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April 30, 2003

Senator William Raggio, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
401 S. Carson St.
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Senator Raggio,

I received a copy of your letter dated April 16, 2003 with the attached "Register of Assurances." The Nevada State Education Association believes that verbal assurances were provided to the Committee by the Nevada Association of School Superintendents, the Nevada Association of School Boards, the Department of Education, and representatives of the Clark County School District as part of their testimony on Senate Bill 191. Assurances were provided to the Committee that all Nevada school districts will be able to implement spring testing and meet the requirements of "No Child Left Behind."

NSEA did testify in support of the "White Paper" prepared by the Nevada Association of School Superintendents and the Association of School Boards. We support the "White Paper" because we believe a spring testing timeline will measure student learning that has occurred during the course of the academic year. A fall testing timeline, on the other hand, does not allow time for teaching the subject matter to be tested and is, therefore, not an accurate measure of student learning.

NSEA was called upon from the audience to answer your question, "Are you comfortable with the implications that spring testing might have as a reflection upon the performance of an individual teacher?" I responded, "It is my understanding that this is the best place to put the test. Our president Terry Hickman, at the last hearing on the bill, supported the School Board position regarding spring testing." I do not recall, and the record of the hearing does not include, that you defined your meaning of "implications." I assumed you were referring to the need to allow a teacher adequate time to teach.

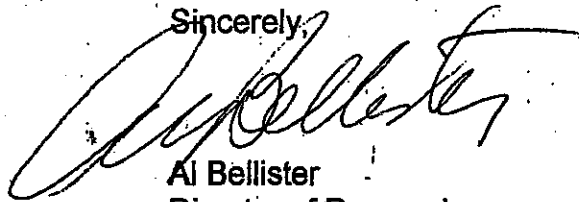
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I must indicate to you that I did not believe you were asking NSEA to provide the same type of verbal and written assurances that you asked of the other parties. NSEA is not in a position to offer assurances on matters over which we have no control, i.e., timely receipt of test data from the vendor, distribution of accountability reports, and performing the necessary Adequate Yearly Progress data analysis.

NSEA and its members are committed to improving student achievement. We assure you that NSEA knows testing is an essential diagnostic tool for teachers. NSEA does assure you that our members provide high quality instruction each and every day to ensure Nevada's public school students learn and succeed.

Sincerely,



Al Bellister
Director of Research

AB:gf

cc: Members of the Senate Finance Committee
Terry Hickman
Ken Lange
Debbie Cahill