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Testimony re SB 34—March 24, 2003
Senate Human Resources and Facilities
Washoe County School District
Lonnie Shields

Senator Raggio, members of the Committee, and staff—for the record. . . . I am Lonnie Shields representing the Washoe County School District.

I am here today on behalf of the Washoe County School District to provide information for your use about the fiscal impact that SB 34 could have upon the Washoe County School District based upon the proposal now embodied by SB 34 before you this morning. During the hearing held on this bill on February 12, 2003, Rita Hemmert, early childhood and kindergarten coordinator for the Washoe County School District testified about the issues of readiness and appropriateness rather than fiscal issues.

In providing the fiscal note for this proposal, the school district examined the number of children currently in kindergarten and first grades in view of their birth dates. As you might expect, about half of the children in kindergarten and first grades have birthdays that would be affected by this proposal. For WCSD, that translates to about 4,346 children who would be eligible for this earlier entry to either kindergarten or first grade.

Our calculations took into account the testing costs for administration of some assessment to these 4,346 children. That estimation is about \$84,786.00 and includes the test itself, the time for teachers to administer the tests, and clerical assistance to make this massive undertaking happen.

Our calculations also took into account that approximately 25% of the 4,346 children tested would be likely to pass the assessment. Based upon an anticipated additional 1,087 children entering kindergarten or first grade, we then projected costs for

- New portable classrooms needed, including set-up and furnishings;
- Additional teachers, 8 for kindergarten and 37 for first grade;

- Supplies and instructional materials per student;
- Transportation of these additional children to their schools.

All of this totals about \$4,863,866 and that's only the projected fiscal impact for the first year to implement this proposal. At a time when we have cut our budget for two successive years, additional cuts would be required to implement this proposal.

We have received calls from parents who are disappointed that their children cannot attend kindergarten or first grade in Nevada because of their birth dates. No matter what date is used, there will always be parents who will telephone to communicate their anger or disappointment about the cut-off dates.

If the intent of this proposal is to devise some kind of appeal process for parents wish to circumvent the dates specified in law, then we would like to have the opportunity to participate in the development of such an appeal process. We would look forward to working with legislators, staff, and concerned others in building an appeal process that is sensible, that does not squander resources, and that has equity for all who might use it.

As written, the Washoe County School District cannot support SB 34 because of its negative fiscal impact upon the school district.