

Juvenile competency statute proposed for Nev.

By Yesenia Amaro, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Children in the juvenile justice system often face different competency issues than adults in the criminal system.

But Nevada currently lacks a statute to address competency issues among juveniles. Officials have used adult criminal procedures as a guide instead, said Susan Roske, an attorney with the Clark County juvenile public defender's office.

The juvenile competency issue is drawing attention nationwide because the reasons children are incompetent for the purposes of court proceedings often differ from those that arise in adult cases, she said on Thursday.

There are limited rules and procedures under the general provisions of juvenile justice in the state, she said. Roske and Jo Lee Wickes, the chief deputy district attorney who supervises the juvenile division in Washoe County, both led a juvenile competency subcommittee of the Commission on Statewide Juvenile Justice Reform. The commission recently finalized a proposed statute for juvenile competency.

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