

AB 186 lowers the Compulsory School Attendance Age in Nevada from 7 to 5 years old and mandates kindergarten.

It also contains an unfunded mandate for School Districts to maintain a **Pre-K** class in every public school.

But we say: "Let parents decide when their child is ready!"



February 27, 2017

Dear Assemblywoman Diaz,

Thank you for meeting with us today. By way of introduction, Nevada Homeschool Network (NHN) advocates for Nevada families who have chosen to direct the education of their children via homeschooling. In this capacity, we are writing today about AB 186. Among other things, AB 186 will lower the compulsory attendance age for entry into school from 7 to 5 years of age. This requirement will apply to all children, whether their parents plan to send them to public school or private school, or homeschool them.

We have several concerns with AB 186 as introduced:

1. **We hold that Nevada parents should decide *when* their child is ready to attend school, not the government. However, the current compulsory attendance age of 7-18 more than satisfies the government's goal of ensuring an educated populace while protecting a parent's right to determine the child's readiness for school attendance prior to age 7.** Many children are simply not ready at age 5 or even 6, but for those parents who wish their child to attend school they may already do so. Under AB 186, parents who would have chosen to delay their child's entrance into formal education will be forced to start their children's schooling up to **two years earlier**, before they may feel it is best for their child. The requirements of AB 186 would apply to pupils in public and private schools, as well as homeschools; rigidly compelling school attendance based on age instead of readiness.
2. **Lowering the compulsory attendance age from 7 to 5, with no exemptions for age 5 or 6, may create an undue financial burden on parents who intend to enroll their child in private school but wish to choose to wait until their child turns 7.** These parents will now be forced by state law to enroll their child a year or two earlier than planned in a private school or submit paperwork to homeschool their child even if they determine their child is not ready for school. Homeschooling parents would be required to start their children's formal education at age 5 even if they've determined the child is simply not ready.
3. **Requiring school districts to provide prekindergarten in every elementary school usurps local control of education and will create an undue financial burden for Nevada.** There are no proven studies showing that prekindergarten promotes long-term educational success. To the contrary, research indicates that early education does not improve a child's potential for being a better student in the future, because early gains disappear in a few years.

Article II, Section 2 of the Nevada Constitution states, "...the legislature may pass such laws as will tend to secure a general attendance of the children in each school district upon said public schools." The key here is, "tend to secure a general attendance" which we believe is met under current law. **Therefore, NHN requests that the compulsory attendance age remain 7-18 to protect the right of all Nevada parents to determine when their child is ready for school and that the state not mandate prekindergarten programs in all public schools.**

Respectfully,

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