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Pro-Life League OF NEVADA

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March 28, 2003

To: Chairman Amodei and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Testimony on SB267 -- (allows adoptee 18 years or older to access his adoption records and eliminates State Register for Adoptions)

My name is Patricia Glenn. I am president of the Pro-Life League of Nevada. I am also co-foundress and presently on the Board of Casa de Vida home for pregnant unmarried young women in Reno. Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

We have three concerns about this bill as presently written:

1. **Privacy** - When a young birthmother decides that both she and her baby will have a better future through adoption, she has commonly been given the promise of confidentiality -- that, except under a court order and for good reason, only if both she and her birth child agree, will her confidential file be opened. SB267 would violate that promise of confidentiality. Some 18 or more years after the mother has established a new future, and possibly mothered a new family, her life could be turned upside down. She would have no privacy protection under the law.

2. **Repeal of the State Register for Adoption** - It would appear that the present Register allows for the release of information to an adopted person if the natural parent agrees. It also allows for restriction of information by the adopted person herself.

We have great sympathy for the desire of an adopted child to learn more about her history and her birth parents. However, we are also greatly concerned about the mother's rights. Abolishing this Register through SB267 would be a great loss in serving the needs of both the birthmother and her child. Rather, we would recommend that the Register be empowered to collect and release medical and other historical information which would be helpful to the adoptee's health and welfare, while preserving the anonymity of the birthmother, if she so desired.

3. The "**Safe Haven**" law, which was passed by this legislature in the previous session, provided immunity for a birthmother if she placed her newborn child into a safe environment. Instead of utilizing this protection, and concerned about her future privacy, a frightened new mother could be tempted to add to the "Dumpster Baby" population which the "Safe Haven" law was designed to prevent. Indeed, instead of giving life to her unborn baby, she might even consider abortion to be her only other supposedly "confidential" alternative.

For these reasons and for the protection of the rights of everyone involved - the adopted child, the adoptive parents, and the birthmother herself, we respectfully encourage you to vote "No" on SB267 as written. Instead, we would ask for a revision of the Adoption Register in order to enable an adoptee to obtain vital health information more easily, while still protecting the privacy of the mother. Thank you.

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