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TESTIMONY BEFORE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
FOR SENATE BILL 57
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2003 – 8 AM

**By Kirby L. Burgess, Director of
Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services**

- This bill modifies NRS 62.2185, which discusses a “restitution through work” program for juvenile offenders. The focus of the law is to establish responsibility and accountability in these young offenders, ages 14 or older, by aggressively seeking restitution for the victims of the juveniles’ unlawful behavior.
- The bill allows for a Probation Officer or Judge to use their discretion as to which youths can be placed in the program and slightly changes the amount that an employer can withhold from the youth’s salary to go towards restitution.
- In January of 2002, a pilot project was created based in part on NRS 62.2185. This project was called the R.E.A.L. Program (Restitution earned, accountability learned). The goal of the R.E.A.L. Program is to ensure victims and the community receive a sense of justice and fairness in the aftermath of a delinquent act committed by a juvenile by having the juvenile repay any restitution owed. An additional goal of the program is to lower the recidivism rate in youthful offenders, ages 14-18 years by giving them job skills training, creating jobs for youth and placing them in jobs at least until their restitution was repaid for those who owed it and/or they were terminated from Probation.
- The R.E.A.L. Program has assisted youths to obtain employment and repay restitution. Fifty-six youth were tracked from January -September, 2002 in the pilot program. Eighty eight percent were males, 12% females. They ranged in age from 14–18 years with the majority being 16-17 years old. All types of delinquent charges were represented. The results were outstanding. Close to 93% of youth participating in the program did not commit additional offenses. Forty-two jobs were obtained for the youth, lasting anywhere from three months to over six months. Total Restitution repaid amounted to \$2,540. Fifty-seven percent of restitution orders were paid in full, the rest was partial and continuing at the end of the pilot project.
- In view of the success of the pilot project, grant funding was obtained to put the REAL program in place on a full time, ongoing basis. A full time position has been dedicated to operate this program and to carry out its mission.
- The Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice supports Senator Wiener’s bill and we encourage you to pass it.