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COMMITTEE: Senate Judiciary Committee

TESTIMONY PROVIDED BY: Robert D. Davidson, Chief of Police
Winnemucca Police Department

TOPIC: Local government impact of Governor's proposed fiscal plan on law enforcement services in the City of Winnemucca

Distinguished members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Robert D. Davidson. I am the Chief of the Winnemucca Police Department in Winnemucca, Nevada. It is my extreme pleasure to address you this morning to provide testimony regarding the local government impact of the Governor's proposed fiscal plan. Specifically I wish to address the issue of the extreme downsizing of the Department of Public Safety Investigation Division and the resulting effect that will have on our local drug task force.

I have had the opportunity to work alongside the Nevada Division of Investigation for some eighteen years; first in their designation as NDI and more recently as the Department of Public Safety Investigation Division. For approximately fifteen years of that time I have directly observed the investigative and enforcement actions of our multi jurisdictional drug task force. Started originally as the Tri County Drug Task Force it has in recent years become the Humboldt/Pershing Narcotics Task Force. The members of this task force include not only my own agency, the Winnemucca Police Department, but also the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, the Lovelock Police Department, the Pershing County Sheriff's Office and lastly, but most importantly, the Department of Public Safety Investigation Division.

The services which are provided by this drug task force are invaluable. The results in our community have been quite effective. Yet this has not always been the case in Winnemucca. In the early 1980's, prior to the development of our local drug task force, the investigation of narcotics related cases was hit and miss at best. Most investigations netted only street level dealers. When informants could be developed we enlisted the aide of the Nevada Division of Investigation who would send a team from Carson City to assist us. The resulting investigations would rarely lead to the arrest of more than a second level dealer and arrests of drug traffickers was rarely heard of. Despite their best efforts, the roving investigation teams simply could not devote enough time or manpower to successfully follow the cases to fruition.

That was then. How have things changed since the mid 1980's. Well according to the latest statistics available to our department the overall crime rate in Nevada rose 3.2% higher than the national average. A large reason for this dramatic increase in the crime rate is the increase in drug use and the accompanying crimes such as burglary, robbery and homicide.

During the last statistical reporting period there were over 10,000 arrests statewide for drug related offenses. Roughly 80% of those arrests involved male suspects while a surprising 20% involved females. Even more surprising however was that some