

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**Eighty-Third Session
March 7, 2025**

The Committee on Judiciary was called to order by Chair Brittney M. Miller at 8 a.m. on Friday, March 7, 2025, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 3 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda [[Exhibit A](#)], the Attendance Roster [[Exhibit B](#)], and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Brittney M. Miller, Chair
Assemblymember Elaine H. Marzola, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Lisa K. Cole
Assemblymember Cecelia González
Assemblymember Ken Gray
Assemblymember Alexis M. Hansen
Assemblymember Melissa R. Hardy
Assemblymember Selena La Rue Hatch
Assemblymember Cinthia Zermeño Moore
Assemblymember Hanadi Nadeem
Assemblymember David Orentlicher
Assemblymember Erica P. Roth
Assemblymember Toby Yurek

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblymember Joe Dalia (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cesar Melgarejo, Committee Policy Analyst
Karly O'Krent, Committee Counsel
Aaron Klatt, Committee Manager
Claudia Pierrott, Committee Secretary
Ashley Torres, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Liz Ortenburger, CEO, SafeNest
Teresa Benitez-Thompson, Chief of Staff, Office of the Attorney General
Serena Evans, Policy Director, Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
Alexandria Cannito, representing Domestic Violence Resource Center
Jason Walker, Lieutenant, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office; and representing Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association
John T. Jones Jr., Chief Deputy District Attorney, Legislative Liaison, Clark County District Attorney's Office; and representing Nevada District Attorneys Association
Mike Cathcart, Business Operations Manager, Finance Department, City of Henderson
Jessica Glover, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Luiza Benisano, Campaigns and Community Engagement Manager, Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada
Jason Garrett Gibson, Private Citizen, Gardnerville, Nevada
Michelle Afshar Dotson, Member, Alessandra Foundation
Katrina Esparza, Private Citizen, Sparks, Nevada
Maximillian (Max) Lowe, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Elizabeth Abdur-Raheem, Executive Director, Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
Paloma M. Guerrero, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public Defender's Office
Angela Knott, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Public Defender's Office
Nicole Reilly, Ombudsman, Office of Ombudsman for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking, Office of the Attorney General

Chair Miller:

[Roll was taken. Committee rules and protocol were reviewed.] Our first bill is Assembly Bill 159. It establishes the Hope Card Program for applicants who have been granted an extended order for protection against domestic violence. Assemblymember, I will give you all a few moments to get settled and whenever you are ready, please proceed.

Assembly Bill 159: Establishes the Hope Card Program for applicants who have been granted an extended order for protection against domestic violence. (BDR 3-180)

Assemblymember Melissa R. Hardy, Assembly District No. 22:

I am honored to be here this morning to present Assembly Bill 159, which aims to provide a vital tool for survivors of domestic violence called the Hope Card Program. I am honored to have with me today, Liz Ortenburger from SafeNest, as well.

As members of this Committee know, domestic violence remains a persistent and devastating problem in Nevada. Unfortunately, we hear statistics that we are probably one of the states that has the highest incidence of domestic violence, which is very sad. But it is realistic. Countless individuals live in fear navigating the complex legal system to secure protective orders that provide a semblance of safety. However, while essential, these orders can be difficult to readily produce and verify in everyday situations.

Hope Card Programs directly address this challenge, which first appeared at the statewide level in Montana in April of 2010. Hope cards provide concise information regarding a protection order. They typically include the dates of issuance and expiration of the order, information about the issuing court, information about the protected parties, and identifying characteristics of the person against whom the order was issued. This ensures law enforcement is not wasting precious time trying to track down paperwork. Victims with orders are also less burdened with stacks of paperwork and can more easily carry and access proof of the protection order. While temporary protection orders (TPO) are meant to be in a searchable repository, sometimes that is either not accessible or there can be a delay in entry. So, the hope card would provide a physical or digital means the survivor could show to police or in other situations, such as to an employer, a landlord, even a neighbor, or at a school to show they do have a protection order against an individual.

At this time, I will go through the key components of A.B. 159. Section 1 establishes the Hope Card Program itself, outlining the responsibilities of the Office of the Attorney General and developing and administering the program. The hope card must include important information; as I mentioned, the applicant's name, date of birth, details of the extended order, and the issuance and expiration dates. It is wallet size; it can be in digital or paper form. There would not be a fee charged to the person seeking the card. Section 1 also addresses potential misuse, establishing that a person who knowingly presents a fraudulent or expired card to another person with the intent to falsely represent they have an extended order would be guilty of a misdemeanor. Then section 3 requires the applicants for the extended order to indicate in their application whether they are requesting a hope card. This would streamline the process and would ensure that those who would like the card can do so easily.

Ms. Ortenburger can give you more details about TPOs, but initially, a TPO can be for 45 days and then the hope card is for extended protection orders. Those are granted by a judge. A hearing allows both the victim and the adverse party to present their evidence, then the judge decides if they are extended. I will turn it over now to Ms. Ortenburger for any additional comments, and then we will take questions.

Liz Ortenburger, CEO, SafeNest:

SafeNest works with survivors on about 3,000 temporary and extended protection orders every year. What we see in the field, quite frankly, is the adverse party dodging being served with the extended protection order, which means that extended protection order then does not go into the repository. A victim who is being stalked or harassed by their perpetrator in violation of that order has very little protection because police cannot look it up in the database.

A hope card issued at the time the extended protection order is granted allows that survivor a layer of protection so they can quickly verify with law enforcement, should they need to, when the adverse party is violating that protection order. The small card provides convenience and clarity for survivors. It is again, just like the bill we will present after this, one layer of protection for our survivor community.

We ask survivors to do about 150 different things when they report they are in a domestic violence relationship. Yet as a community, we provide very, very little in the way of ease of those processes. This is one step we can provide as a lawmaking body to make this pathway somewhat easier for survivors.

Assemblymember Hardy:

If any of you have ever dealt in the court system and came away with your file or your documents, I do not know many who would carry all those documents around. And so this is just another tool and a way for a victim to show they have an order in place. It gives them a sense of security and allows others to know they have this—maybe a family member, or a school, or someone can contact law enforcement on that person's behalf just by simply showing this card. We will take your questions now.

Assemblymember González:

Thank you so much for the presentation. I definitely understand the intent here, and I would agree we do ask our victim-survivors to do a lot of things, but I do have a few concerns with this bill. You stated in your presentation that this would be a card that is issued at the time the extended protection order is granted. I am trying to find it now—I read this the other day. For some clarity, does the person have to request this? Or is it an automatic card? Then, I will have a follow-up if we have time for follow-ups.

Liz Ortenburger:

It is requested on the application. So, when they are filing for an extended protection order, they would mark that they would like a hope card.

Assemblymember González:

Where does the Attorney General come into this? Because if the victim-survivor is asking for this at the time of protection or they are in the courts, and if we are wanting to limit the burden on them, are they now having to go to the Attorney General? Does the Attorney General deliver it to them? Can you walk me through how that would actually look?

Assemblymember Hardy:

I spoke with the Attorney General, and they are supportive of this and say they would have no problem managing this. I was hoping they would be here today, but they can certainly answer questions about how that would work because, to your point, we want this to be easy for the victim and not make them jump through more hoops. That is not the intent of it. I am sure they can speak to that.

Chair Miller:

Assemblymember, did that answer your question, or do you still need clarity?

Assemblymember González:

Yes. Sorry.

Chair Miller:

Chief of Staff Benitez-Thompson, would you approach, please?

Teresa Benitez-Thompson, Chief of Staff, Office of the Attorney General:

Could you repeat the question, first?

Assemblymember González:

In the bill, it states that the Office of the Attorney General would administer these. But then the victim-survivor would ask for this card while they are filling out their extended protection order. I am wondering, as a victim-survivor, would I then have to coordinate with the Attorney General's Office? Would you be sending it to the courts? Then I go pick it up? What is the process? Because I am just a little confused on that part.

Teresa Benitez-Thompson:

Thank you so much to Attorney General Ford. We would figure out what that process is. We would work with our partners, especially our judicial partners, to figure out at what point it is the right time for our office to issue that card. We want to speak to the fact that we think that this is reasonable, and we can figure this out. This is not an insurmountable ask for our office, logistically. We can make a plan and pull this together.

Chair Miller:

We may just call you right back up. With that, our next question is from Assemblymember Moore.

Assemblymember Moore:

I do have a question about the logistics of this. You said that the hope card can either be a physical card or it can be digital, and it is something that is requested at the time they are asking for an extended order. Victim-survivors, a lot of times when they are going through this, they are not really thinking clearly, especially because you have to go to court and face the person that has been abusing you. Why not encourage the victim-survivor, when they get the card that has the information on how to get a TPO, to scan that TPO and extended order on their phone?

Liz Ortenburger:

I always think it is important to remember that women living at and below the poverty line are five times more likely to be victims of abuse. So sometimes how that translates, and what we see in our world, is scanning things, getting things in your phone—let us also remember the phone is usually the thing the abusive partner takes and smashes. There is a lot of concern in a survivor's space and a lot of access to things that normally, yes, I can scan something into my phone, and it is no big deal, but in these situations becomes more complicated. A wallet-size card, if they receive it digitally, they print it out, cut it to the right size, and put it in there, in whatever they are using. Or they take a picture of it and put it on their phone, that is much easier than scanning in the entire protection order.

The other thing that happens on the scenes of domestic violence phone calls very often is, the abuser has taken or has hidden their electronic device. So, police are unable to find or have access to—if that adverse party has not been served, it is not in the repository. A survivor is the best person to dictate what works best for them. If that means I have five paper copies of this hidden all over the house, if there is a violation, I can find one of those and give it to police; or if it is digitally having it on my phone and I know that is a safe space for me as a survivor. We have to create options and empowerment in the space so a survivor can do what is best in their scenario, which is why it is digital; or you can receive it laminated, I believe is the other option. So honestly, what I see every day is survivors are their best advocates, and giving them as many options to stay safe is the best option.

Assemblymember Moore:

I am also curious, if you are able to answer this, how many other states have this type of program?

Liz Ortenburger:

I was able to locate seven states that have this program. Indiana and Washington were the two, I think, that sort of spearheaded this several years ago. Those are also states that we can look for, should there be an amendment around; is it the Attorney General (AG) Office; is it the court administrator; how are these things being done efficiently in other places? But there are seven states that I was able to find that currently have this program.

Assemblymember Hardy:

Yes, there are seven, I was told ten, so there are those. There are, in addition to states doing it, there are municipalities also doing it. I found this from Florida. I know they have this program there.

Assemblymember Cole:

I think this is really important and will be very beneficial. My question is related to this being limited to domestic violence. I do not know how broad this would be or how big the fiscal note would grow if you swept in more, but does domestic violence include the threats of domestic violence or when you are concerned about maybe something happening to your children?

Liz Ortenburger:

It is important to understand this bill only covers extended protection orders, the TPOs which are much higher quality. Emergency TPOs that are only available in Clark County are not included under this. The reason for that is, as Assemblymember Hardy said, temporary protection orders are 45 days in length and they can be renewed. But extended protection orders can last years. So having the card is helpful. In terms of expanding the reach, I think that will be a conversation I hate to say for next session, because it feels so far away. But I have found in Nevada, what works really well for us is, if we start something kind of at the most important nexus, which selfishly for me is domestic violence, then get it working well, and then look to expand it in further sessions, that is a very good strategy for our state.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:

If these cards are helpful, and we also established that some survivors are not thinking clearly right in the moment, I am wondering why this is upon request and maybe not automatic, that you can opt out of?

Liz Ortenburger:

Similar to what I said before, survivors are their best advocates. Most extended protection orders are worked through with an advocate or with legal advice, so there is somebody there. But if I know it is best for me not to have this kind of documentation because of my survival, I need to be able to make that choice for myself. SafeNest is a huge proponent of survivor empowerment, and this falls in line with that value.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:

I appreciate that. My question is, just as far as process goes, are you envisioning that when they are going through this paperwork, they will be asked, Do you want this, yes or no, that will be part of the questions?

Liz Ortenburger:

Yes.

Assemblymember Hardy:

I just wanted to follow up a little bit. As she was saying, when you initially get a TPO that is for 45 days. As we have mentioned, many times these are very emotional and volatile situations. This is usually with someone you are in a relationship with, you may have children with, and all that, so it is very emotional. That is why the initial order is short. Then when you want an extended one, now you are going to a judge and you are working with someone and working through all of these things. Sometimes victims decide, No, I do not want the protection order. They go back to the abuser. A lot can change. So that is why we wanted this for the extended order because then that gives them a little time away from the incident. Then they can work through, do you really want this, and where is that victim in this whole process, working with an advocate or an attorney to decide what they want to do?

Assemblymember Yurek:

I think this is going to be a very helpful piece of legislation. I am going to draw on my experience as a police officer wherein why I think this would be so helpful. There are a lot of times the violations of these orders come late at night, on weekends; and obtaining copies to confirm that this exists, to establish probable cause, to make an arrest, were challenging. I love the concept here, but as I was going through the bill, it talks about the types of information that is going to be available. Then I look at section 1, paragraph (c), subparagraph (4), it does provide that any other information that the Office of the Attorney General deems appropriate. Because a lot of the information that is listed there did not provide, or would not have provided me, as a law enforcement officer with some of the specific details that are often included in the protective order; specific distances, locations, things like that. Is your vision that this provision or this portion of the bill would cover and contain those details? Because a card telling me this but that does not have the details I might need to enforce that order could limit its effectiveness. So can you just address that for me?

Assemblymember Hardy:

Yes, and that is my understanding of any other information. So maybe that is something, as Ms. Benitez-Thompson said, as we develop this we can determine what exactly. That is a great suggestion, of what is the distance they are supposed to stay away. So, I appreciate that suggestion.

Chair Miller:

I will follow up on the Assemblymember's question. Would there be room for—when the Attorney General does something that is for the entire state, but sometimes different jurisdictions or municipalities, there are certain things that are unique to each community—would there still be the flexibility for that to be included as well?

Assemblymember Hardy:

I am not sure I understand the question.

Chair Miller:

This is regarding the question that the Assemblymember just asked about including other additional information and that the Attorney General would have the ability to do that when the Attorney General does something that is going to apply to the entire state. However, there are times where certain municipalities or jurisdictions or communities, there are things that are unique to different communities. Would there be the flexibility for additional requirements to be included or to be adapted toward our community needs?

Assemblymember Hardy:

Yes. I mean, those are things we can work out with the AG on how flexible or adaptive they need to be, like you said, for each jurisdiction or what information you want on them. I have seen examples of hope cards that have the protection order extending to children and the children's names are on there. Maybe somebody would not want that. But that is kind of what

I have seen and what I would envision we can work with the AG's Office to figure out; is it a form, and you put in what you want on that for a particular card but then some standard information for all of them?

Liz Ortenburger:

I want to add one of the places we see the largest violations in this, which is in schools. The adverse party is supposed to stay away from the school where the children are. The victim goes into the principal's office or the administration office, and they are asking, How do I prove that? Schools are very reticent to get involved in these kinds of situations for all the right reasons, but the card with that information on it, having the school listed as an address. Of course, there is only so much space on a card. It may be that as we progress in this program, there is an actual barcode or a code the victim can pull up to show all the places the adverse party—as we do all the emergency temporary protection orders for Clark County, sometimes there are up to 35 locations—the adverse party is not allowed to be within a reasonable distance of, to protect the victim. But also, a lot of times children are involved. So, this can get very complicated. There is only so much space on the card. I think because there are ten states that are doing this, we can pull from some of the best practices and work with the AG's Office to make sure that the right, the critical information, is on there. Then we will move forward in future sessions.

Chair Miller:

I heard two points, one being that even for specific community adjustments, it will still go through the Attorney General's Office, which I appreciate. The other one is, because of our rural communities, our tribal communities, we have people that live and coexist between tribal land and other land, I just want to make sure that everyone would be covered and those flexibilities would be available. Thank you for that.

Assemblymember Roth:

My question is just procedural. How is the process of obtaining the card impacted if the extended protected order has not been served on the adverse party?

Liz Ortenburger:

My understanding from the conversations we have had is, the card is available upon the judge granting the extended protection order. Because one of the issues that is evident in the space from SafeNest's lens is the adverse party evades being served. Then the victim has no protection because it is not in the centralized repository. Law enforcement cannot look it up until the adverse party is served.

Assemblymember Nadeem:

My question is, if we see the data from other states, what do you see? How does the hope card help the victims in the other states?

Assemblymember Hardy:

In reading about this and researching this idea, everything that I have read has shown that it helped a lot because of all the reasons we have mentioned. It just shows that this person was

granted a TPO by the court. It is easily accessible. They may be going to a mall or going somewhere and, like we said, not carrying the copies of their TPO with them, something happens, and this is readily accessible for them. It helps, as we have mentioned, to show law enforcement, if that is not accessible to them for some reason. Everything I have read has been easily implemented, and victims have taken advantage of this, and it has been very helpful. It has helped them feel protected and feel safe. I have not seen any reports of it not working or having any negative effects.

Assemblymember Gray:

Good bill. I would actually like to see it expanded to all people who have restraining orders and extended restraining orders. But the question I have is probably more technical. We have talked about privacy and stuff, what is going to go on there especially when we talk about the 35 different restrictions. Could we just simply have the card with? And this is a technical question, but could the card actually just identify the victim and then have a QR code where the officers can scan it and get everything they need?

Liz Ortenburger:

I absolutely love that idea. I think that would require more technical infrastructure than we have prepared at this time for the bills. And again, I do not think we see this as a stopping point. We see this as an evolving point. Yes, how do we create a connection point, knowing that that QR Code without some protection around it would, could, create an opportunity for violations of privacy and all kinds of things should that card fall into the wrong hands, for example. I think there are definitely some nuances to figure out. What we are seeing mostly in other states is simply a card printed, that there is a protection order, extended protection order, this is the date of expiration, and pretty minimal information on the card. But we can do more research to figure out what that looks like. And again, I think this evolves. This is not a stopping point. This is a starting point of providing really important protections for survivors.

Assemblymember González:

I really appreciate the intent of this. My question is, and I think maybe I missed it, would an officer still have to verify the information on the card?

Liz Ortenburger:

The intent is that the survivor can show the card, and then the adverse party is dealt with as is appropriate by law enforcement recommendations. I think what is important to understand, as we have done ride-alongs and worked closely with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department over the years, the scenes of TPO violations are just as chaotic as scenes of initial domestic violence 911 calls. There is oftentimes screaming, crying, just chaos. What we want to do is make this as easy as possible for the officer to do what they have information for, to mitigate the situation as quickly as possible. The anticipation is that the officer would be able to look at the card, see the adverse party, see that there is an extended protection order in place, and act accordingly to their policies.

Assemblymember Moore:

I have a question about how the card works. You are going in as the victim-survivor, you are filling out the paperwork, and you see the check box where it says, Would you like a hope card? How would a victim-survivor know what a hope card is? How will they know that this will be another tool to help them?

Liz Ortenburger:

My guess will be that it will say "hope card" and it will say "a wallet-sized documentation of your extended protection order," to give it context. So, for a survivor who is filling that application out without any advocacy or support, that would be a quick definition. And potentially even a link to understand more if the Attorney General's Office were to put up a web page that explained the program so they could get more information if they needed it.

Assemblymember Hansen:

I appreciate this bill very much. One thing I found interesting that you mentioned in your opening comments is that this originated, this idea originated, in Montana in 2010. So many other states have done this. But what was interesting to me and especially since I have a lot of tribal groups in my district, this originated with the Crow Nation in Montana. It came out of a tribal nation. I usually have a lot of concerns about, oh, you know, let the state stay out of the way of municipalities and such. But then we know there are things the state does do and that we need them to do. I can say from personal engagement I have had with my constituents in those six rural counties that domestic violence unfortunately knows no boundaries. This is a statewide problem, for sure. I am glad to see the support of the Attorney General's Office because it is a statewide program. We would see a lot of these mechanics worked out in the regulatory process. Is that right? Is that how that would work?

Assemblymember Hardy:

Thank you for the question. Yes. So, as Ms. Benitez-Thompson said, we can address how all the specifics work, what we want to include, how they would know what a hope card is, all of that. Because we sometimes walk a line when we are doing legislation of being prescriptive enough in the bill, or being too prescriptive, and what needs to be done; and also, if there needs to be adjustments as this develops and progresses. If there is too much prescription in the bill, then we have to wait, and come back to the next legislative session. A lot of that can be worked out if the Attorney General is the one that does this program. Then that way, if adjustments are needed to be made, then we can do it that way.

Assemblymember Marzola:

I did have two questions, but my colleagues all asked some amazing questions. But if I could just make a request, Chair. First, I want to say thank you so much for bringing this bill. SafeNest holds a special place in my heart, so whenever you are here, I love that. But my request is, you stated there are about seven to ten other states that have implemented the hope card. If you can give that information to the committee secretary so the entire Committee can have it, we can go through it and see what has worked and what has not. We would appreciate it.

Assemblymember Hardy:

Yes, absolutely. We can get those to you. Some of the states have even put on an example of the card they are using. You can go and look at that—Florida, Montana—you can actually see the card and what is on them. We would be happy to do that.

Chair Miller:

At this time, I am going to open it up for testimony. We will start here in Carson City. Again, I ask that everyone say their name and spell it so we have it for the record. And also, please keep your comments to two minutes. We will begin here in Carson City.

Serena Evans, Policy Director, Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence:

We support any measures to reduce barriers and help empower victim-survivors. We are appreciative and support this bill.

Alexandria Cannito, representing Domestic Violence Resource Center:

We are in support of this bill. We support efforts to allow law enforcement easier and quicker access to confirm protection orders especially in time of crisis.

Jason Walker, Lieutenant, Administrative Division, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office; and representing Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association:

We are here in support of Assembly Bill 159. I believe it would be a good program, as well as potential good groundwork and hopes to get us to legislate an option of electronic service of protection orders in the future. Again, supporting.

John T. Jones Jr., Chief Deputy District Attorney, Legislative Liaison, Clark County District Attorney's Office; and representing Nevada District Attorneys Association:

We are in support of A.B. 159 and appreciate Assemblymember Hardy for bringing the bill.

Mike Cathcart, Business Operations Manager, Finance Department, City of Henderson:

This program will assist our officers in the field. We are very supportive and thank the sponsor for bringing the bill.

Jessica Glover, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

From my experience of domestic violence, I have what is called the Confidential Address Program (CAP) card. The CAP card ensures that instead of giving out my physical address, I give out the CAP program address to receive my mail. However, it needs to be all efficient with the hope card and the CAP card because from my experiences, I have recently found that my mail is not being received through the CAP program. So, the hope card and the CAP card altogether, it needs to be established that the victim-survivor is being protected a hundred percent.

Chair Miller:

Is there anyone else here in Carson City who would like to testify in support? [There was no one.] I do not believe there is anyone in Las Vegas. Anyone on the phone lines?

Luiza Benisano, Campaigns and Community Engagement Manager, Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada:

We support A.B. 263. [*sic*].

Chair Miller:

Next caller. [There was no one.] I will go ahead and open it up for opposition testimony starting here in Carson City. [There was no one.] Anyone on the phone lines? [There was no one.] Then I will go ahead and open it up for neutral testimony beginning here in Carson City.

Teresa Benitez-Thompson:

As we read A.B. 159, we think that we have legislation that allows us to work on successful implementation of the program. Section 1, lines 7 through 9, about being able to consult and work in coordination with district courts and justice courts will be important to us. Also in section 1, subsection 2, for lines 32 through 34, about the flexibility and additional information that might be needed. Then section 4, on the time frames is helpful to us as well, just that upon passage and approval, we can begin the work, the administrative work, start those conversations about what this would look like, and then have actually until January 2026 to hit the ground running on this. We think we have got a workable runway.

We will mention, and we will not discuss it completely here, we do not think we need a lot of additional resources in order to make this happen from a practical standpoint. You will see a fiscal note; we think a humble fiscal note attached for one Administrative Assistant III (AA3) position in order to do this. It looks like from the last report that we could find from the 2022 Uniform Crime Reporting registry, there were about 1,700—just over 1,700—extended TPOs in that year. So, basing it on that workload, we think with the one additional AA3 that we would be able to accomplish this.

Chair Miller:

Is there anyone else wishing to testify in neutral? [There was no one.] Anyone on the phone lines?

Jason Garrett Gibson, Private Citizen, Gardnerville, Nevada:

We would like the record to reflect that we are neither for or against this bill. We know for a fact; we have the evidence to show, over 25 websites receiving a quarter of a million views a month that most of our social ills, traumas, woes, and damage controls happening again this morning are created by the state, manufactured by the state, and then cured by the state. We would like to give you an example of such.

Chair Miller:

Ok, sir, we are in testimony for the bill. So, I am going to ask that you speak directly to the bill.

Jason Gibson:

I am testifying to the bill. I am going directly; I am going directly to this bill and the need for this bill. This bill is the result of, well, for example, Douglas County receives up to 70, 911 calls a day, emergency calls. Many of these calls are for protective orders or domestic violence issues or alleged emergencies. What we learned is that the county here in Douglas County, a retirement community of 52,000 people, receives upwards of 500 calls a week, most of which are red flags. Law enforcement encourages the traffic, uses the statistic, to pad their budgets, their salaries, their equipment request, and their expansion projects. Like the new Justice Center, 57, no, \$62 million plus. Most of these calls are falsified. When we try to get a protective order because the neighbor is shooting at our cats or what have you, then law enforcement comes out and tries to turn the narrative on us. The next thing you know, we are the ones being slapped without representation, without due process, with an automatic protective order.

Chair Miller:

Ok. Thank you, sir. Your time is up. Next caller. [There was no one.] Then I will welcome the bill presenters back up for any final remarks.

Assemblymember Hardy:

I just want to thank you for all the great questions and your interest in this bill. It would recognize the importance of protecting vulnerable individuals and empowering them to live free from fear. The hope card would be an effective mechanism for survivors to readily demonstrate their protected status and seek assistance when needed. A simple card given to a survivor to show they have an extended protection order could be the difference between life and death. I urge your support of this bill, and thank you for your time.

Chair Miller:

I will go ahead and close this hearing. We have another bill hearing. I just want to remind folks, too, that testimony on bills need to speak directly to the bill; testimony on issues or things under the purview of this Committee can be reserved for public comment. With that, our next bill is Assembly Bill 162, which establishes a statewide database and Internet website for certain criminal records relating to domestic violence. Assemblymember, I will give you all a few moments to settle in. Then again, please remember everyone needs to introduce themselves and after you state your name to please spell it for the record. Then when you are all ready, please proceed.

Assembly Bill 162: Establishes a statewide database and Internet website for certain criminal records relating to domestic violence. (BDR 14-52)

Assemblymember Toby Yurek, Assembly District No. 19:

Good morning, Chair Miller, Vice Chair Marzola, and members of my favorite morning committee, the Committee of Judiciary. I have the distinct pleasure of representing Nevada's Assembly District 19. I really appreciate the opportunity to present Assembly Bill 162 to you this morning, a bill that we hope to have recognized as Alessandra's Law. This bill is about equipping people with the tools they need to protect themselves, something that directly impacts public safety.

Meeting new people has never been easier. Whether through dating apps or social media, relationships can form quickly, sometimes without much background or context. But what happens when somebody unknowingly becomes involved with a person who has a documented history of domestic violence, a history that is not easily accessible to those most at risk? That is exactly what happened to Alessandra. She was a young woman with a bright future who unknowingly got involved with a man who had a history of domestic violence, including a prior attempted murder here in Reno. She had no way of knowing. Two weeks after breaking up with him, he took her life. Had she or even her family been able to access the information that this bill attempts to provide, they might have recognized the warning signs and been able to take action.

That is why this bill is important. Alessandra's Law creates a statewide database allowing individuals to see someone they are dating and whether they had multiple domestic violence convictions. It is not about imposing additional punishment. It is about transparency and public safety.

Today, you are going to hear from Michelle Afshar, Alessandra's best friend, and board member of the Alessandra Foundation, who on behalf of Alessandra's parents will share their family's heartbreaking story. We will also hear from Katrina Esparza, a survivor from here in northern Nevada, who was targeted by the same perpetrator. Finally, we are going to hear from Liz Ortenburger, the CEO of SafeNest, who will speak on the cycle of abuse and the ongoing threat that is posed by repeat offenders. Then I will conclude with a short section-by-section overview of the bill before we address any questions that the Committee may have. Chair, with your permission, I would like to turn the microphone now over to Ms. Afshar.

Michelle Afshar Dotson, Member, Alessandra Foundation:

I am here today not only as a member of the Alessandra Foundation, but as Alessandra's best friend. She was my sister in every way that mattered, and losing her to domestic violence nearly ten years ago shattered many lives. But since then, we have fought to ensure her story is not just one of tragedy, but one that sparks change.

For nearly a decade, Rick and DiAnn Beatty have dedicated themselves to shining a light on the dangers of domestic violence. They have traveled to courtrooms, legislative chambers, and communities across the country. They are sharing Alessandra's story and fighting for laws that could save lives. They have never hesitated to stand before lawmakers no matter how painful it is to relive their daughter's murder because they believe in this work with all their hearts. That is why it is especially difficult for them to not be here today due to a medical emergency. They are unable to travel for this hearing, something they would never miss under any other circumstances.

They have asked me to stand in their place and read their statement to you. Now, their words will follow:

Good Morning, Chair Miller, Vice Chair Marzola, and members of the Committee. My name is Rick Beatty. My wife DiAnn and I are the cofounders of the Alessandra Foundation, created to honor our daughter, Alessandra Barlas, who was brutally murdered by her ex-dating partner in October 2015 in San Jose, California. We moved to Las Vegas from San Jose in 2021 and are deeply grateful to Assemblymember Yurek for collaborating with us to bring forward A.B. 162, Alessandra's Law. It is our hope that this legislation will protect other families from facing the unimaginable loss that we experienced.

Why we need this legislation: The man who murdered Alessandra, now serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole, had previously attempted to kill another dating partner in 2009, right here in Reno, Nevada. She miraculously survived that brutal attack and thankfully is here with us today. Unfortunately, neither our family nor Alessandra had any idea this individual harbored such a violent history. He never disclosed his past, and in the absence of any accessible tool to uncover domestic violence convictions, we are left entirely in the dark. By the time we learned of his criminal record, Alessandra was already gone. I cannot say with certainty that an online conviction database or record portal would have prevented Alessandra's murder. But I do know it would have given us and her circle of friends vital knowledge.

Alessandra had already broken up with him and was preparing to move on with her life. She had just been accepted to Samuel Merritt University College of Nursing three days before she was killed. Lured under false pretenses to an apartment in San Jose where she believed she would be repaid money he had borrowed, she was attacked and left for three days while he fled.

The Alessandra Foundation: DiAnn and I have a strong faith in Jesus Christ. From the very beginning, we felt guided to turn our grief into action. About a week after Alessandra's passing, I felt the Lord prompting me at 2 a.m. to

create a foundation in her name, a foundation that would carry on her vision of serving others. Alessandra's name means helper and defender of humankind. We are determined to honor that calling.

Our work has two main focuses, education and advocacy. In 2023 we collaborated with Texas Representative Victoria Neave Criado and Dallas Police Chief Eddie Garcia to develop Texas H.B. 5202, which established a public facing database of individuals twice convicted of domestic violence. That legislation passed with overwhelming support. When my wife and I met Assemblymember Yurek at a Las Vegas Chamber event, we shared Alessandra's story and the success in Texas. We soon began drafting a Nevada version of that law. With guidance from the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence and numerous service providers, A.B. 162, Alessandra's Law, took shape.

On behalf of my wife DiAnn, the Alessandra Foundation Board of Directors, our extended family, and the many friends who loved Alessandra, I humbly ask for your support of A.B. 162. Passing this bill would provide greater transparency, potentially preventing other families from enduring the horror of losing someone to a brutal and senseless crime. Thank you all for your service to the people of Nevada. May God bless you and grant you wisdom as you deliberate this legislation.

Katrina Esparza, Private Citizen, Sparks, Nevada:

I stand here before you today in support of A.B. 162, or Alessandra's Law. I feel compelled to share my story because the man who murdered Alessandra once tried to kill me too. I hope my experience helps shed light on why this legislation is so crucial.

If I cannot have you, nobody can. Those are the words spoken to me by someone who I loved, and I trusted; they still echo in my mind. I was new to the area, and he was all that I knew. In hindsight, I see how isolated that made me, easier to manipulate and control. I was stalked, as well. I tried to leave, thinking I had finally broken free. But he showed up one night telling me more lies to earn my trust. Then without warning, he turned violent; he went in for a hug and started to stab me with a kitchen knife, strangling me and attacking me. I remember the blood and the sheer terror of knowing I might not survive.

By the grace of God, I did survive, but Alessandra tragically did not. The difference might as well have been the ability to check his documented history of domestic violence. That is what Alessandra's Law would do, give people free and immediate access to vital information about a potential violent past.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone. It is surrounded in shame and many victims blame themselves for not leaving sooner or not warning others. This bill would help prevent future heartbreak by ensuring the young women and anyone else facing similar situations they have the tools to protect themselves. If we can help one person avoid hearing the words, If I

cannot have you, nobody can, it will be worth it. I respectfully ask for your support on A.B. 162. Let us all stand together to protect those who are isolated, vulnerable, and in need of lifesaving information.

Chair Miller:

To both of you, thank you so much for your courage to come and share your stories. We are deeply upset about both of your losses. To the parents, we extend appreciation for their advocacy and their courage as well, and hope that whatever situation they are addressing right now comes through on the positive side. To you, a survivor, thank you for your courage. Both bare different wounds, and hopefully they can close a little more as time goes on. Your loss of safety and security is something that we do recognize. But thank you so much for coming forward and sharing your stories.

Liz Ortenburger, CEO, SafeNest:

I echo Chair Miller's outstanding delivery of the bravery that it takes to come forward in the face of domestic and sexual violence.

I am going to provide a trigger warning before I speak. I am going to share with you four homicides from January 2023 in Clark County. Rachel Ruiz-Izquierdo, 25 years old, killed January 4, 2023, in a suspected murder suicide with her boyfriend—cause of death, gunshot wound to the head. Yanet Rivera, 41, found strangled January 28, 2023, in her southwest Las Vegas bedroom—cause of death, strangulation by choking on a foreign object. Shirley Williams, 56, found strangled on January 29, 2023, in her southwest Las Vegas bedroom—cause of death, strangulation. Ashley Benitez, 22, fatally shot on January 31, 2023, inside her apartment after a fight with her boyfriend—cause of death, gunshot wound to the neck. These are simply four homicides in Clark County in one month of the year. We know that we live in one of the most dangerous states in the country for women being murdered by men, and one of the most dangerous states in the country for domestic homicides in general.

Like these women and Alessandra, I have no idea if the perpetrators had prior convictions of domestic violence. What we know about domestic violence relationships is they start out in a normal pattern; it is dinner, it is conversation, it is texting. Then that friendly text that said, Please text me when you get home, becomes a text of, Please let me know when you leave work. Please let me know when you leave the grocery store. Please let me know when you get home, you are not home on time, you are five minutes later than you are normally home. Slowly the walls of control close in around a survivor who started a relationship, falling in love and having romance, the exact same way that we all do. And then what we know is the most dangerous time for a survivor of domestic violence to be murdered is as they are preparing for departure or in the zero to 12 months after they have left.

Nevada remains one of the most dangerous places in the country for women being murdered by men and domestic violence homicides, in general. This bill gives potential survivors at least one opportunity to check upon two convictions, which, as your premier agency in the state, I do not know what that number is of how many convictions folks have over two years, but I will guess the number is relatively small. Because what we know is, when domestic

violence perpetrators are issued classes, there is a stay of charge. So, if you take the 26 weeks of classes, you are not convicted of domestic violence. So, the list of convicted domestic violence perpetrators that would be on this list are those that either did not engage in classes, did not complete the classes, and received two convictions within a seven-year period. These are our most dangerous abusers. Let us give potential survivors the opportunity to live and let us pass this bill.

Assemblymember Yurek:

If you are good with it, I will just do a quick overview section by section so that the Committee has a chance to understand what is going on in this bill. Section 1 amends *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) Chapter 179A to include the new provisions that are set forth in sections 2, 3, and 4. Section 2, subsection 1, requires the Director of the Department of Public Safety to establish a statewide database within the Central Repository for persons with two or more convictions of domestic violence. Section 2, subsection 2, clarifies that the database must provide certain information about each person including their name, date of birth, physical description, offenses, and punishment. Subsection 3 clarifies the database is public but certain confidential information such as social security numbers and victim identities is excluded. Subsection 4 provides an Internet website must be maintained to provide public access to this database information.

Subsection 5 ensures the website must include information on the process for petitioning for the removal of information as well as contact details for organizations that provide services to domestic violence victims. Subsection 6 allows individuals to petition for the removal of their information under certain conditions. Subsection 7 requires the Director to consult with organizations that provide services to domestic violence victims and use existing databases where feasible. Subsection 8 provides immunity from liability for the Department and for law enforcement agencies regarding the accuracy or disclosure of information.

Getting into section 3, it prohibits the use of information from the database for purposes related to loans, credit, employment, education, housing, or business services. Section 4 establishes civil liability for anyone who uses this database information in violation of section 3. Sections 5 and 6 offer conforming changes to clarify that public information from the database is not subject to dissemination restrictions, and address confidentiality and public record statutes.

With that, Chair, we are open and willing to address any questions that the Committee may have.

Assemblymember Gray:

Another good bill. Why did you decide to include misdemeanors instead of just limiting it to felony convictions?

Liz Ortenburger:

Data is not easily available in this state around convictions for felonies or misdemeanors. What we see as a trend is very often felonies are being pled down into the misdemeanor

space. Part of that is lack of access to forensic nurses for strangulation exams, in particular, which would carry a felony offense, but the evidence is not available. Part of that is it also has to do with survivor recants and no shows as they relate to different cases. So, while I would love to say, Hey, this should just be a felony database, I think what the numbers are showing us, and what the survivor experience and the abusive partner experience in our justice system is that being convicted of two misdemeanors in seven years is already a high bar. Let us do the best we possibly can to get this space as safe as possible.

Assemblymember Yurek:

I appreciate that question. Anticipating this, by the way, there has been a lot of dialogue. I have been working this bill for over a year and understood and anticipated that issue might come up. While I do not have all of the references, I am happy to share with the Committee the data that I did find to support that. But the reality is, as I believe Ms. Ortenburger just indicated, is that most of the domestic violence cases are charged in fact as misdemeanors, even when they involve serious, more egregious bodily harm and injuries. For example, I know the Bureau of Justice Statistics says that about 80 percent of domestic violence arrests result in misdemeanor charges. The National Institute of Justice indicates that misdemeanor domestic violence offenders still have a very high rate of recidivism. Then the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found that strangulation, which is a predictor of future homicide—strong correlation there—is often charged as a misdemeanor. Ultimately, if we limit the database to felony convictions only, my concern is that we would be excluding from that database the people who are most likely to recidivate, reoffend, and potentially hurt somebody.

Chair Miller:

I am going to have Legal jump in. Karly O'Krent will respond to that as well.

Karly O'Krent, Committee Counsel:

Under NRS 200.485, domestic violence (DV) battery is a gross misdemeanor offense.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:

Thank you for bringing this bill and thank you for your bravery in telling your story and Alessandra's story. My question is about the cross-state nature of the story you just told us. If this database is Nevada-specific, how will women in other states get that information? Will this be part of a national database? Will women have to search literally every single state to see if something happened?

Liz Ortenburger:

First of all, SafeNest data shows that 80 percent of what is happening here is grown here. So, know that, yes, while Alessandra's case is tragic in that the abusive partner moved to another state. What we will advise is that folks look at the databases that are available currently; it would be Nevada and Texas. If you have an abusive partner who is coming from Nevada or Texas, you would have availability of the database to look. There is no national database around this. The only way you could achieve this information would be to buy a national

background check through the Federal Bureau of Investigation or one of the background check companies. Currently that is how that would have to progress. If you had an abusive partner who had roots in Nevada, you would be able to check the Nevada database.

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:

Thank you for that clarification. My follow-up question is just about how women would know about this. Because I do not know that many women, in starting a new relationship, know, I should look up the domestic violence database. Is there a plan to advertise that should the bill pass?

Liz Ortenburger:

I can only address this from SafeNest's lens, but as we intersect with 11,000-plus survivors each year, of course it will be part of our education portfolio. The other thing should the bill pass, what we will plan to do in Clark County in particular, is work with our partner agencies, Legal Aid of Southern Nevada, our sister agencies in the adjacent space, and work on a marketing and advertising campaign. We also have cards that are provided on the scenes of many domestic violence 911 calls, adding some information about, Hey, you can check this database. But it will be survivors in communities who share information with each other. It will be about getting the information out and then about making sure we are persistent in sharing it.

The other thing I like to share is a lot of the survivor families we work with are parents of adult children who have a daughter inside a relationship. They feel like they cannot get to her because she is being isolated. Allowing and educating those parents on the availability of this information is hugely helpful as well. It will be a grassroots marketing effort on our end. There may be something larger the state can provide in terms of money for a marketing campaign. But certainly, that is how we plan to do it.

Assemblymember Yurek:

I really appreciate that question. Honestly, it is one of the things I wrestled with, and I think the reason I appreciate it—because it sounds like you appreciate the value of a database like this and how it will help people—but the reality is, certainly people do cross lines as this specific story indicates. My hope is that through the advocacy efforts of this family, we might be able to step into this space and really start to launch a trend of states that can grab onto this and make this information more readily available. So that is kind of our hope. I recognize our limitations as state legislators. I would love to see this take on a national level, but I am hopeful that we might be able to be the next step to really kind of push a trend across our country.

Assemblymember Hansen:

Thank you so much for being here and I think I speak on behalf of all of us, we admire your bravery. We are so sorry to the Barlas family for the loss of Alessandra, and we should all have good best friends like you and a strong survivor that is willing to come and relive some

of the horror of your experience to help others here in Nevada. I appreciate you all. I was just interested to understand within the bill, it is all domestic violence, not just intimate partners. If you could elaborate on why it went that route?

Liz Ortenburger:

Of course, it follows the statute definition of domestic violence, which makes everything cleaner because then the department that is setting up the database has very clear guidelines around what is included. But also, working in this field, domestic violence, yes, sits in the intimate partner space. But pre-indicators oftentimes sit in a very different space. They can sit in the family space; they can sit in an adult child abusing an adult parent. That violent nature, while we often identify it in only the intimate partner space, is absolutely, in 40 percent of the domestic violence that we deal with on an annual basis, is not intimate partner. I think in order to make the database the most effective and ensure those administering it have the cleanest guidelines following the NRS definition of domestic violence makes the most sense.

Assemblymember Yurek:

That is another one of those issues that came up as I was working on this bill. It seems like most of these issues are often involving the intimate partner violence. I also tried to go and research, and understanding there is not a lot specifically here in Nevada, but nationally, the decision was made to broaden the scope to include all repeat domestic violence whether it was intimate partner or not, because violence that is within the families often stands beyond just that of the intimate partners.

To cite just a couple of stats for you to help highlight or illustrate this, the Department of Justice shows that 30 to 40 percent of domestic violence offenders have a history of abusing multiple household members including children, parents, siblings—not just intimate partners. The National Domestic Violence hotline found that abusers who harm other family members are more likely to commit severe violence against intimate partners later. Finally, the CDC. Domestic violence within families beyond just intimate partners often correlates with higher rates of homicide, child abuse, and elder abuse. What we see is a consistent pattern of violence that extends beyond that of intimate partners that often does come back. So, believing that those stats and violence outside of intimate partner is a predictor of what might happen to an intimate partner is what led us to really include that language in this bill.

Assemblymember Roth:

Thank you so much for the presentation and thank you both so much for sharing your story. I do not think there is probably anybody in this room who has not been impacted by domestic violence in some way. A concern I raised earlier on a bill earlier in the week is that I often interact with victim-survivors in a different space, and that is when the legal system has been weaponized against them. That is always sitting in the back of my mind. With that, my question is, have we seen in places that we have implemented this, that there has been a reduction in violence so we can really balance how the legal system sometimes interacts with victim-survivors in a not so great way with the need to reduce that violence?

Liz Ortenburger:

As the Texas law only went into effect last session for them, in 2023, there is limited data as to whether or not violence rates have dropped. Also, to understand the cycle of violence, it is not my anticipation that this bill would create violence rates to drop. The reason is because while I may be educated about the database and I can look that up as one survivor, as Assemblymember La Rue Hatch mentioned, how does everybody know about it? That is going to take quite a bit of time. So, an abusive partner and abusive partner traits are, Okay, I am going to maybe find you as my next potential partner, and you may be educated about the database, you may exit that relationship before either engaging or early. That abusive partner is still going to seek another partner, someone who does not know about the database or for whatever reason engages in that relationship and who is going to potentially become a victim. So, bills like this are incredibly important for protecting the space, but they will not reduce violence—I think that is important to understand—unless every woman for whom this perpetrator was aware of the database and decided not to engage, right, which would be all the women in the country, which seems improbable.

Understand the nature of this is to protect a potential survivor, but it is not going to do anything to curb violent rates. As you speak about the domestic, the justice system being weaponized, we actually have a series of classes for people who have been convicted of domestic violence, but whom we can see through the assessments are absolutely the victim. If they engage in the classes, that conviction is dropped from their record, so they would not be in the database. Again, the high bar of getting in this database should control that weaponization, also anything else that we are concerned about, because two convictions in seven years in this space is an incredibly high bar.

Chair Miller:

I know that Ms. Ortenburger does not mean to imply that men are not victims. We appreciate and understand and know it is even more sensitive, but men are indeed victims from women and they are victimized from men as well. And so we of course want all of our male victims to please come forward because we want to support them as well.

Assemblymember Moore:

Thank you for being here, sharing your sister's story and your story as well. I think those of us that are survivors need to speak up more. Given my personal experience and what we have heard in the past is that abusers do not often get arrested immediately. It takes several phone calls for that to happen. A lot of times—if it is the first time, if they are in a relationship with someone else, they did the same thing, they were never arrested, and they are in another relationship with someone else and they finally got arrested—a lot of times nothing happens to them; they take classes, they do community service, they may spend a night in jail, if that. So, they would not be on this database. In order to be in this database, they have to be convicted twice. Do we have an estimate of how many people would be on that database here in Nevada?

Assemblymember Yurek:

I will let Ms. Ortenburger address that in a second if she has some data. I am not aware of truly how many people this would be. But I think you have highlighted a point that I really want to emphasize here. That is the high threshold of two convictions; that is why as I alluded to earlier, we did not limit it to felony. I mean, taking it to the felony, that is off the charts high. This is not going to capture every potential violent person out there that poses a threat to somebody. But what we are trying to do is strike a balance from a public policy perspective of providing transparency and maintaining individuals' right to be free from additional punishment, hurdles that could stigmatize them, and create problems. That is the balance that we are trying to do here. So again, I want to reiterate what I think your point is making and that is we are not going to capture everybody in this database. This is not a be-all, end-all solution to domestic violence and progressive, more serious injuries, ultimately death, that can happen from these. So, I do not know the number of people, and perhaps Ms. Ortenburger can speak, if she has got some specific data on it. But I just wanted to reiterate that point, that this is trying to strike that balance.

Liz Ortenburger:

I did want to thank Chair Miller for that. Thirty percent of the arrests in the domestic violence space in the state of Nevada are female perpetrators. Just to give everybody context, 70 percent male perpetrators, 30 percent female perpetrators are the numbers that come out in the Nevada crime stats. To answer the question, there is complexity around the data in the space in that it is not publicly available. We tried to, through the Attorney General's Office several years ago, get reports from the courts on how many convictions are we actually having. My data comes by way of, if you are convicted twice of a domestic violence misdemeanor, you are issued 52-week classes instead of 26-week classes. As SafeNest is a provider in that space, I can tell you that I have had two people in my eight years at SafeNest who have been issued the 52-week classes. That is the only indicator I have of how many folks have been charged twice in a seven-year period with domestic violence.

Assemblymember González:

As a victim-survivor myself, I really appreciate the intent of this bill. My question is, if people were to seal their records but they are on this database, do they then petition to get off this database? Is this something forever? Can you talk to me about what those logistics look like?

Assemblymember Yurek:

To be clear, specifically what this bill does allow is for somebody to petition to have themselves removed from this database. That can be basically one of two ways right now. That is if they were to have one of their records convictions sealed, expunged, or removed, and it would put them below the threshold of the two-conviction requirement, and they can petition to have themselves removed. Then the other way is that a conviction or for lack of a conviction within seven years, they can also petition to have themselves removed. So, under both of those circumstances, they just file that petition. The process is not fully vetted out yet; they probably have to establish through the regulatory process, but the intent would let them petition to have themselves removed under those circumstances.

Assemblymember González:

Because I am just thinking of the courts and victim impact statements, would that be taken into consideration, if a perpetrator is asking for their information to be removed from the database?

Assemblymember Yurek:

I did not anticipate for purposes of removal from this database that there would be that, because we are really trying to make it pretty clear and concise that under these specific circumstances your removal. Obviously to have records expunged, in Marsy's Law, constitutional requirements, certain victims would have the right to speak into processes that would precede this petition to have themselves removed.

Assemblymember Gray:

Ms. Ortenburger, you have mentioned in your testimony several times the seven-year mark which we have seen in the bill. So, I am going to direct this one actually to Assemblymember Yurek. Why seven years? Why not ten? Why not five? Speaking as a father, I think longer—a father of two daughters—I think longer is better. But that is just me.

Assemblymember Yurek:

It was not long ago that we were sitting in this Committee and there was on a related bill, a lookback here that sought to extend from seven to ten years. So, anticipating that, I also went and was trying to look and try to figure out why is that? Because I was not fully aware, there was some intuitive sense that it made. I really appreciate it because I did not highlight that point earlier, but basically, it is based on statistics and research related to criminal recidivism; specifically, the point at which a person's past convictions statistically mean that they are less likely to reoffend. Basically, studies show that after seven years without a new conviction, an offender's likelihood of committing another crime drops significantly and approaches that of basically the general population.

I did find, for example, a study here from the Bureau of Justice Statistics. It was a 2014 study tracking over 400,000 released offenders. They found that more than half or 53 percent of domestic violence offenders were arrested again within three years. By year seven, recidivism rates dropped to basically correlating with the general population. There was another study that I found, a 2021 study, by the National Institute of Justice that found repeat domestic violence offenders were at the highest risk of reoffending within the first three to five years after their convictions, with rates again statistically dropping off significantly at year seven. Then finally, I found one more here. It is a 2017 study by the U.S. Sentencing Commission that found recidivism rates fall sharply after seven years, indicating again that repeated, or the offenders who have remained crime-free for a period of seven years are just much less likely to reoffend. That is why I did not choose to expand this any further.

Assemblymember Nadeem:

Thank you for the presentation. This is a very important matter and thank you for bringing it forward. My question is that the same person who is convicting the crime again and again, does it indicate that that person has some mental issues, some issues maybe relating to

childhood or growing up? Do you think about including a therapy and behavior therapy, going forward?

Liz Ortenburger:

What is now currently available, for someone that is a misdemeanor domestic violence is 26 weeks of classes. Those classes have a list of requirements in the NRS of what needs to be provided. They are group classes, and they are facilitated, not therapeutic, but it is the closest thing we have to mental health for this population. I also think it is important to understand that the intersectionality of domestic violence and alcoholism, the intersectionality of domestic violence and child abuse are all there. The classes are designed to deal with that intersectionality and work with each offender to find ways to mitigate their violent tendencies. That is what is available currently.

If you are convicted once in that seven years, you get 26 weeks. If you are convicted twice, you get 52 weeks. That is the current layout. We have looked at mental health, individual therapy, and things for abusive partners. As you all know, Nevada is hamstrung in how many therapeutic providers we have. This is a space that, if you are running this program, you are reliant on the offender paying for those classes. Or as SafeNest does, we underwrite the program, \$250,000 a year. So, understand this is a very complicated space, not only for abusive partners, but also financially for providers.

Chair Miller:

That concludes our questions. I will open it up for testimony. We will begin here in Carson City with support testimony.

Maximillian (Max) Lowe, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

I am here to support A.B. 162 as I strongly believe that public safety and the safety of domestic violence and sexual assault victims should be top priority. One thing I would like to hope if this bill passes, that the regional centers that provide services to those with disabilities have access to this database. Because Desert Regional Center, where I left Vegas, they have—I cannot exactly give the numbers because they keep these statistics secret—I believe there is at least a third of the clients that receive disability services with the Desert Regional Center have a violent history like this. There is a service coordinator who specializes with that who I know, and in the situation with my ex-roommate who was abusive, would say when I report things to the service provider I was with back in Vegas, and they would say, Oh, it is just two roommates who do not get along. But over time when I would say things, tell them, report things, it would not be believed. If it had led up to the situation that I told you about before and that had I not made that Adult Protective Services report, had I not made that police report and pressed charges against my ex-roommate, nothing would get done. However, there are investigations.

Also I would like if this database, if this bill passes, I hope that it would help other people and the service providers and the service coordinators to identify, when they assign housemates to in-service providers is understand who should be with who and what the level of care and supervision should be.

Alexandria Cannito, representing Domestic Violence Resource Center:

I want to share a personal story with you this morning. A few years ago, I matched with this guy on one of the dating apps, went out with him, actually knew of him from my undergraduate studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. I later found out that he was on parole because he had served time for charges of attempted murder, false imprisonment, and strangulation of a girl that he had dated for a few weeks. A database like this, I think it is really, really important. The apps do not do background checks, to my knowledge, on the people on them. I think it is really important that we know who we are involving ourselves with, who we are going out with, because when you are going on dates, you are meeting strangers; you do not know anything about them and you only know what they tell you. We support this bill.

Elizabeth Abdur-Raheem, Executive Director, Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence:

I am pleased to speak in support of Assembly Bill 162. Last year across Nevada, 49 individuals died in homicides related to domestic violence. One of the most devastating things we must realize as a state is that many of these deaths could have been prevented. As we have heard, the sobering reality is that many abusers do not stop when the first or second relationship ends. Instead, their relationships are a consistent path of power, control, and violence replicated across time. When these individuals are intercepted by law enforcement and the criminal justice system, there is an opportunity to recognize the pattern and prevent further abuse. The most basic tenet of advocacy is to listen to victim-survivors and understand that they are the truest experts in the field. When victim-survivors of domestic violence and their families come together in the midst of their personal trauma to identify and fight for a solution that will save others, we must listen and implement these solutions.

This bill is one of those times. We commend the personal bravery of the victim-survivors who are sharing their stories here today. We commend Assemblymember Yurek for listening to victim-survivors and acting on their behalf. We urge you to support Alessandra's Law.

John T. Jones Jr., Chief Deputy District Attorney, Legislative Liaison, Clark County District Attorney's Office; and representing Nevada District Attorneys Association:

We are in support of Assembly Bill 162, Alessandra's Law. We appreciate her family and friends as well as Assemblymember Yurek for bringing this bill forward.

Jason Walker, Lieutenant, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Sheriff's Office; and representing Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association:

We are supporting A.B. 162 for all the reasons outlined in the presentation.

Jessica Glover, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

I am supportive of A.B. 162. I think it is very important to establish a database for Internet websites for criminal records. I applaud the friends and family of Alessandra coming forward. My personal experience is I did meet someone who was online. When they became secretive, I used my own legal research and paralegal studies. I started researching them and

I found out that they had been to prison. They were on parole for either murder or drug trafficking. When I ended the relationship, they started having others, their friends and family, start harassing me and stalking me. I went to law enforcement, and law enforcement was not understanding what I was going through. I ended up committing a crime that I had to fight and equip from. That saying of "If I can't have you, no one else can either" is a true and real thing. My abuser wanted, if they could not have me, to either put me six feet under or in prison. I recommend A.B. 162.

Chair Miller:

Not seeing anyone else here in Carson City, I did see someone in Las Vegas. I just want to make sure, is there anyone there wishing to testify in Las Vegas? [There was no one.] Anyone on the phone lines?

Jason Garrett Gibson, Private Citizen, Gardnerville, Nevada:

On behalf of the Foundation for the Law of Time, we are in support of the bill. It is necessary to provide a context for testimony, however, so please be patient. One of the callers, I quote, domestic violence knows no boundaries. All this damage control this morning. The historic sum result of economic slavery, commercialism, prostitution, ignorance, greed, cultural genocide, manufactured by a fictitious entity doing business as the State of Nevada. These kinds of systems are going to be a reoccurring theme as we look at the violent social fabric of one of the wealthiest states in the country. Follow the money. These remedies that we bring to the table again today which augment these kinds of legislative bills have been online for over 85 years. Well, this is knowledge, it has been on the table for over 85 years. The constitutional crisis, folks, it is rooted in education. Many of the people in this state are well to do and have a very low social IQ. If you did a little social networking to find out about your potential partners or relations, use your Facebook, you can tell all sorts of—

Chair Miller:

Ok, sir, we are not going to condemn victims. Next caller. [There was no one.] I will open it up to opposition testimony here in Carson City. I just want to remind folks that opposition testimony is not opposition to the issue, the concern or the experience of victims. It is opposition to technical aspects of the bill and the policy.

Paloma M. Guerrero, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Clark County Public Defender's Office:

My testimony in opposition is by no means an attempt to minimize the loss of Alessandra. She should be here today. I am very sorry to her parents and everyone who loved her for their loss. A DV database like this at this point is premature. The bill was copied from an identical bill that was enacted in Texas. However, it is too early to see if there has been an actual impact in Texas and see if it will actually help possible survivors. We do not know at this point if it will do more harm than good. The Washoe County public defenders and I have spoken with Assemblymember Yurek about our concerns, and we thank him for reaching out to us to hear what we had to say. First, the intent of the bill is to help with intimate partner violence. But the bill as written encompasses more than intimate partner relationships and includes any person whom the person is related to by blood or marriage. If we think about the

world that we are living in now, where children are spending more and more time living at home, there gets to be a ton of friction between children and their parents. We do not really want to be including those situations because, at this point, someone can be 19 years old and push their dad and get their first DV conviction; then at 25 years old, be a victim of DV themselves, call police for help, police show up, and they cannot tell who was the first aggressor but be mistakenly arrested themselves and get their second DV conviction. Now they are on a public database themselves for everyone to see. We did suggest an amendment to limit the definition of domestic violence to just that intimate partner relationship.

Second, I want to make clear that this bill cannot be retroactive. We cannot put on a public website the names of anyone who has already been convicted, because the law requires that when someone takes their plea, they make an informed decision. Since no one was admonished and advised that this would happen, doing so would be unconstitutional. Third, instead of a petition-based process for getting people off the database after seven years, we suggested that the database just make it automatic because people are unlikely to be tracking once seven years has elapsed and take all of the steps to actually get themselves off the database. I will pass it to my counterpart from Washoe.

Angela Knott, Deputy Public Defender, Legislative Liaison, Washoe County Public Defender's Office:

Our next concerns when we spoke with Assemblymember Yurek is how misdemeanors and felonies are significantly different. A second domestic violence conviction within seven years is still a misdemeanor. Basically, a daughter who pushes her mom when she is suffering from a mental health episode when she is 20 years old can get her first domestic violence conviction. Then five years later, when she pushes her mom again, she will get a second domestic violence conviction. That young woman will now have her information and her picture blasted on this website. That seems to be against the spirit of this bill.

Domestic violence calls for mandatory arrests, and oftentimes due to the chaos of the situation, it is the victim who is arrested. We have concerns that focusing on misdemeanors wraps in victims of domestic violence, where the legal system is being weaponized against them while ignoring the verifiably violent offenders. Amending this bill to reflect felony DV cases encompasses the more dangerous and violent offenders ensuring state and county resources are dedicated to the most high-risk offenders. Just to clarify, in Washoe County, I am unaware of any practice or law that reduces a second domestic violence conviction to a first if they complete counseling.

Lastly, while this bill attempts to include protections against misusing this information against a person, it will absolutely be used against that person. Rental companies will be checking the websites when filtering through applicants and deciding who gets to have a home. Potential employers will be pulling this information from the website to reject employment for that person. We would like to continue working with Assemblymember Yurek in crafting a bill that captures the spirit of Alessandra without the unintended consequences.

Chair Miller:

Is there anyone else here in Carson City wishing to testify in opposition [There was no one.] In Las Vegas? [There was no one]. Anyone on the phone lines? [There was no one.]

Then I will open it up for neutral testimony. If there is anyone here in Carson City who would like to testify in neutral?

Nicole Reilly, Ombudsman, Office of Ombudsman for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking, Office of the Attorney General:

I just wanted to add on the marketing piece, that if this bill passes, the Attorney General's Office will be very happy to work with all of our partners statewide to disseminate the information.

Chair Miller:

Anyone on the phone lines? [There was no one.] Then I will welcome the bill presenters up for brief final comments.

Assemblymember Yurek:

Thank you, Chair and Committee members, for this very thoughtful discussion on what I believe to be a very significant and important policy issue. I also want to thank the public defenders who came up in opposition today. We did have a meeting, we have had subsequent follow-up conversations, and while I appreciate their perspective, they did submit a conceptual amendment to me last night. I let them know that in consideration of what we are trying to do and trying to find this balance, that it would be from my perspective an unfriendly amendment. Until we get a work session to move this out, of course, I am willing to continue to have discussions to see if we might be able to address any issues they have. But I just want to again thank them for their discussion and willingness to have conversations with me about this.

In closing, I just want to say that this is a difficult issue. Domestic violence is a massive issue and it is a difficult issue in our state. I understand the public defenders' concerns about misdemeanor versus domestic violence, the scope beyond intimate partners, as well as why you are requiring a petitioner to—or somebody to—have to petition to have themselves removed as opposed to just an automatic removal. I believe those are fair questions and I believe they deserve honest answers. In my closing, I just want to briefly address it and say that while the reality is that domestic violence is not always charged as a felony even when it should be, most domestic violence cases, serious ones included, are pled down to misdemeanors. If we limit our database to felony convictions only, we risk leaving out the very people that are most likely to reoffend, putting the very victims we are trying to help in danger. Domestic violence is not just about intimate partners. The data shows that abusers harm family members, children's parents, and even siblings. They are just as dangerous in future relationships. We cannot turn a blind eye to these patterns of violence just because they do not fit into a very narrow definition. Abuse is abuse. If we want to prevent future harm, we have to acknowledge the full scope of that problem.

Finally, I understand the concern about requiring the petition for removal as opposed to automatic removal, but this is about getting it right. Automatic removal could lead to mistakes allowing people to slip through the cracks even when they still pose a threat. I was thinking about this as an analogy earlier. Sometimes we put spam filters on our email, and we want certain things to happen in an automatic fashion. My guess is as I look up on this dais, a lot of you can find out that automatic processes do not often work as efficiently as we would like. We just want to make sure that a process does not allow the people we are trying to hold accountable here, or to help protect our victims, they cannot slip through the cracks. So, at the end of the day, this is about giving people access to information that could save lives. Domestic violence is not just a moment in time; like I said, it is a pattern, and we have a chance to intervene before that pattern escalates into something worse. I urge you to support this bill, and I thank you for your time.

Liz Ortenburger:

I just want to say on behalf of the 49 victims of domestic violence homicides last year, the 56 in 2023, and the countless before them, this is an opportunity for our state to do something for survivors.

Chair Miller:

Thank you so much for your presentation. We just have a final statement from Vice Chair Marzola.

Vice Chair Marzola:

Thank you, Assemblymember, for bringing this bill. It is an important bill because it makes it available for everyone information that should be out there. If I have the means and I can afford it, I can buy a subscription, go on the website, and find all sorts of information about anyone I want. But I think the reason why this bill is important is, it makes it available to everyone in our state no matter what zip code, if you have money, and if you do not have money. This is why it is important. Thank you so much for bringing this bill. Ms. Ortenburger, thank you again.

[[Exhibit C](#) and [Exhibit D](#) were submitted but not discussed and are included as exhibits for the hearing.]

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Chair Miller:

I will go ahead and close the hearing on Assembly Bill 162. Next on the agenda is public comment. I will open it up first for public comment here in Carson City [There was no one.]. Anyone on the phone lines? [There was no one.] Then I will close public comment.

I will go ahead and adjourn the meeting as we have completed everything for today. I know that everyone is anxiously waiting to find out which time we will start on Monday morning. All the eyes and heads are turned. We will start at 9 a.m. on Monday morning. The meeting is adjourned [at 9:51 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Claudia Pierrott
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblymember Brittney M. Miller, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
A.B. 162	C	Assemblymember Toby Yurek, Assembly District No. 19	Document titled "Summary of AB 162 Alessandra's Law – DV Database" authored by Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence.
A.B. 162	D	Assemblymember Toby Yurek, Assembly District No. 19	Document Titled "2024 Domestic Violence Homicide Report"