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May 19, 2013

Senate Finance Committee
Nevada Legislature, Room 2134
401 N. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Chairwoman Smith and Committee Members,

By way of introduction, Nevada Homeschool Network (NHN) advocates for Nevada families who have chosen to direct the education of their children. In this capacity, we are writing today in opposition to SB 182. **Among other things, SB 182 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.

We have several concerns with SB 182 as introduced and currently amended:

- **We hold that Nevada parents should decide when their child is ready to attend school, not the government.** The current age of 7 gives parents that opportunity. We appreciate that the bill's sponsor amended the bill to partially address this issue by allowing parents to exempt their child from attendance at age 5 but we believe it is reasonable that the compulsory attendance age remain at 7 so that parents, not the state decide the age of attendance. Many children are simply not ready at age 5 or even 6. However, for those parents who wish their child to attend school the opportunity to do so already exists under current Nevada law. ***"Choice in Education" should include "when" as well as "where"***.
- **Requiring school districts to provide all-day Kindergarten in every elementary school usurps local control of education and will create an undue financial burden for Nevada.** There are no proven studies showing a benefit of all-day Kindergarten for the long-term educational success of the child. Further, funding for other educational services vital to current public school students will be depleted.
- **Lowering the compulsory attendance age from 7 to 5, with an exemption for age 5 only, 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 earlier than planned or submit paperwork to homeschool their child even if they determine their child is not ready for school.

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 the Senate Finance Committee members to vote no on SB 182 or amend it to leave the compulsory attendance age at 7-18 and protect the right of all Nevada parents to determine when their child is ready for school.**

Respectfully,

Frank Schnorbus, Chair

Elissa Wahl, Vice-Chair

NHN Officers: Barbara Dragon, Kelley Millard Radow, Laura Siegal, & Ray Poole