



March 9, 2021
Senator Melanie Scheible, Chair
Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Nevada State Legislature
Carson City, Nevada

Dear Chair Scheible and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tiffany Stickney and I am the Executive Director of the Winnemucca Domestic Violence Services (WDVS). I am writing to you to ask your support of SB177. Humboldt County has a population just over 18,000, is 9,626 square miles, and is located between Pershing and Lander County. Humboldt County includes many cities; Winnemucca, Golconda, Grass Valley, Denio, McDermitt, McDermitt Reservation, Kings River, Orovada, Winnemucca Colony, and Paradise Valley. WDVS was founded in 2003 and became a 5019(c)3 in 2005. We started by serving domestic violence victims and soon realized we had to also serve sexual assault, stalking, teen dating and trafficking victims in order to serve our community. We do this through emergency services such as hotel or shelter stays, food, clothing, hygiene products, long term shelter, counseling, rapid rehousing and financial education. We are the only direct service provider for these services in our County.

Our Mission Statement states: Winnemucca Domestic Violence Services is dedicated to providing victims and their children with a safe environment free from abuse, while educating the community on the signs and effects of domestic and sexual violence. Annually, WDVS serves around 200 women, men and children through crisis intervention, shelter, protection order assistance, court advocacy, counseling and personal needs. Since the re-opening of the County, due to Covid, we have seen an increase of 60% in sexual assault intakes. Many of these have been in the house of married couples. We also saw an increase in the number of individuals needing shelter. Although the population of people served is mainly women between the ages of 29 and 54, WDVS is proud to serve all members of the community, regardless political or religious affiliation, ancestry, economic status, education, marital status, race, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, handicap or national origin. We also help secondary victims through counseling and resources. WDVS maintains a staff of 4 to 5 people and 3-4 regular volunteers. Volunteers assist with the Hotline maintained by WDVS as well as office work, organization of donations and event help. We work closely with law enforcement, Human Services, the Frontier Community Action Agency as well as Child and Family Services to ensure service delivery to those impacted by violence that may walk into their office.

Marriage License funds are more crucial than ever to our organization as it is used as Match for our federal grants and fills many needs gaps. Unfortunately, fundraising in 2020 was much lower than in previous years. Where we raised an average of \$23,000 per year in fundraisers previously, WDVS was only able to raise a little over \$7,000 in 2020. These fundraising dollars is usually what we use for match. Additionally, many federal and state grants are restrictive in what they can be used for and may not provide all the funds needed for someone in a very rural



area. Marriage License funds are less restrictive allowing us to cover more gaps in funding. WDVS received less than half of what we usually receive in Marriage License funding in 2020. We were able to secure some other funding but it was specifically for the cost of PPE as well as the additional costs incurred through hotel stays. The cost of hotel stays increased greatly as we were only able to house one family in our scattered site shelters at a time instead of the two families usually allotted to a two-bedroom home. This is due to COVID restrictions.

Again, I cannot stress the importance of support of SB177. As the only agency that provides specialized advocates to walk a victim through the social, justice, medical and legal systems after a traumatic event in our community, please support our cause and local victims!

Tiffany Stickney
Executive Director
Winnemucca Domestic Violence services