

TESTIMONY OF AARP NEVADA IN FAVOR OF SB329,
JESSICA PADRON- ASSOCIATE STATE DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY

On behalf of AARP Nevada, I am here to express our strong support for Senate Bill 329 (SB329), which mandates dementia and cognitive impairment training for first responders. This legislation is vital for safeguarding the well-being of Nevada's aging population and ensuring that first responders are equipped to interact effectively with individuals experiencing cognitive challenges, while preventing tragedies.

As Nevada's population ages, the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias continues to rise, affecting countless individuals and their families. First responders are often the initial point of contact during emergencies involving persons with dementia. Proper training enables them to recognize symptoms, communicate effectively, and employ appropriate interventions, thereby enhancing safety and reducing the risk of adverse outcomes.

The Alzheimer's Association offers a free, online program titled "Approaching Alzheimer's: First Responder Training," designed to prepare emergency personnel for situations involving individuals with dementia. This training provides 24/7 access, self-paced modules, and interactive activities, making it a valuable resource for first responders seeking to improve their skills in this area.

Other states have recognized the importance of such training. For instance, Ohio enacted House Bill 23, which develops education and provides optional dementia training to first responders. AARP Ohio commended lawmakers for this initiative, highlighting the positive impact on individuals with dementia and their families.

By passing SB329, Nevada will join these proactive states in ensuring that first responders possess the necessary knowledge and skills to assist individuals with dementia effectively. This legislation not only promotes the safety and dignity of our seniors but also supports first responders by providing them with the tools needed to navigate complex situations involving cognitive impairments.

AARP Nevada urges the legislature to pass SB329, demonstrating our state's commitment to protecting vulnerable populations and supporting our dedicated first responders.