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Written Testimony Of Detective Todd Raybuck, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department

In support of Assembly Bill 443 Date: May 13, 2003

Good morning Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in regard to AB 443 as a representative of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

I am Detective Todd Raybuck: I am an eleven-year veteran of the Metropolitan Police Department. I have been assigned to Narcotics for the last four years and am currently the Narcotics Demand Reduction Coordinator. Demand reduction is a fancy term for education and awareness in order to reduce the future demand for narcotics.

Prior to becoming the Demand Reduction Coordinator I worked in an undercover capacity investigating drug related sales and trafficking cases. It is my experience having intimate knowledge of today's drug culture that I share with you my testimony today.

Today's popular drugs are: cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, and a new breed of drugs dubbed "club drugs" such as ecstasy, catamenia, and GHB.

Ecstasy has both stimulant and hallucinogenic properties. The drugs effects are increased heart rate and elevated body temperature. In some cases, body temperatures have been recorded in the range of 104 to 108 degrees. The dangers of overheating and dehydration while under the influence of this drug are well known among its users. The short list of complications includes: kidney failure, liver damage, heart attack, stroke, and death.

Catamenia is a close chemical cousin to the drug PCP, The users of this drug take near overdose amounts to feel as they describe "an out of body experience." The dangers of this drug include severe brain damage, respiratory failure, coma, and death. Often users of this drug will use it while under the influence of other drugs increasing the dangerous side effects.

G.H.B. commonly referred as the "date rape" drug has become a popular replacement for alcohol in many nightclubs. Like alcohol it is a central nervous system depressant. Users claim that this drug provides a strong sexual euphoria. An overdose can occur with as few as three teaspoons or a single dose when mixed with alcohol. An overdose victim falls into respiratory failure, coma, and serious risk of death. In the last twelve months, LVMPD narcotics detectives have responded to more than 100 GHB overdoses at Las Vegas Valley hospitals.

The frequency of overdoses for these drugs have become so common that the danger of serious life threatening serious effect, are often ignored and in some cases deliberately over looked.

I'd like to tell you about one popular Las Vegas nightclub where drug use was so prevalent that overdose was a common occurrence. Employees of this club set up gurneys in the kitchen area to treat victims in house rather than call for emergency personnel in order to avoid the risk of bad publicity or police scrutiny.

Another club in Las Vegas had security carry overdose victims to waiting limousines hired by the club to take the victim to a nearby hospital. Often the drivers would drag the victim into the ER waiting room and leave without informing medical personnel.

One incident at yet another nightclub involved bouncers who carried a male patron to a car who was suffering from an overdose. The bouncers told the victims girlfriend he was suffering from a GHB overdose and that she should take him to hospital. However, before she could leave. the bouncers changed their recommendation and told the girlfriend he would be fine to just take him home. The girlfriend was following their advice and on the way home he stopped breathing and went into convulsions. Fortunately for him, they were passing a hospital and his life was saved.

That wasn't the case for a 35-year-old tourist to Las Vegas who came to town to celebrate the opening of his new dental practice. Friends convinced him he should take ecstasy to help with the celebration. He felt sick after taking the drug and his friends took him to his hotel room. They did not want to call for help fearing they would jeopardize his career. Instead they put his life in jeopardy. That night he died.

These are only a few examples of an all too common occurrence in clubs and our communities throughout the state of Nevada.

Those who choose to engage in the use of illegal drugs assume the consequences of their decision. However, at such time those consequences render a person unable to care for themselves others must be compelled to do so to prevent substantial bodily harm or death.

For those persons who refuse to seek help Assembly Bill 443 is needed!

As citizens, parents, law enforcement and lawmakers, we must do everything we can to prevent the tragedy of more parents burying their children. One such tragedy involved Danielle Heird, whose father is here today. Danielle went out with friends in what was supposed to be a celebration. After taking ecstasy, Danielle became sick, her friends took her to a house where she died. To quote my friend Jim Heird in response to having to bury his daughter "It's not the scheme of things."

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.