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SB 317

SB 317 formalizes a cooperative agreement between Nevada Department of Education and Nevada Department of Corrections in designing a correctional education program, encouraging long overdue dialog intended to meet the needs of both departments. NDOC encourages each of the committee members to support SB 317 which requests that the four school districts and nearly 60 teachers who serve our eight major prisons develop and implement a correctional education system and become not only adult educators, but also correctional educators. The program is to be comprehensive and to include instruction for high school diploma, basic literacy, English as a second language, GED, life skills and occupational education as listed in **Section 3.2**.

Since the average age of an offender in Nevada is 36 years and the average sentence length is 2 - 5 years, it is imperative to focus on special needs of offenders by providing them with a secondary credential and a viable job skill prior to release, with the ultimate goal of reducing recidivism. The correlation between education and employability skills in lowering return rates is well documented in other states as well as nationally. (See "Education as Crime Prevention", Center on Crime, Communities and Culture September 1997 and "Education Reduces Crime", Three-State Recidivism Study Summary, Correctional Education Association and Management & Training Corporation February 2003 and "Literacy Behind Prison Walls" National Center for Education Statistics, National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), 1993.)

Upon receiving recommendations from the Governor's Study Committee on Corrections, I researched best practices and spoke with other state corrections education coordinators. All agree that prison education is most effective when administered by educators rather than corrections departments (Thom Gehring, "Results of a Nationwide Survey: Correctional Education Organizational Structure Trends" Journal of Correctional Education, Volume 41, Issue 4, December 1990). States such as Maryland, West Virginia, Delaware, Oklahoma and Florida have developed strong corrections education systems in cooperation with the state departments of education, providing a framework for the proposed Nevada system.

Your support for this bill will allow Nevada Department of Education and the Department of Corrections to collaboratively do the right thing in providing a correctional education system for our offenders.

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ASSEMBLY EDUCATION

DATE: 5/14/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT J

SUBMITTED BY: MARTA HALL