



The Nevada Policy Research Institute

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NPRI Urges Vote on School Choice Bill

The Nevada Policy Research Institute today expressed its hope that Senate Bill 158, which proposes using taxpayer money to send disabled and troubled students to a private school of their parents' choice, would be granted a vote in the Nevada Assembly before the conclusion of the 2007 legislative session.

The bill, authored by Sen. Barbara Cegavske, passed in the Senate last week by a unanimous, 21-0 vote, but is currently bogged down in the Assembly Ways and Means Committee. The bill must clear the committee before the full Assembly can vote on it, but a committee hearing on the bill has not yet been scheduled. Commonly, opponents of bills send them to the Ways and Means Committee by attaching fiscal notes. Such a tactic can mask a silent death for the legislation which, stuck in committee, never receives a vote before the full Legislature adjourns. June 4 is the last day the Assembly could vote on the bill.

“This bill represents an important step forward in the effort to grant Nevada parents more control over their children’s education, particularly in the case of children whom the public education system fails most egregiously,” said NPRI Communications Director Andy Matthews. “Whatever the result, this historic bill deserves a vote in the Assembly.”

Curiously, unanimous passage in the Senate came after the bill received opposition in two separate Senate committees. Sens. Steven Horsford and Joyce Woodhouse voted against the bill in the Human Resources and Education Committee, while Sens. Dina Titus, Bernice Mathews and Bob Coffin opposed it in the Finance Committee. Sen. Valerie Wiener abstained from the vote in the Human Resources and Education Committee. All six senators, however, voted for the bill when it went before the full Senate. None of the six has yet returned calls from NPRI seeking explanation for the change in their vote.

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