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April 14, 2003  
Re: Assembly Bill 268

Good morning  
Chairman Arberry  
Vice Chairwoman Giunchigliani  
Members of Assembly Ways and Means

For the record, my name is Nancy Kuhles.  
I am a speech pathologist and secretary for the Nevada Speech-Language and Hearing Association (NSHA).  
This morning, I am speaking on behalf of the members of the Nevada Speech and Hearing Association (NSHA), in support of Assembly Bill 268.

Assembly Bill 268 provides an **opportunity** for speech pathologists, employed as *teachers of pupils who have speech and language impairments* in Nevada school districts, who have **passed a national examination**, completed a year long clinical fellowship, achieved **national certification** by being awarded the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC), to be recognized as meeting the highest national standard.

Assembly Bill 268 would recognize and reward those speech pathologists employed by Nevada school districts who achieve and maintain **national certification, the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC)**, issued by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), and are licensed by the Nevada Board of Examiners.

In 1999 our legislature passed Senate Bill 46 which recognized and rewarded teachers who achieve and maintain national certification issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) offers certification in 24 areas.

Speech Pathology **is not** one of those 24 areas.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) **does not** have future plans to develop standards for certification in the area of Speech Pathology.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) offers national certification in the area of Speech Pathology.

Nationally certified teachers are "highly qualified" professionals.

Nationally certified speech pathologists are **highly trained, and "highly qualified"** professionals.

ASSEMBLY WAYS AND MEANS  
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SUBMITTED BY: Nancy Kuhles

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Nevada school districts are experiencing a shortage of speech pathologists who teach students that have been identified as having speech and or language impairments.

A shortage of **highly trained, highly qualified** professionals who directly impact the learning of Nevada students in the content areas of English, Language Arts, Math and Science.

Children with speech, language or hearing disorders are impeded in the learning process.

These children need these **highly trained, highly qualified speech pathologists** to help them meet the demands of the curriculum and meet the performance standards of statewide testing.

Support and passage of **Assembly Bill 268** will benefit children in Nevada schools by helping Nevada school districts **recruit** these critically needed **highly trained, highly qualified** professional.

Support and passage of **Assembly Bill 268** will directly benefit children in Nevada schools by **retaining** these **highly trained, highly qualified teachers of pupils who have speech and language impairments**.

The shortage of these highly trained, highly qualified speech pathologists has forced Nevada school districts to contract with private contractors at a cost almost 2 times higher than that they pay for their current employees.

Currently, school districts throughout Nevada are paying **\$42.00 to \$60.00 per hour to private contractors** for speech and language services, at a **daily rate of \$294.00 to \$420.00**.

School districts throughout Nevada pay their employed highly trained, highly qualified speech pathologists between **\$35.00 per hour for a 1<sup>st</sup> year employee**, to **\$59.00 per hour for a 25 year employee**, at a **daily rate of \$247.00 to \$416.00**. This amount includes a retirement (PERS 18.75%) and benefit package (varies by school district; can be \$4,000.00 paid annually).

A 183-day contract for **privately contracted** speech and language services costs a district approximately **\$54,000.00 to \$77,000.00 per speech pathologist**.

**\*\*Money that comes out of a school districts general fund. \*\***

A 183-day contract for district employed speech pathologists providing speech and language services, costs a district between **\$45,000.00 for a 1<sup>st</sup> year employee**, to **\$76,000.00 for a 25-year employee**. This amount includes a retirement (PERS 18.75% (PERS) and benefit package (varies by school district; can be \$4,000.00 paid annually).

As a side note, NSHA has been hearing from special education administrators that they are paying more for privately contracted services for less satisfactory services. For example

Contracts are typically with "Traveler Rehab Companies" A young 1st year graduate is sent to a rural / or urban district - stays a few months and then decides they do not like Nevada and leaves.

**This is not fiscally responsible.**

**Passage of Assembly Bill 268** would provide an annual 5% salary supplement to highly trained, highly qualified speech pathologists employed by Nevada school districts.

To receive this salary supplement, a speech pathologist employed by a Nevada school district must maintain national certification issued by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, maintain licensing issued by the Nevada Board of Examiners, have worked 3 years full time in a Nevada school district holding a valid Nevada teaching license and having a "satisfactory performance" on their annual teacher evaluation.

**Passage of Assembly Bill 268** would cost school districts between \$2,500.00 extra per year for 3<sup>rd</sup> year employee to \$3,800.00 extra per year for a 25-year employee. (This amount includes retirement benefits paid by a district to PERS at 18.75%).

**Passage of Assembly Bill 268** would save districts between \$1,700.00 to \$25,000.00 per year for a highly qualified, highly trained 3 year employed speech pathologist.

**This is fiscally responsible.**

**Your support and passage of Assembly Bill 268** will aid in the recruitment of the most highly trained, highly qualified speech pathologists who directly impact the learning of Nevada school children.

**Your support and passage of Assembly Bill 268** will aid in the retention of these highly trained, highly qualified *teachers of pupils who have speech and language impairments.*

**Your support and passage of Assembly Bill 268** shows fiscal responsibility.

On behalf of the Nevada Speech-Language and Hearing Association, I want to thank you for your time and consideration in lending your support for the passage of **Assembly Bill 268.**

these contractors are making \$42.00 to \$60.00 a year. who knows what next year's contracts will be? Clark Co has 15-20 un-filled positions Washoe Co has 2 Carson City has 4 Churchill Co has 2 Douglas Co has 1 Lyon Co has 3 Nye Co has 2 there will be 12 University graduates in speech pathology this year

they do not like Nevada and leaves. A district has to deal with inconsistent service, multiple SLEs in one year, periods of time with no service at all. 1st year grad. with little or no school site experience.