



Clark County Education Association



March 1, 2021

Nevada Senate Committee on Education
C/O Chair Senator Moises Denis
401 S Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Re: Public Comment for March 1, 2021 Senate Education Hearing SB118: Establishes provisions related to education. (BDR 34-155)

Hello and thank you Committee Chair Denis, and committee members. My name is Brenda Pearson, and I am here representing the Clark County Education Association.

The Clark County Education Association (CCEA) represents more than 18,000 licensed professionals in the Clark County School District. We are the largest independent teacher's union in the country and in the State of Nevada. We engage in bipartisan advocacy for advancing public education in Nevada.

CCEA is testifying in support on Senate Bill 118 and thanks Senator SeEVERS-Gansert for bringing this bill forth. The statewide expansion of the Dean's Future Scholars Program will help to bridge the equity divide of students who transition into postsecondary education.

In 2019 there was a 12% difference between the graduation rates of Caucasian and minority students. Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic, enrollment statistics in postsecondary are dropping, with higher education entities reporting a significant drop in enrollment for first-generation college students for the upcoming 2021-2022. Research has shown that mentorship, tutoring, and resource support services of first-generation college students increases retention and academic success. Senate Bill 118 will provide much-needed support and services for our first-generation college students through the statewide expansion of an already successful program. Further, we believe the language authorizing use of gifts, donations, bequests, grants and other sources of money will help to ensure accessibility to funding for this program. In addition to access to food, technology and programs and activities, grant and scholarship opportunities for first generation college students are encouraged to be made readily accessible and publicized to address the equity issues related to higher education.

Building a stronger and more diverse economy in Nevada means that we ensure equitable access and support for those seeking post-secondary education. Thank you for your efforts, we look forward to doing all that we can to support post-secondary opportunities for Nevadans.

Respectfully,

Brenda Pearson, Ph.D.
Clark County Education Association