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April 7, 2003

Re: Senate Bill 462

To the Members of the Senate Government Affairs Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony in writing. The American Cancer Society supports Senate Bill 462 which would establish a Division of Minority Health within the Department of Human Resources.

Put simply: The burden of cancer on some segments of the U.S. population is heavier than on others. In 2003, approximately 1.3 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer. Racial/ethnic minorities are expected to account for a disproportionate number of these cancers. African American men, in particular, have a 20% higher incidence rate and a 40% higher death rate from all cancers combined than white men. Some contributing factors include having little or no health insurance, living in poverty, lack of access to health information and services and language barriers. It is our hope that by creating a Division of Minority Health, answers can be found to help save lives in our underserved populations.

Dr. Mark Clanton, a member of the American Cancer Society's subcommittee on diversity has said, "We can do something about this situation, and we are working more closely with underserved communities to understand the barriers that contribute to health disparities, identifying the best community assets to tackle the problem, and mobilizing them in creative strategies to eliminate these disparities."

As one of the fastest growing states in the nation, we have a duty to help close the health gap, and Senate Bill 462 would provide the foundation to tackle such a goal. We can no longer afford to ignore the enormous health disparities that exist between minority and caucasian populations in our state.

On behalf of the American Cancer Society and our volunteers, we thank you for your leadership on this issue and urge you to support Senate Bill 462.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Buffy Gail Martin".

Buffy Gail Martin

Director of Government Relations -- Nevada