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**Testimony on SB480
April 10, 2003**

**Doreen Begley, RN, MS
Nurse Executive for the Nevada Hospital Association
Emergency Department Staff Nurse for 30 years**

Good afternoon Chairman and Members of the Committee. For the record my name is Doreen Begley. I have been a registered nurse for the past 33 years, spending the first 30 years of my nursing career working as a staff nurse in the emergency department. I am here today on behalf of the Nevada Hospital Association and as an ER nurse, to urge you to strongly support SB480, the primary seat belt law.

Working in the emergency department can be the most stressful aspects in a nurse's career. Having to deal with life and death situations on a daily basis is incredibly demanding. But one of the most difficult aspects of the job is seeing the countless number of needless deaths and injuries that result from individuals choosing not to wear a seat belt. Having to inform the families of their loved one's death or critical injuries becomes overwhelmingly tragic when health care providers know that it would not be the case had a seat belt been worn.

When an individual chooses not to wear a seat belt, while it is thought to be their personal right to make that decision, their injury or death does not just impact them. It affects the on scene first-responders and every healthcare worker that is needed to help save their life. I can't tell you the number of times I have discharged the battered, sutured and broken body of a victim of a car crash, who was wearing a seat belt, so they may go home to attend the funerals for their friends who were not.

The best solution for this tragic issue is **Prevention**. The best car crash is one that doesn't happen; the best outcome from a car crash is to minimize the injuries and deaths whenever possible. Making seat belt use mandatory, and allowing the Nevada Highway Patrol and other law enforcement agencies to have the ability to stop un-belted drivers is the ultimate solution. I always wear my seat belt. Everyone who rides in my car must wear a seat belt. You should always wear your seat belt, and so should all Nevadans. On behalf of the Nevada Hospital Association, I strongly urge you to pass SB480 so that we can ensure that all Nevadan's will Buckle Up.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am available to answer any questions.