been touched by the word the minister has given them. We have very few justice of the peace weddings. They are all minister weddings by those in good standing in their own churches. I know you have a problem up north here that we do not have down south. You are depriving those people in the wedding business down south who do most of the wedding business in the state and those who want to have a little bit of church sermon in their ceremony. If you spent a little time in a wedding chapel I am sure you will see that the people are pleased. They are not treated as cattle. We take them as individuals.

REV. RICHARD ENGESETH: I am Reverend Richard Engeseth and am here as the coordinator of the Nevada Counsel of Churches Legislative Committee and have been studying and working with the clergy of the State for the past year in this regard. I will be extremely brief.

Two points, the first of which is that we are not here to argue the morals or the ethics of an industry. I hope that question will be argued under a bill that Senator Young has introduced and a hearing, I hope, will be held on this later. We will then get into the morals and ethics of Nevada's wedding industry as to whether we should in the moral ground and the ethical ground and the legal grounds upon which it stands or tries to stand. I don't think that is appropriate for this discussion for this bill at this hearing. We are talking about a bill introduced by Senator Dodge, not by the churches, or anyone else's. This was a judicial reform bill to try to do something about justices of the peace back in the justice business.

We have been criticized in the State of Nevada in the national press and Playboy Magazine, Saturday Evening Post and many others as well as the fact that I have been on the air in the bay area and in Los Angeles and also on the east coast talking to people about this particular bill. The fact that our JPs are rumored to be the highest paid officials of the State. I do not know that this is fact but it printed pretty generally and distributed generally. This is the

purpose of this bill, judicial reform. It is to get back to have the civil authorities take care of the civil part of an act that used to be both. Just as we now register births without having to go back to baptismal records. We register deaths without licensing clergy to do funerals. This is getting rid of and taking care of this. It is not a question of battle back and forth about wedding chapels or anything else. That you will fight at a given time. I would hope that we would confine ourselves and do this bill on the basis of does it actually reform the judiciary, does it give us better law and order, faster administration of justice, better justice for all.

This is the fundamental, the economics and the rest of this are real side issues.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: At this time we will have to take up the opponents side. I would like to call George Flint to come forward please.

Mr. Flint, on February 18th you appeared before this committee and presented to us in writing the alleged conversations you had with some of the national religious leaders. I have here in my hand a copy of the information you gave. Subsequent to our hearing and your presentation we received from a number of people you had quoted statements indicating not only that you had misquoted them but of more concern to this committee statements to the effect, by these people, that you had represented yourself to them as being the official representative of some branches of the State government, including branches of the legislature. I would like to confront you with that information at this time. I have here a letter from Rev. Emerson in which has discussed this matter with Bishop Tippett, who you quoted in your presentation and Bishop Tippett advised Rev. Emerson that Mr. George Flint did telephone me and in making himself known to me said he was seeking my opinion and that of others around the nation for the Senate leader. Bishop Tippett said all he knew about the matter was by way of newspaper accounts and he was awaiting information from Mr. Winne, a leading national layman in the United States. He also advised you were representing yourself in your conversation with him as a representative of the State Senate of Nevada.

We have a telegram from Dr. George Harkin, Secretary of the Lutheran Church in America who you quoted and he said you were representing yourself as Administrative Assistant to the Speaker of the Senate.

We have a telegram from Dr. James L. Sullivan, Executive Secretary-treasurer of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tennessee who you quoted in your presentation. He said "Apparently my name was used in testimony - I resent that without my knowledge or consent my personal comments by telephone were misrepresented in yesterday's hearing by a man whom I do not know but who identified himself to me as an Administrative Assistant of the Governor.

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in discussing SB 81.

Mr. Flint, did you represent yourself to these people as being representatives as alleged in these telegrams.

MR. FLINT: I know nothing of these allegations until I read in the paper that these had been made. Let me tell you what I told these gentlemen and for the record, gentlemen of the committee, I am going to speak under oath.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: Mr. Flint, you are not speaking under oath. Tell us anything you want but tell us the truth.

MR. FLINT: First of all, let me say this. I have spent approximately 55 or 60 hours with three different members of the Assembly correlating the wishes of the wedding industry, the wedding chapels, florists, etc., what their thinking was with proposed legislation to do with marriage. These men have been Mr. Close, Mr. McKissick and two others. Not only myself but Mr. Eaton has spent many, many hours with these men.

When I called these men they didn't know who I was, they didn't know me at all and I told them basically this, "The fifty fifth session of the Nevada Legislature was in session. I told them I was calling them from Reno, Nevada. I told them who I was and I told them I had been assisting leaders of the Assembly with relationship to wedding legislation." Now if this was wrong, if this made me look like I was claiming to be an assistant or an administrator, then I was wrong. I had no intention of posing as an official of either your house or the house down the hall. To my knowledge I will definitely deny that I ever used the Governor's name in talking to Mr. Harkin. I talked in generalities with relationship to the fact that the following day there was to be a Senate Judiciary hearing on this particular bill and at that time I wanted to take their thoughts before the Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing.

In my defense of this matter, I would say this. If you were sitting in your office in New York, 3000 miles away, and a man called you on the phone and said the Nevada Legislature is in session such legislation is being considered, that I have been working in assisting some of the legislators in relation to this specific area of legislation, helping to suggest legislation desirable to the wedding industry, it could be possible that the man would misunderstand me as posing as an official.

I feel, Mr. Monroe, and other members of the Senate Committee, that at least two or three of these cases, I reaffirmed sometime during the conversation that I was not acting as an official.

I know that Mr. Zimmerman in Springfield, Missouri was quite upset because I called him back. He told me that he had been informed by Mr. Pumphrey that I was a paid lobbyist. He said that if he had known I was a paid lobbyist I wouldn't have been so free

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with my conversation. Obviously, when a group of men all give you evidence that they were misled, pardon me, that I misrepresented myself, somewhere along the way I must have said something that would lead them to believe that I was an official. I had no intention of doing that, and I can't say this publicly but I do have tapes of my conversation with three of these men. These are follow up conversations when I called them back and in all cases these three re-affirmed that this was their stand on the legislation.

One of the men told me that he felt I misrepresented myself, one other man told me that he hadn't been contacted at all, one of the men we talked to twice since then and neither time has he told us that he thought he was misrepresented.

I feel I made two basic mistakes in presenting this information to you. I feel first of all that rather than putting this information in direct quotes it would have been better more proper on my part had I said this is a resume of my conversation with these men. I took notes over the telephone and after I finished the conversation I attempted to put into a quote or thought these conversational notes we had made in that conversation. One of these men I talked to about twenty minutes and then I listed what he said there in four or five lines. The other mistake I probably made was this. In relationship to the Baptist gentlemen who is at reference there I spoke to his assistant also, Mr. Crow. In fact Mr. Crow I talked to more at length than I did his superior the gentlemen whose telegram you have there. I made the mistake when I presented the information to you that I didn't list both of their names. I should have done that. Possibly Mr. Crow might have said something that I gave credit to the other gentlemen.

I feel that the intent of the information that was given me was given in truth. I don't feel that if I misquoted them, it wasn't a misquote in thought but in the actual wording.

As far as the other matter goes, gentlemen, some of you have known me for as long as seven or eight years. I have a lot of money invested in this business. I owe a lot of money in this business and I would be a complete and utter fool if I purposely did what is being suggested here by certain people. I have been around long enough that if I got on the phone and said that I was Governor Laxalt's Administrative Assistant I could be guilty of some pretty bad charges. I would be a complete fool to do that. As I said, I told these men and I had no hesitation in doing it, that I had been working assisting not as an assistant, but assisting - maybe it was a bad word - certain legislators in relationship to this information or for this legislation. This is what I meant to say, now let me say in closing. Four of these gentlemen had to return the phone calls to me. They were calls from 323-1375 in Reno. That is the Chapel of the Bells, and when the calls were returned they were not returned to the State of Nevada offices but the telephone was answered "Chapel of the Bells, Reno, Nevada". For that reason it kind of slips my mind as to how if the phone was answered on that basis, how they thought I was some

representative of your group. Does that answer your question, sir?

CHAIRMAN MONROE: We can't continue this further but I just want to say this. The reason we brought this up today was that we wanted you to know that we have received these contradictions and representation from people who we consider to be extremely honorable people and while you were never under any oath and whatever you did here we have no recourse to what you did, but are merely bringing this up to point out that we do not believe that your representations, if you made them, were proper and that you had any authority to do what you did and that our feelings as a committee is that you have resorted to unscrupulous methods. We want that to be in the record and that is all we want to say about it. There is nothing else we can say.

SENATOR SWOBE: May I ask Mr. Flint one question? Do you know  
\_\_\_\_\_ of the L.D.S. Church in Reno?

MR. FLINT: No, I don't.

SENATOR DODGE: I would like to ask that if at any time in the original contact you made with these people you indicated that you were connected with the wedding chapel business in Nevada?

MR. FLINT: Yes, I did two of the gentlemen. Mr. Zimmerman I referred to on the matter and I think I did with Archbishop Dwyer also.

SENATOR DODGE: It seems to me that if you identified yourself that way I don't see how they could have been confused about your position, that they could have considered you any sort of an assistant to anybody in the legislature. The other thing, it seems you are guilty of a half-truth situation when you speak about the fact that you are assisting the legislatures in the development of a bill. Isn't it in fact the situation and your motivation that they were assisting you in trying to accomplish a piece of legislation that you were interested in, or that would be satisfactory to you. It seems to me that you have been deliberately guilty of half-truths at least in your representation to these people.

MR. FLINT: You would have to be the judge of that. I made no direct or purposeful intention of misrepresenting myself. I do deny that I said I had any relationship to the Governor.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: Thank you sir. We have just a few minutes left and I would like to hear at this time people who have come here to speak in opposition to this bill. Please be very brief.

JOHN EATON: Senator, I am John Eaton, I am general manager of the Chapel of the Bells in Reno. I have lived in Nevada for 22 years. I would like to say for the information of the committee that I do not have any financial interest in any chapel or in any real estate which one sets on. I am an employee of a corporation called F.T.H. Corporation which owns and operates the Chapel of the Bells.

The first point I would like to bring out is that I would not presume to challenge the gentlemen's figures on the weddings performed in the State of Nevada, but I think it would have an interesting bearing on the committee's decision that if his figures are actual weddings performed in the State in the calendar year 1967 are correct, I believe the figure you gave us was 67,000 or 75,000. It can be proven thru the office of Vital Statistics of the State of Nevada thru Mr. Sullivan than in 1967 the calendar year there was in excess of 85,000 marriage licenses sold. If SB 81 were adopted this would probably mean that 10,000 of these marriage licenses were never used, consequently if SB 81 was in effect these people probably should not have been married and consequently would have ended in 10,000 divorces. You also stated that marriages are on the decrease. In 1968 in just the three counties of Washoe, Ormsby and Clark County there was an excess of 85,000 in just the three counties. These are figures given to me by the County Clerks from their records.

There is a certain amount of theory regarding the health of the State of Nevada. As a Nevada resident I am not ashamed at all to be associated with the chapel industry. I don't feel that as a Nevadan that our image is bad but I do feel that Nevada has accepted the fact that we are a tourist oriented economy and neighboring states with similar population, Wyoming for instance, has to operate their state budget on the calendar year 1967 with a total sum of 58.7 million dollars income. I will give you these figures as I don't want to be wrong on my statistics. Nevada's figures for the same period were 84.8 million dollars to operate it's state for a like number of residents. These figures mean to me that I probably paid a lot less taxes as a lot of the tourists came in and paid some of my taxes for me. The tax structure in Wyoming is the same as in Nevada.

We have talked about a lot of theory, whether it is good or bad. Two of the gentlemen that spoke have been in the State of Nevada less than two years and they have not been associated and have turned down, by Father Pumphry's admission the right of a religious ceremony in the State. The people probably turn to a wedding chapel when a minister of their own faith refused to marry them and I don't believe they would turn around and go back home because he refused to marry them. I think before any action is taken which would destroy the chapel industry, there is a little bit over 2 million dollars invested and probably 1.5 million dollars of that is still owed which would probably mean a lot of bank losses and losses to the economy.

I think there should be a lot further study regarding the actual chapel industry so that we won't wind up with something that will put a large number of people out of business completely, which would seriously damage the economy of the State. I feel more study could be brought up to back statistics which I still hold and can verify by the State Hiway Department's out of State visitor survey. These statistics were compiled from that using their figures.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: We have time for just a couple more to speak.

REV. BOB TRUESDALE: I am Bob Truesdale and I am from Las Vegas. I want to thank you Senator Monroe and members of this committee for the privilege of speaking here for a moment.

First of all I have been hearing and reading news accounts of the "quickie" marriage in Nevada. I am raising three children in this great State and have been here four years and am engaged in the wedding chapel industry. I make my living there and also have a fine congregation and am happy to say I don't have to beg to support my church and I am not condemning anyone that has to go out and raise funds. God gave me an instrument here and I use it. That is the industry we call marriage.

The idea of "quickie" marriage in our State, I would like for you to read under the name of Gretna Green Wedding Chapel, a copy of a Los Angeles yellow page ad. There are more wedding chapels in Los Angeles County in California than there are in the entire State of Nevada. I can show you more yellow pages but this one says "no waiting period". They have a law over there for a three day waiting period, they have a blood test but these can all be circumvented by little maneuvers with favored groups. They are being circumvented in California so these people are not leaving California because they cannot be married quick. We have had newspaper reporters come in from California and they chuckle. That was presented to me by Bill Stout who is an executive announcer with Walter Cronkite and he said to me "I want you to see why we are not taking a poke on national television any more at your wedding industry"

These people come over here because they want to be married in Nevada and when you say the Justices of the Peace are doing 50% of the weddings you may check with our Justice of the Peace. If my records are correct from their statement and from the facts we can get from the court houses, in Clark County they are doing only about 37% of the marriages. One other figure I am going to mention- He was showing a 22 million dollar figure for the State. I would like for you gentlemen here two years ago when they came out with SB 60, you men put it aside and I thank you for that. These gentlemen have said they are going to keep trying. We are going to keep trying to survive. This figure will go to the United States Government Internal Revenue Tax as there are over fifty licensed chapels in the State but here are the figures of one wedding chapel that will go in on an income tax return. When this man said 22 million dollars I don't know where he got all of his figures.

I might suggest in closing and thanking you men, I am not going to bring religion into this as I don't think this is the place to preach, we will keep our preaching in the church. You men are here to legislate law. I say take a study for two years and if these facts that these men show here are true, then let's go with a marriage law that will kill the industry but if we have proven each of them wrong, and we can do that especially with the 22 million dollar figure,

then I would say let's go ahead and put a "sign only" marriage law endorsed by the legislative committee of the Nevada Counsel of Churches, let's put a marriage commissioner in - let's go ahead and put one in anyway and eliminate the JP problem. Let's give these people a choice so they can have a civil marriage or they can have a minister. What right do I as a minister, what right does the clerk's office have to say this is the only way you can be married in our great State.

Thank you, gentlemen.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: I would like to call on Mrs. Orcutt and I would like to warn her that we are going to adjourn this session at quarter to eleven, without fail.

REV. MINNIE ORCUTT: I am Minnie Orcutt, Pastor of Glory Temple Church, Reno, Nevada also publicity chairman of the Nevada Ministerial Association, a housewife and a Chapel owner and I want it plainly understood that I am not ashamed to be called a chapel owner.

I want to read the last portion written and signed by the Nevada Counsel of Churches Engeseth, "The Reverends in the wedding chapels make an affidavit once a year that marriage is incidental to their duties to the congregation. They say on the Senate floor, we make our living from wedding business, we force them to be hypocrits." These men say that under the current law and I want it plainly understood that I am not a hypocrit.

You haven't heard any sermons but I would invite you to come to our church if you want to hear one, but I first want to give my personal testimony as a minister. The reason I am in the wedding chapel business is because I am a minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to quote to you Romans 1:16 for it says "I am not ashamed of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." I want it personally understood that first I am a minister of the gospel and I will be preaching the gospel when the crepes are hung on the legislative doors. I have nothing to be ashamed of.

Quoting Al Engelman, and you gentlemen have these copies of the paper, it says in the Nevada Carson City Appeal, dated May 23, of last year, "A fighting mad Baptist parson challenged the Chamber of Commerce proposal to publicize Carson City as the City with a heart and the marriage center, calling chapels not houses of God, but dens of thieves". This is strong and he better be able to back it up. He then said "These are the worst blights Carson has and the clergy of the major denominations are trying to do something about it." And the quotations go on but I do not have time to go into these. You all have copies.

In last night's paper this is what Al Engelman said, "We are not doing a thing to put chapels out of business, we are merely let's not legislate religion." I agree with that, as far as the ministers



Having to appear before the clerk to get permission when a man is called to God I do not think the State should have that jurisdiction. I want you to know that this Al Engelman is the one that told Bill Goni, who is the Recorder and sitting right there, and I am not going to say anything I can't prove. Bill Goni told my husband and me that Al Engelman accused him of taking payoff money because he sends weddings to the chapels. Not so, I don't have to pay off anybody.

Another thing, this is the man that cornered Bill Goni at a ministerial meeting here in Carson City about a year ago and called him on the carpet as to why he gave my husband a permit to perform marriages. My husband has a degree from the Bible Baptist Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas and he has been preaching since he was 13 years old. Duane, will you please stand. Is that right? ("That is right"). I have asked his parents to come to substantiate that. Will you please stand and say "yes". ("Yes"). This is the man it states in the paper here that said he does not have a personal axe to grind and he wants to get rid of the wedding chapels. I am here to declare to every one of the gentlemen sitting over there that the wedding chapels are here to stay.

The man quoted from the Los Angeles yellow page directory that there were more chapels listed in that area than there are in the State of Nevada. I have a copy of the Sacramento directory. Listed under chapels are no less than six Methodist church advertised chapels. I want you to know that wedding chapels will one day be from coast to coast and border to border. I count it a privilege to minister in them because I know in my heart that I am a sincere minister of the Lord Jesus Christ and I try to be a hostess and be kind to every single person that comes to our State to be married.

Bob Pumphrey said in a paper that "it was unchristian like". I don't want to say anything that I can't prove but he believes it is allright to smoke and drink and gamble and do all of those little goodies. We are really at odds. They call me a religious fanatic.

I want to read you something from Steeple Among the State, written by Dr. Leon L. Luthrow (?) on the centennial story of Nevada churches. This was written by the Methodist and distributed by the Methodist. It says that Rev. Brewster Adams from Reno, Nevada married more couples than any other person in the State of Nevada. They would call it an assembly line, and the marriages have stood over the ages. He married my sister and her husband many years ago and they are soon going to celebrate their twentyfifth anniversary. He was called the "Marrying Parson". It is said that Brewster Adams, Mr. Baptist of Nevada for 36 years has married over 100,000 couples. It also says in this book about the Methodist Church and says it is the second most marrying church within the United States and it is in Reno, Nevada.

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I am sorry I haven't got longer because I have lots of goodies you would enjoy.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: Sorry, but we don't have any more time. I would like to say that we are not trying to close the wedding chapels.

REV. ORCUTT: May I please say one thing before we go. You know a woman wants the last word.

I performed a wedding ceremony May 7, 1965 for the District Attorney of Lander County, George Holman. He came to my chapel by choice and I was the minister that officiated. The groomsmen were none other than Grant Sawyer and Harvey Dickerson and the late Milton Badt gave the bride away.

CHAIRMAN MONROE: Thank you all. This hearing is adjourned.

(10:50 a.m.)