**NEVADA GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

**Position on Crimes Against Individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities**

Historically, individuals with disabilities have been subjected to systemic discrimination, marginalization, and violence. From the eugenics movement of the early 20th century to the deinstitutionalization efforts of the late 20th century, societal attitudes towards people with disabilities have often been rooted in misconceptions, fear, and stigma. These negative perceptions have contributed to a lack of protections and resources for individuals with I/DD, making them particularly susceptible to various forms of abuse.

Studies have shown that individuals with disabilities are significantly more likely to be victims of crimes, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, than their peers without disabilities. Their unique experiences often include isolation, dependency on caregivers, and communication barriers, which can complicate their ability to report crimes or seek help. Furthermore, societal biases can lead to a lack of belief in their accounts of abuse, further silencing their voices.

**The Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) recognizes the unique vulnerabilities faced by individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and condemns all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation directed toward this population, regardless of the perpetrator of the crime. Crimes against individuals with I/DD not only violate their fundamental human rights but also undermine their dignity and ability to fully participate in society.**

**Policy Recommendations:**

1. **Enhanced Training for Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Disability Service Providers/Agencies**: Implement mandatory training programs focused on the unique needs of individuals with I/DD. This training should cover topics such as recognizing signs of abuse, effective communication strategies, and appropriate response protocols to ensure sensitive and informed interactions.
2. **Accessible Reporting Mechanisms**: Develop and promote accessible reporting mechanisms that cater to individuals with I/DD, ensuring they can report crimes without barriers. This includes providing support services, such as advocacy and legal assistance, tailored to their needs.
3. **Community Education and Awareness Campaigns**: Fund and support public awareness campaigns that educate the community about the rights of individuals with I/DD and the prevalence of crimes against them. These campaigns should empower individuals with I/DD and their families to recognize and report abuse.
4. **Legislative Protections**: Advocate for comprehensive legislation that addresses the specific needs of individuals with I/DD, including laws that establish stricter penalties for crimes against this population and require reporting of abuse in care settings.
5. **Increased Funding for Support Services**: Allocate funding to organizations that provide support services to victims of crimes with I/DD. This includes counseling, advocacy, and legal assistance to ensure that individuals receive the help they need to navigate the aftermath of abuse.
6. **Data Collection and Research**: Promote research initiatives that focus on understanding the prevalence and nature of crimes against individuals with I/DD. Establish a system for collecting data on reported incidents to inform policy decisions and allocate resources effectively.
7. **Ensure Proper and Adequate Care**:Strengthen safeguards within caregiving settings, including residential facilities, group homes, and in-home care services, to prevent neglect, abuse, and exploitation. This includes implementing regular oversight, mandatory background checks for caregivers, clear incident reporting protocols, and enhanced training to ensure individuals with I/DD receive safe and appropriate care.
8. **Address Perpetration Among Individuals with I/DD:** Develop training, policies, and intervention programs that recognize and appropriately address situations where individuals with I/DD commit crimes. This includes ensuring accountability while also considering their cognitive and developmental needs, access to appropriate rehabilitative services, and legal protections that uphold both justice and disability rights.

The NGCDD is committed to advocating for the safety and well-being of individuals with I/DD. We call upon state and local governments, law enforcement agencies, service providers, and community members to join us in creating a safer environment for individuals with I/DD. Together, we can foster a culture of respect, understanding, and accountability that ensures the protection of some of our most vulnerable citizens.

Last Review Date: