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## TESTIMONY

**BILL: SB 239 Requires Department of Human Resources to Establish  
Statewide System for Information and Referral Accessed by 211**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

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Good afternoon, Chairman Rawson and members of the Committee. I am Mary Liveratti, Deputy Director of the Department of Human Resources. I am here to support the development of a statewide information and referral system with access by dialing 211.

The Strategic Plans for People with Disabilities and for Seniors (authorized by Assembly Bill 513 during the last session) both recommended that a 211 universal access line with supplementary No Wrong Door website and community-level call centers be established. The strategic plans recognized the need for information that is up-to-date, accurate and easy to access.

Families often do not know where to go for assistance. Consumers and families cannot make the best decisions on how their needs can be met, if they do not have access to reliable, appropriate information, referral, and assistance. The Strategic Plans also acknowledged the need to coordinate services as a means to avoid confusion for the consumer and reduce service duplication. This system would allow for a greater knowledge of the

resources available and could be designed to assure referrals are offered more appropriately by screening for location, financial resources and other pertinent data related to consumers.

An additional benefit of this system would be data collection. Data from this system could be used for future strategic planning. For example, service needs that are not being met by available resources would be identified. Currently, it is difficult to gather and use this information effectively because it is not compiled or comparable in some cases. All of the strategic plans identified the need for improved data systems for future planning efforts and accountability. This system would enable the compilation of information on an on-going basis and could provide statistics for budgetary and legislative purposes.

Although both SB 239 and SCR 11 designate the Department of Human Resources as the agency responsible for establishing and maintaining the 211 system, we believe very strongly that this system must be developed as a public/private partnership. Establishing a 211 system will require a commitment by multiple public agencies, such as human services and the Public Utilities Commission, and also private agencies, such as United Way. We envision the 211 system being operated by a private entity such as the United Way. United Way agencies have provided leadership in this area in many states, including Nevada.

Anne Cory, President and Chief Professional Officer of the United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra, presented a proposal to the Committee for

the Study of State Programs for Providing Services to Persons with Disabilities on September 10, 2002. In addition to describing the benefits of the system, Ms. Cory also emphasized the many planning tasks that would need to be accomplished before implementing a 211 system. Some of these tasks included completing a business plan, forming a 211 coalition to complete the plan for implementation, hiring a statewide 211 coordinator, updating human services databases, coordination with 911, 311 and 711 systems, developing system design for centralized administration and multiple call centers, working with Homeland Security for disaster planning integration of 211, creating a training plan and a marketing plan for public awareness.

At this point, there has not been enough planning completed to develop a realistic cost to develop and implement a 211 system. Although the Department of Human Resources has prepared a rough fiscal note by refining the projected costs in the strategic plan, we feel these costs are very rough estimates. We estimate approximately \$500,000 for SFY 2004 and \$733,080 for SFY 2005. The on-going cost is estimated at \$1,466,160 per biennium. We have not had time to look in any depth at possible funding sources.

In summary, we support the development of a statewide system for information and referral on health, welfare, human and social services with accessibility through 211 calling. This system would provide streamlined access to existing services for our citizens and would provide improved information for future community planning. However, as previously stated,

planning efforts are not far enough along to determine accurate fiscal impact, nor has a business plan been established.

We do not believe legislation mandating a 211 system should be passed at this time. We suggest passage of SCR 11, which will allow DHR to continue to develop a business plan, identify funding sources and work with community partners to determine the best implementation strategy.

I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.