

**N.A.A.C.P.**  
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT**  
**OF COLORED PEOPLE**

RENO/SPARKS BRANCH #1112  
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Dear Nevada Legislative Member:

Governor Sandoval has proposed a budget that would drastically cut the spending for K-12 education at the same time increasing the budget for Nevada State Prisons. This proposal will have a disparate impact on the black community and other children of color and reeks of racism.

Nevada is last in the nation on education spending and has one of the highest the highest drop-out rates. There is a direct correlation between high school drop outs and increased incarceration rates. Children who don't complete high school are more likely to end up in the prison system.

A recent study conducted by Dr. Debra Feemster disaggregated the graduation rate data for Washoe County School District that showed the actual graduation rate for black males was an abysmal 24% for 2006-2007. Approximately 7% percent of those graduates received special education diplomas resulting in an actual graduation rate of 17%. This is nowhere near the national graduation rate average of 68%.

The drop-out rate for black males has gotten worse over the past ten years which corresponds to the continual cuts made by the legislature in K-12 education. Now the Governor wants to cut spending for K-12 education in Washoe County by \$150,000,000 over the next two years (the cuts are significantly higher for Clark County). The drop-out rate will only get worse, especially for children of color.

The result of the Governor's proposal to decrease K-12 spending is to increase the drop-out rate which will then require an increase in the Prison budget to accommodate more inmates. Nevada will have one of the best

school to prison pipelines in the country. That is the true effect of the Governor's education and prison budgets.

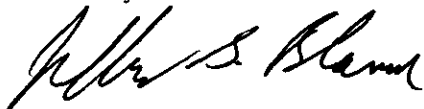
Black males are already six times over represented in Nevada prisons compared to the general population. As convicted felons, over 13,000 blacks in Nevada can't vote. This is reminiscent of the voting restriction laws adopted in the South after the Civil War. Welcome to the "New Jim Crow"<sup>1</sup>.

On behalf of the Reno/Sparks Chapter of the NAACP I urge you not to support the Governor's education and prison budgets. Our children need more money to succeed in their education, not less. Contrary to the popular myth that money doesn't matter, it does. And our education system needs a lot more of it. You need to raise revenue for education.

If more funds are not generated for k-12 education you, the legislature will be in violation of the Nevada's Constitution Article 11, Section 2. You will force the people you represent to initiate litigation to obtain a court order requiring you to properly fund our public education system.

You have the opportunity to be the leaders our children and grandchildren will be proud of. Or you can be remembered as the politicians who continued the decline of Nevada's educational system that is decimating our children of color. The choice is yours.

Sincerely,



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c: Governor Sandoval, Reno Gazette Journal, Sparks Tribune, Nevada Appeal, Las Vegas Review Journal

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<sup>1</sup> The New Jim Crow, Mass incarceration in the Age of color blindness, by Michelle Alexander