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SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

OPENING REMARKS REGARDING

ASSEMBLY BILL 226

SUMMARY— REQUIRES DRIVERS AND CERTAIN PASSENGERS OF TAXICABS AND LIMOUSINES TO WEAR SAFETY BELTS.

BY

ASSEMBLYMAN JOHN OCEGUERA

THANK YOU, CHAIRMAN SHAFFER AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. GOOD AFTERNOON. FOR THE RECORD, I AM JOHN OCEGUERA REPRESENTING ASSEMBLY DISTRICT NO. 16 IN CLARK COUNTY. I AM PLEASED TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY AS A SPONSOR OF ASSEMBLY BILL 226 AND THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE THIS BILL, AS AMENDED, TO THE COMMITTEE.

UNDER CURRENT NEVADA LAW, ADULT AND CHILD PASSENGERS IN TAXICABS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO WEAR SEAT BELTS, ALTHOUGH TAXICABS ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO BE EQUIPPED WITH SEAT BELTS.

ASSEMBLY BILL 226 SEEKS TO AMEND CHAPTER 484 OF THE *NEVADA REVISED STATUTES*, WHICH IS WHERE OUR SEAT BELT LAW CAN BE FOUND. THE BILL ADDS A NEW PROVISION TO CHAPTER 484 THAT SPECIFICALLY REQUIRES ADULT AND CHILD PASSENGERS IN TAXICABS TO USE THE SEAT BELTS THAT ARE AVAILABLE.

IN MY POSITION AS A CHIEF OF A NORTH LAS VEGAS FIRE DEPARTMENT, I HAVE SEEN ONE TOO MANY MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS INVOLVING TAXICABS, AND ONE TOO MANY ACCIDENTS WHERE THE PASSENGERS IN THE TAXICABS ARE INJURED OR HURT BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T WEARING THEIR SEAT BELTS. I HAVE EVEN SEEN ACCIDENTS WHERE PASSENGERS IN TAXICABS HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T WEARING THEIR SEAT BELTS.

WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT SEAT BELTS IMPROVE BY HALF A PASSENGER'S CHANCES OF SURVIVING A CRASH AND ARE THE BIGGEST SINGLE FACTOR IN DETERMINING WHETHER A PERSON SURVIVES AN ACCIDENT, YOU CAN APPRECIATE HOW THIS BILL CAN IMPACT SAFETY OF ADULT AND CHILD PASSENGERS IN TAXICABS.

WHEN YOU NEXT CONSIDER THAT LAS VEGAS TAXICABS, ALONE, PROVIDE APPROXIMATELY 21 MILLION TRIPS EACH YEAR, YOU CAN FURTHER APPRECIATE HOW THIS BILL CAN

IMPACT THE SAFETY OF ADULT AND CHILD PASSENGERS IN TAXICABS.

FINALLY, CONSIDER THAT LAS VEGAS TAXICABS WERE INVOLVED IN 3,870 REPORTED ACCIDENTS LAST YEAR, TWO OF WHICH INVOLVED FATALITIES.

WITH MANDATORY SEAT BELT USE, INJURIES TO ADULT AND CHILD PASSENGERS WOULD EITHER NOT OCCUR, OR WOULD BE LESS SEVERE.

ASSEMBLY BILL 226 ALSO REQUIRES TAXICABS TO POST SIGNS IN THEIR VEHICLES INFORMING PASSENGERS OF THE LAW AND THE PENALTY FOR NOT WEARING A SEAT BELT. HOPEFULLY, THESE POSTINGS WILL SERVE ANOTHER PURPOSE BESIDES INFORMING PASSENGERS OF THE LAW, AND THAT WOULD BE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE PASSENGERS WHO DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY BUCKLE-UP OF THEIR OWN VOLITION WHEN THEY RIDE IN A TAXICAB.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS BILL, AS AMENDED.