

Dear Chair Doñate and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence to express our strong support for Assembly Bill No. 368, which would establish critical protections for residents of assisted living facilities and living communities for persons with disabilities.

As the statewide coalition representing direct service-providers throughout Nevada, we know that elderly individuals and people with disabilities experience disproportionately high rates of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Too often, these vulnerable populations have their autonomy restricted and their voices silenced, making it difficult to report or document abuse when it occurs.

AB 368 takes a meaningful step toward addressing this problem by ensuring residents and their representatives have the legal right to install and use electronic communication devices in their living quarters. This simple yet powerful tool serves multiple purposes that are vital to protecting vulnerable Nevadans.

As an organization that centers our work on the experiences and needs of victim-survivors, we know that one of the most damaging aspects of abuse is the silencing of victims. The provisions in AB 368 that prohibit retaliation against residents who request these devices and establish penalties for tampering with them are particularly important in ensuring that survivors can safely use this tool without fear of consequences.

Nevada ranks high nationally for rates of elder abuse, with studies suggesting that many cases go unreported. For people with disabilities, the rates of abuse can be up to three times higher than for people without disabilities. AB 368 represents an important step toward addressing these troubling statistics by giving vulnerable residents tools to protect themselves and hold abusers accountable.

We urge you to support this victim-centered legislation that aligns with best practices in trauma-informed care by amplifying the voices of survivors rather than silencing them. By passing AB 368, Nevada would join other states in recognizing that electronic monitoring is a valuable tool in preventing and addressing abuse in residential care settings.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to protecting Nevada's most vulnerable residents.

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