

Nevada Prison Education Project
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TO: Assembly Committee on Judiciary

Meeting on Thursday, March 13, 2025

FROM: Doug Unger, Member, Nevada Prison Education Project
E-mail: (removed) Phone: (removed)

RE: Support for AB 321

PUBLIC COMMENT – Support for AB 321

Doug Unger, Member, Nevada Prison Education Project. Thank you Chairs Miller, Marzola, and Members of the Committee.

The Nevada Prison Education Project is an independent organization that includes teachers from colleges and universities in the Nevada System of Higher Education, several community groups, justice-impacted students, and the Nevada Department of Corrections. We all work together to improve and expand prison education in our state. Prison education greatly reduces recidivism and helps to provide a second chance for the justice impacted to reshape their lives, learn skills, pursue careers and contribute to society. Still, too often we find that earning an Associate's, Bachelor's, or even a Master's degree isn't enough, no matter how hard a formerly incarcerated student works. Even after serving time plus probation and making amends, the stigma of having committed a crime, having made that mistake, closes vital doors for employment and stifles that second chance at building a new life. AB 321 will provide a process so that, at the discretion of a judge, the conviction can be set aside and a certificate granted that should improve significantly opportunities to make good use of an education or other qualification to be able more gainfully to join the workforce. AB 321 also provides a pathway toward firefighting positions vital to our state; also a second chance provision for those who prove themselves and succeed enough to secure occupational or professional licenses. Please consider the positive trajectory of re-entry into society that this bill can help to achieve: incarceration leading to reform; reform to release; release to personal improvement; and with enough perseverance, this second chance. AB 321 can save lives. It's the right thing to do. Thank you.