

March 15, 2021

Chair Scheible
Senate Judiciary Committee
Nevada State Senate
Legislative Building
Carson City, NV 89701

Chair Scheible and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sue Meuschke. I am the Executive Director of the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCEDSV), the statewide coalition of domestic and sexual violence programs in Nevada. I am here today to express NCEDSV's support for SB 177. We want to thank Senators Ratti, Cannizzaro and Scheible for bringing this important bill to the legislature.

SB 177 increases the surcharge on every marriage license sold in the state to provide much needed resources for domestic violence programs in the state but also to establish statewide funding for sexual violence services. For those of you who are not familiar, there are fourteen domestic violence programs serving all 17 counties in the state and one stand-alone sexual violence service provider in Las Vegas who all rely on grants from the Account for Aid for Victims of Domestic Violence. Six of the fourteen domestic violence programs also, to the extent they are able, provide sexual violence services but they receive no state funding for that critically needed /important work.

The recipient organizations range from large multi-staff agencies in Clark and Washoe County to small two to three person operations in communities like Elko, Fallon and Winnemucca, to an all-volunteer program in Battle Mountain. While each program is a private non-profit organization, they are all dedicated to serving survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence in their communities.

Last year, during the COVID Pandemic, community based programs reported serving 21,121 first time contacts and 11,989 repeat contacts a 6% increase in clients statewide. They saw a 33% increase in hotline calls and a 14% increase in bednights. You will hear today how those increases were absorbed by community based programs and how the need is often unmet.

You will also hear today that there are programs, often domestic violence programs, who are striving to fund sexual violence services by cobbling together a patchwork of federal, state and private funds to establish services. They reported serving 453 adult rape victims and 1,163 victims of child sexual abuse last year.

But in many communities in our state there are no services for victims of sexual violence or the services that do exist are at the whim of federal funding. The Coalition in fact manages a grant from the Office on Violence Against Women that provides funding for five rural domestic violence programs to establish or expand sexual violence services. We have no guarantee that this funding will continue after September of 2022. If we are not funded again those services are at risk of disappearing unless we can establish ongoing funding – and thus we are here today.

We know that we are asking for a lot – doubling the surcharge from \$25 to \$50 to be used to increase funding for domestic violence programs and to establish funding for sexual violence programs is a hefty request. We believe that the benefits will far exceed the costs. We are asking that 75% of the total revenue fund domestic violence services and 25% of the revenue fund sexual violence services – this will maintain and provide a critical increase in funding for domestic violence programs and yet provide enough funding for base services for sexual violence programs.

In many communities these services will be provided by the same program. Particularly in rural communities the cost efficiency of delivering the two services from one organization helps make up for the lack of economy of scale the rural programs experience.

The financial impact of domestic and sexual violence is staggering:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the financial impact of domestic violence ranges from individual to societal. In fact, they say the lifetime economic cost associated with medical services, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice, and other costs, was \$3.6 trillion. The cost of domestic violence over a victim's lifetime was \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men.
- The CDC estimates that the per-victim lifetime cost of rape is \$122,461. When this per-victim cost is multiplied by the estimated 25 million reported adult victims of rape in the US, we find that rape will cost the economy approximately \$3.1 trillion dollars over the lifetimes of those 25 million victims.

If our services can prevent or mitigate the harm to victims, we stand to save Nevada millions of dollars.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue and we urge 'do pass' on SB 177.

Thank you,



Sue Meuschke
Executive Director, NCEDSV