



March 13, 2021

Honorable Melanie Scheible, Chair and Judicial Committee Members

State of Nevada

Re: Senate Bill 177

Dear Senator Scheible and Committee Members:

Noah's Animal House began in 2007 as a program at The Shade Tree shelter in Las Vegas. The goal was to remove barriers to shelter for victims of domestic violence or victims of sexual assault that had pets. It was the first animal sanctuary co-located on the grounds of a domestic violence shelter in the county. Since opening as a program, the request to help save the lives of victims with pets in other places lead to becoming a separate charitable organization in 2012. Noah's Animal House Foundation provided a way for expansion to Northern Nevada in partnership with Reno's Domestic Violence Resource Center in 2018. The expansion doubled our capacity and impact in the state of Nevada for victims, their children, and their pets.

For thirteen years we have welcomed the arrival of victims with pets and for thirteen years we have celebrated the victims becoming survivors through the expert work of victim advocates in the shelters, police departments, and courts. The agencies employing these expert advocates are funded in part by marriage license fees and are key to the services for victims. Since opening in 2007 we have worked with more than one thousand families fleeing domestic violence. These brave and courageous members of our community reach out through hotlines, social media messaging, email, and through our website. Their plea for assurance we can help is present in every conversation. We have assisted victims from fifteen years old to seniors in their eighties. Each has their own trauma they have endured and desperately need to leave. Arriving at shelter is the beginning but healing and feeling safe takes time and resources. We know the increase in funding allocated to victim services will provide the sheltering agencies with the resources to assist the victims.

Noah's Animal House Foundation partners with two of the largest domestic violence shelters in the state of Nevada. We exist to remove a barrier to shelter and partner with the shelters so the victims can enter safety. We support SB177 to increase the portion of Marriage License Fees to \$50 toward victims of domestic violence and sexual assault services. During the past year when the pandemic changed everything we knew about life in Nevada, one thing did not change and that is violence in the home. The victims were locked down twenty-four hours a day with their abuser and when they could escape,

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experts in trauma care, legal protection, and victim's rights were the ones poised to assist. We stand with these experts that assist the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and support increasing the financial resources for the agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to support survivors in Nevada. If we may be of any assistance regarding consideration of Senate Bill 177, please do not hesitate to contact Noah's Animal House Foundation at noahsanimalhouse@gmail.com or myself directly at Marlene@noahsnv.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marlene Richter".

Marlene Richter, L.S.W.

Executive Director