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TESTIMONY

BILL: AB 8 Revises Provisions Pertaining to Child abuse (Shaken Baby Syndrome)

NEVADA DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

CONTACT: EDWARD E. COTTON, ADMINISTRATOR

PHONE: 684-4401

Good morning Chairman Anderson and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Edward Cotton, Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services. I am here to support AB8, which would amend NRS200.508 to include "evidence of shaken baby syndrome" in the definition of "physical injury", and also defines "shaken baby syndrome".

More than 50,000 cases of shaken baby syndrome occur each year in the United States; one shaken baby in four dies as a result of this abuse. Head trauma is the most frequent cause of permanent damage or death among abused infants, and shaking accounts for a significant percentage of those cases. Studies have indicated that 15% of all children's deaths are due to battering or shaking, and an additional 15% are identified as possibly resulting from shaking. There is concern among medical professionals who work in the child abuse field that many injuries and deaths caused by shaking babies are not appropriately diagnosed or recognized. They are often attributed to accidents or even Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). This Bill will heighten public awareness of this issue and make it easier for DCFS to protect children who are victims of shaken baby syndrome by assuring that the perpetrator no longer has access to the child.

I urge you to support this Bill as an important step in our efforts to protect Nevada's most vulnerable citizens.

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ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY

DATE: 2-11-03 ROOM 3138 EXHIBIT G

SUBMITTED BY: Edward Cotton

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I urge you to support this Bill as an important step in our efforts to protect Nevada's most vulnerable citizens.

G-283

TESTIMONY

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G-383