# NEVADA GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

## **DRAFT Position on Voting**

Voting is a fundamental civil right for Americans to have a voice in choosing the elected officials whose decisions impact our lives, families, and communities. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are more likely to experience difficulties in registering to vote, requesting absentee ballots, and casting their vote, compared to persons without disabilities. Even with limited access to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant machines, many poll workers are unfamiliar with and unable to provide instruction to someone with a disability on how to properly use the machine. When assistance is provided, it is often without the privacy of the individual’s vote in mind.

Several federal laws recognize and protect the right of people with disabilities to vote. They set standards to ensure access to polling places and to permit assistance to voters where it is needed. The **Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA)**requires jurisdictions responsible for conducting federal elections to provide at least one accessible voting system for persons with disabilities at each polling place in federal elections.  The accessible voting system must provide the same opportunity for access and participation, including privacy and independence, that other voters receive. Universal accessibility creates a world that does not separate anyone based on their abilities. The fundamental problem is that voters with disabilities are being offered a “separate but equal” approach to voting, and as such “separate” is *not* equal. The NGCDD advocates for accessible, effective, and efficient election processes at all levels, that have a universal design for all voters.

### Policy Recommendations:

Voting for people with disabilities must adequately include the following:

* Access to working ADA compliant machines at all polling locations, with polling workers trained and available to assist, if requested.
* Access to private and equal locations for individuals to cast their ballots.
* Ensure all policies and programs result in the creation of equal treatment and access to all universally designed voting related services to all individuals.
* Access to reasonable voting hours and expanded transportation hours to accommodate public transportation users and/or voters who work.
* Develop and strengthen inclusive laws that protect the right to vote, easy access to voting machines, easy voter registration and absentee ballot requests, reasonable hours to vote which reflect the needs of working voters, and elimination of government ID barriers to voting.
* Beginning in youth, encourage inclusion of individuals with I/DD in all levels of voting and education on voting rights in schools.
* Develop and strengthen all currently available polling locations and machines in Nevada.
* Strengthen and encourage use of currently available Nevada's Effective Absentee System for Elections (NVEASE), which can be accessed at [www.nvease.gov](http://www.nvease.gov).
* Support the development and continuation of voting options that provide people with I/DD with multiple options to register to vote, request absentee ballots, and to cast their ballots.
* Provide education to law and policy makers on the needs of individuals with I/DD when it comes to all aspects of voting.

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