

## DISCLAIMER

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Madame Chair, members of the Committee, I am John Slaughter, with the Washoe County Manager's Office.

The need for AB 151 came to our attention last year when the duties of the Public Guardian were split from those of our Public Administrator, and we created the Office of Public Guardian. This was done with the full support of our elected Public Administrator and the District Courts. The Office of Public Guardian is now administered by a professionally certified guardian, whose only function is to serve in that capacity.

The job of the Public Guardian involves some the most critical duties a County is asked to perform for individuals in the community. When an individual is incapacitated and unable to manage their own financial resources and / or is unable to make informed medical decisions, and *has no one else available to do so*, the Public Guardian is appointed by the Court to make these quality of life decisions.

The issue we have is that the Public Guardian lacks the authority in Statute to appoint deputies to perform the day-to-day functions required to manage guardian cases. For example under current statutes, only the appointed Public Guardian can sign official papers, such as court documents. In order to properly manage a ward's financial affairs, one of the first things typically done in every guardianship case is to go to the ward's bank and to freeze their accounts. AB 151 would allow the Public Guardian to assign these duties to appointed deputies.

In preparing the bill draft for AB 151, we looked to similar authority allowed other County Officers such as the Public Administrator, the County Clerk, the County Coroner and the County Surveyor; who are all allowed by NRS to appoint deputies.

AB 151 also changes provisions of the term of office of the appointed Public Guardian by having the position serve at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners, in the same manner as the other appointed County Officials.

In summary Madame Chair, AB 151 allows the Public Guardian and her staff to perform the guardianship function in the most professional and efficient way possible

Thank you, I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.