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April 9, 2003

Re: Assembly Bill 502

Dear Members of the Assembly Commerce and Labor Committee,

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Buffy Martin and I am representing the American Cancer Society. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Assembly Bill 502.

Nationally, more than 1.2 million new cancer cases are expected to be diagnosed this year alone, and we can expect to lose 555,500 people to cancer in 2003. In Nevada, 10,300 new cancer cases will be diagnosed in this year. About 4,300 Nevadans will die from cancer in 2003. We can no longer ignore the opportunities and hope that clinical trials provide cancer victims and their families. Cancer is a disease that affects the whole person, the whole family, the whole of our society. Only by exercising every treatment possibility can we curb the rates of cancer incidence and death.

Phylecia Wilson, an American Cancer Society volunteer was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia last year. She was enrolled in a clinical trial to test a new drug that targets cancer cells at the molecular level, called Gleevec. Gleevec was developed by Dr. Brian J. Druker, a scientist at Oregon Health Sciences, University of Portland. Since Gleevec only targets cancer cells, Ms. Wilson has experienced very few side effects. She says, "Without clinical trials, 90% of childhood cancers would not be curable, without clinical trials, new or improved treatments would languish in the laboratory, never reaching the patients who need them."

Sitting before you is a bill that could dramatically change the lives of cancer victims in our state. Each year our nation invests more than \$15.5 billion in biomedical research. One of the most important ways we can advance and increase cancer treatment knowledge is through clinical trials. Clinical trials offer unique opportunities for testing the viability of certain cancer treatments, while at the same time providing opportunities for improved quality of life and survivorship. The American Cancer Society is in full support of Assembly Bill 502, which would increase clinical trial access for Nevadans, and perhaps through increased access and participation we can find a cure for cancer.

I was to be joined this afternoon by an American Cancer Society volunteer and two time cancer survivor Jerry Crum, but unfortunately Mr. Crum was recently re-diagnosed with cancer and is currently preparing to enter a clinical trial in San Francisco. He said to me this morning that if he survives this next journey with cancer that he will assist in any way possible to pass Assembly Bill 502.

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As a lawmaker you make decisions every day that impact Nevadans. Rarely do you have an opportunity to provide such support and hope to those whose lives have been affected by cancer. Assembly Bill 502 would do just that, provide hope and perhaps a new treatment, or even a cure for cancer.

On behalf of the American Cancer Society and out 6,000 state wide volunteers, we urge you to support Assembly Bill 502.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Buffy Gail Martin

Buffy Gail Martin

Director of Government Relations - Nevada