

CCEA

Clark County Education Association

the union
of teaching
professionals

March 25, 2021

Nevada Assembly Committee on Education
401 S Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Chairwoman Bilbray-Axelrod and committee members,

My name is Dr. Brenda Pearson, with the Clark County Education Association. CCEA is in full support of AB262 as amended. CCEA believes that we must put our educators and our students first. One step in doing so is by ensuring that SB543 is funded to the optimal level, the next is to ensure that students who are historically disadvantaged are given opportunities for growth and achievement throughout the entirety of their time in the K-20 educational delivery system. This bill will help Indigenous students pursue college, at our own institutions. Now, I would like to read testimony provided from one of our educators.

Thank you for hearing my testimony on AB 262. My name is Carolyn Lara and I am a STEM Robotics Teacher in Clark County School District at Spring Valley High School. I am also native Yaqui and Papago. I am writing to you in strong support of AB 262.

As a high school teacher I get to experience the joy of seniors getting accepted into my alma mater, UNLV. Of course, I am proud to see my students be able to go to any college of their choosing, especially here in Nevada. I believe that students must see educational opportunities here in Nevada so that their talents can be used in the community in which they have grown up. Nevadans know what Nevadans need. Unfortunately, I have also bore witness to some of the lows and disappointments of students as they realize their tuition costs are more than they can afford.

Nationally, the largest hurdle for many of our students in attending college is their tuition costs. This barrier disproportionately affects our Native American population. It is imperative that we remove that obstacle from the pathway to higher education for our Indigenous communities here in Nevada. By doing so, we would make a more equitable playing field, as well as entice our young people to stay home and build our communities stronger.

We know that our state revenues rely largely on gaming and mining. Without diversifying our economy we will continue to run into budgeting shortfalls year after year. We must invest in education. Our state cannot continue to operate under the status quo without a serious investment in the future of our youth's education.

Our native communities have long been disenfranchised on their own land. It is time that we become serious about reducing systemic racism within our state and expand residency to our Indigenous Community here in Nevada regarding tuition fees and rates.

Please support and move AB262. Thank you for your time and consideration.