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FRANK R. WOODBECK
DIRECTOR

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Written Testimony of Frank R. Woodbeck
Director
Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation

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*“Educational Collaborations to Promote Industry Alignments to Strengthen
Nevada’s Workforce”*

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Good morning Chairman Kline, Congressman Heck and members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me here today to discuss career and technical education and training programs that promote industry alignments to strengthen the economy and workforce in Nevada.

I am Frank Woodbeck, Director of the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (*aka* DETR). DETR’s mission is to provide Nevada’s businesses with access to a qualified workforce, support the career and training goals of jobseekers and encourage equal employment opportunities for all Nevadans, including those with disabilities. In unification with that mission, DETR continues to seek innovative ways to carry out its historic *safety net* responsibilities even more intently in response to the *Great Recession* that our nation has endured throughout the past seven years. Governor Sandoval recognizes the Department as the architect that designs and promotes collaborations with Nevada’s Department of Education, the Nevada System of Higher Education, including the community colleges, the Governor’s Office of Economic Development (GOED), and the school districts to deliver pathways for careers and vocations to the unemployed, under-employed and yet-to-be employed citizens of Nevada.

Nevada's Career and Technical Academies, Signature Academies and STEM-related magnet schools play a vital role in our efforts to promote high demand occupations to youth who will be entering the workforce over the next decade.

Background

DETR serves as the state's workforce development arm, providing numerous labor-related services through its divisions. DETR manages 10 Nevada *JobConnect* offices, which provide job seekers with resources for job searching, skills assessment and training, and provides employers with assistance in finding qualified employees. Thousands of job seekers utilize the *JobConnect* centers daily, while business service representatives serve employers by offering space for hiring events, assess to tax incentives and resources related to on-the-job-training programs. DETR also includes:

- The Nevada Equal Rights Commission, which investigates claims of discrimination in the workplace, in housing and places of public accommodations;
- The Rehabilitation division, which encourages employers to hire people with disabilities, and works with people with disabilities on training and job placement; and,
- The Research and Analysis Bureau which maintains statewide labor statistics and reports the monthly unemployment rate and economic standing.

When the Great Recession hit in 2007, demand for DETR's services ramped up exponentially. When Governor Sandoval assumed office he realigned economic development efforts and quickly brought DETR into the fold as a major contributor to the economic development activities. If Nevada is to survive another economic downturn in the future it must focus on attracting a diverse cadre of industries. In order to do so, it must have a skilled workforce in place that can sustain a globally competitive economy.

The Governor's Office of Economic Development (*aka* GOED) commissioned a study of Nevada's economy by the Brookings Institute. Findings concluded that Nevada should focus on nine sectors for economic development and workforce expansion. From this study and with legislative action and support, DETR formed the Governor's Workforce Investment Board's

industry sector councils to initiate workforce development activities in these sectors that include high demand occupations of the future. These industry sector councils include:

- Health Care and Medical Services
- Clean Energy and Sustainability
- Tourism, Gaming and Entertainment
- Aerospace and Defense
- Information Technology
- Logistics and Operations
- Mining and Materials
- Agriculture
- Manufacturing

Utilizing the findings of the industry sector councils, the Governor’s Board provides guidance to the local boards for investment of Workforce Investment Act funding in training for the unemployed, underemployed and young adults seeking a successful career in the Nevada economy of the future.

Each industry sector council is designed to number approximately 22 – 25 volunteer members; at least 51% of the membership is business executives from the industry sectors, including CEOs, COOs, and human resource executives. Furthermore, each industry sector council includes a representative from GOED, the Department of Education, the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), the community colleges, the Nevada Legislature, local elected officials, labor representatives, the Regional Development Authority, a staff economist from DETR’s Research and Analysis division, and representatives from the two local workforce investment boards. These industry sector councils are a component of an historic collaboration between the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board, GOED and DETR and will yield investment in workforce training and development that will serve Nevada’s industry growth of today and the future.

All of the industry sector councils have established Strategic Plans and are underway with initiatives to support growth within their respective sectors. For example, the Health Care and

Medical Services sector council has planned a workforce summit for April 2014 to bring together various stakeholders from across the state for input on current and future workforce demands to best prepare for an adequate supply of health care workers to meet health care delivery needs in Nevada. The goal is to provide a roadmap for businesses, educators and government leaders to address health care workforce challenges and opportunities to identify proposed solutions.

Additionally, on the health care front, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded Nevada a \$150,000 grant for the Future of Nursing State Implementation Program to help prepare nursing professionals to address health care challenges. DETR matched the grant with \$50,000. The grant is a partnership of DETR, GOED, NSHE, Nevada Action Coalition, and the Nevada Hospital Association.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is an important framework for Nevada's workforce development activities. It is meant to be customer-focused, providing us the guidance we need to ensure job seekers have access to valuable training programs and other workforce related services. However, if we are to meet the ever changing demands that the recession has placed on the state's workforce, we need flexibility to craft innovative programs at the state level that are aligned with our training needs, while still maintaining accountability for the expenditure of funds. We have been extremely successful in implementing a number of programs with our economic development and education partners.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education

In the 2013 legislative session, SB345 passed and codified the formation of a Nevada STEM Advisory Council, of which I am a member. The purpose of the council is to develop a strategic plan for the development of educational resources in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to serve as a foundation for workforce development, college preparedness and economic development for the state. Nevada is experiencing a significant shortage in the workforce of those with STEM-related skills. The Governor's economic plan includes seven industries that require a STEM-skilled workforce. In an effort to bring greater awareness to STEM -related careers, several STEM conferences have been planned throughout the state; two STEM conferences were recently held with Harney Middle School students at

Nevada State College and the College of Southern Nevada. The students listened to panel discussions by industry professionals and had the opportunity to learn more about STEM-related careers.

Career and Technical Education

Career and technical education (CTE) in Nevada is organized under 16 nationally-recognized career clusters. The basis of CTE is the course sequence, commonly known as the CTE program. There are over 70 CTE programs in secondary education, with career pathways ranging from health sciences to information technology. To complete a CTE program, a typical high school student will complete a three-credit core course sequence; to demonstrate full competency, the student will take an end-of-program technical assessment and a separate assessment to measure employability skills.

- In Nevada, more than 50,000 students in grades 9-12 are enrolled in CTE courses
- CTE programs exist in varying degrees in more than 100 Nevada secondary schools
- Nearly four out of 10 Nevada high school students are enrolled in a CTE course
- Typically, approximately 45% of enrollees are female and approximately 55% are males
- Students who concentrate in CTE, that is, complete two credits, graduate from school at higher levels as compared to the regular student cohort*

* In the 2012-13 school year, Nevada's cohort graduation rate was **70.65%**. For students who earned two or more credits of CTE coursework, Nevada's cohort graduation rate **87.75%**

Most students who enroll in CTE are enrolled in programs at comprehensive high schools. While the model for success is clearly the academy model, emphasis needs to continue on programs offered in comprehensive high schools, where creative solutions are needed to ensure those students have comparable access to CTE as do students in state's seven CTE academies.

Nevada Workforce Development Centers

DETR recently partnered with the NSHE and the community colleges statewide to open the Nevada Workforce Development Centers in support of Nevada's economic development efforts. The first center opened last fall at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). The centers are part

of the Governor’s vision to bring education and workforce development together to help advance economic development for the state.

The centers allow students preparing for graduation to be paired with potential employers currently located in Nevada or those interested in relocating to Nevada. The goal of the centers is to ensure employers have the qualified pool of applicants they need when looking at Nevada’s workforce.

The center at CSN is staffed with CSN’s Division of Workforce and Economic Development (DWED) and Nevada *JobConnect* employees who assist employers with recruitment, employee pre-screenings, job profiling, job postings, job matching services, and more — *free of cost*. In addition, employers have access to the largest database of job seekers (220,000 and growing) provided through the Nevada *JobConnect*. The center offers employers customized training programs, employee assessment and credentialing programs. Employers will also have access to extensive regional economic data including local forecasts, wage and labor force information. The center can also provide businesses with information and assistance in developing partnerships with other entities and accessing state and federal funding opportunities such as tax incentives for hiring and training.

Rights Skills Now

Manufacturing represents Nevada’s 9th largest industry employing approximately 39,900 individuals. Although small, manufacturing in Nevada has an enormous potential for growth. Manufacturing is expected to grow by more than 5,000 jobs between now and the year 2020, again far exceeding national expectations. DETR has partnered with *Dream It Do It*, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating a highly skilled workforce through the attainment of academic degrees and nationally portable, industry-recognized credentials that are aligned with the nationally recognized Skills Certification System. *Right Skills Now* is a nationally replicable, fast-track solution that was designed by the Manufacturing Institute when manufacturers expressed their need for skilled machinists.

Right Skills Now enables local manufacturers to access a highly skilled, trainable and entry-level manufacturing workforce in 16 weeks, compared to the 12 months or longer timeframe that traditional programs offer. The initial phase of *Right Skills Now* in Nevada guided 34 Nevadans through 16 weeks of hands-on technical skills training and towards valuable careers with Nevada manufacturers. These 34 participants were recruited through Nevada's workforce system and completed all requirements of the *Right Skills Now* program obtained each of the following:

- ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate
- College credit from either Western Nevada College or Truckee Meadows Community College
- Four National Institute of Metalworking Skills Credentials, including two in Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) operations
- Work experience with a Nevada manufacturer in need of a CNC operator capable of becoming a skilled machinist

Recruitment targeted the record number of unemployed and underemployed Nevadans, including veterans who received preference and persons with disabilities. Candidates were identified through an analysis of their prior work history in related industries such as construction, logistics, warehousing, agriculture, mining, maintenance, and others. All candidates for the *Right Skills Now* program were screened with ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and Work Keys Talent Assessment, which assesses personal and workplace behaviors and attitudes.

The NCRC is currently available at all state community colleges. Western Nevada College and Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) have since incorporated *Right Skills Now* programs in their Machining, Welding and Auto Mechanic programs. In conjunction with the National Institute of Metalworking Skills, Western Nevada College has modified its existing curricula to offer this fast-track model that equips the participants with basic skills required to perform on the job as a Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) operator.

At the successful completion of this program, participants earn 24 hours of college credit, and they have an understanding of the career and education pathways necessary to further their careers in manufacturing.

DETR Partnership with Washoe County School District (WCSD) and TMCC

This educational partnership targets 19-21 year-old drop-outs and at-risk students to provide them remedial classes to bring them to a level of proficiency to earn their high school diploma and be admitted to TMCC. Students will work with a Student Success Specialist to select a skills certificate program at TMCC. Student Success Specialists will work with the TMCC Job Placement Specialist by reaching out to local employers to match the program participants with a relevant work internship and/or possible employment. Students must enroll in a rigorous course of study and maintain a 2.0 grade point average to remain in the program. Students receive one-on-one assistance, counseling, encouragement and mentoring from the specialists during all phases of the program. They also receive assistance to apply for financial aid. Students participate in college readiness workshops, academic advising and complete a Work Keys, ACCUPLACER and career assessment test. Successful completion of both summer semesters ensures a stipend of \$800 to students for tuition purposes.

JAG – Jobs for America’s Graduates

Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) is an innovative, non-profit program that has been credited with changing the lives of nearly three-quarters of a million young people across the country by helping them stay in school, move on to pursue higher education and/or gainful employment. The results of the program have been so inspiring that Nevada became one of the most recent states to adopt the model, hoping that it will serve as a life line for at-risk youth in our state.

The JAG model consists of a comprehensive set of services that applies a holistic approach to assisting students. The components include:

- Classroom instruction
- Competency-based curricula
- Adult mentoring
- Advisement and support

- Summer employment training
- Student-led leadership development
- Job and postsecondary education placement services
- 12-month follow-up services
- An accountability system

The curriculum equips students with a minimum of 37 employability competencies, intensive career exploration and developmental opportunities. The adult mentoring provides individual attention to students to overcome challenges and barriers that prevent them from taking advantage of their high school education. The support component connects students with personal, psychological and other youth services in the community to address issues that often prompt them to drop out of school. Because the goal is not only to graduate students, but to ensure their success after high school, the placement portion of the program pairs students with specialists who identify entry-level job opportunities for graduates and assist them in exploring opportunities for post-secondary education. Additionally, students are placed in summer employment to support year-long learning.

Youth Website

Through the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, and with support from Governor Sandoval and the Youth Council of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, the Nevada *JobConnect* launched a website dedicated to educating and preparing Nevada youth and young adults to make smarter employment and career decisions.

The site – www.NevadaYouth.org – includes helpful tips youth can use to approach a potential employer such as resume and cover letter advice; interview *dos* and *don'ts*; and hints for landing a job. In addition, the site has many helpful links to relevant, state-approved programs and organizations to assist youth in assessing their skills, exploring their career interests, and planning for the future. The site also links to the Nevada *JobConnect* Job Bank for students searching for part-time employment. The Clark County School District closed its Job Bank last year and began referring students to the Nevada Youth website.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony today on the collaboration efforts that our state has and will continue to make with the Department of Education and high schools, postsecondary education, and with the industry sector councils on the promotion of industry alignments to strengthen Nevada's economy and workforce. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.