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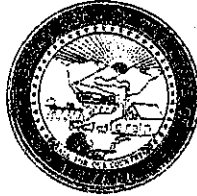
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# State of Nevada Assembly

Seventy-Second Session

## Comments for SB 49- Suicide Prevention Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie

When I agreed to be a member of the Interim Subcommittee to Study Suicide Prevention, I was troubled by the high suicide rates in Nevada. I soon came to understand that my concerns were eclipsed by the reality of the situation. This public health problem has literally become a crisis threatening almost every family in the state.

Let me outline the shocking scope of the problem:

- Nevada has the **second highest** rate of suicides of the 50 states.
- Suicide is the **fifth** leading cause of deaths for Nevadans.
- Nevada has **twice** as many deaths from suicide as from HIV.
- Nevada's high rate of suicide is evident among all age groups and socio-economic populations, including youth, elderly men, Native Americans and residents of rural communities.
- Persons in their 20s, 30s and 40s have the **highest** occurrences of suicide.

Although the problem is complex, one of the primary reasons that Nevada has not been able to reduce the number of suicides is the lack of adequate state and local programs. A concerted effort is needed to meet the challenge. Educators, law enforcement, health care providers, public policymakers and other champions must join together to address this public health crisis.

AB 49 begins this long arduous process by establishing a coordinator with the sole responsibility of focusing the suicide prevention efforts by creating public awareness and by building community prevention networks. Without a well-orchestrated coordinated effort, Nevada has little or no possibility of turning this tragedy around.

We also must not shy away from our responsibility to provide adequate funding so that people have access to mental health care. We will all have to make a strong commitment if we are to succeed in our efforts.

I commend Senator O'Connell for her leadership in developing the recommendations of the Interim Study and urge you to support of SB 49.

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