

Disability and Abuse Newsfeed

Week of February 8 to February 14, 2020

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Articles are listed in alphabetical order by state within each category, so you can easily scan through the articles for those within your state or other states in which you have an interest. *International* articles are near the end. The categories are: *Abuse and Neglect, Guardianship, Laws & Legislation, Studies & Statistics, Improved Supports, International, and Miscellaneous.*

Check the categories below for a guide to types of abuse. The categories are indicated by type, and the number of the article.

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While on the homepage, we invite you to “like” us at the bottom of the page, making it easier to keep up with our activities! Prior weekly newsfeeds are archived at: <https://disabilityandabuse.org/newsfeed/contents.htm>

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Articles by Type of Abuse:

Abuse and Neglect:

Sexual Assault: 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 21, 27, 32, 52, 55, 56

Physical Abuse: 3, 6, 7, 11, 14, 26, 53, 57, 58

Financial abuse: 1, 23, 28, 54

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WINNER of most egregious award: 43: Article affirms people with autism can actually have friendships and romantic relations!

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Teams: 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 16, 23, 30, 31

Good News: 35: Disability related bills stemming from Phoenix Hacienda nursing home to be heard this week; 36: Hawaii proposes bills to protect seniors; 37: Nursing homes to approve cameras to increase safety of residents; 47: ISU gets grant to help train students to work with deaf and blind children.

Bad News: 2: Court rules NC illegally segregates people with disabilities; 4: child placed in dangerous foster home and died; 12: “sexual arousal research” conducted at a care center; 18: Family income of children with disabilities determines educational services—or not; 41: USDOJ finds half of those exploiting elders are family members.

ABUSE & NEGLECT

1. “Alex City Resident Arrested for Elderly Exploitation” - Bettye Wells Baker was arrested Wednesday by the Alexander City Police Department for first-degree financial exploitation of an elderly person. Investigators with ACPD were called to an Alexander City bank in December to meet with an elderly family member of Baker, 56, of Alexander City. The family member explained she moved to Alexander City a few years ago to be closer to family, according to ACPD chief Jay Turner. “At the time she thought it would be best for her to move in with Baker,” Turner said. “She bought a house two years ago and Baker moved in with her.” At the time of the report in December, the victim said approximately \$95,000 had gone missing from her bank account over a period of 23 months. The complaint Baker was served with Wednesday during her arrest alleges she took \$43,596.47 from the victim. – Alex City Outlook – February 7, 2020 – (Alabama) - <https://is.gd/ZBR3pg>
2. “Court Ruling Says NC is Illegally Segregating People with Disabilities” - North Carolina has been illegally segregating people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in institutions or putting them at risk of institutionalization, a judge ruled Thursday. The lawsuit was filed by Disability Rights North Carolina in 2017 against the state, the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and Secretary Mandy Cohen. It argued that insufficient state funding and [inattention to disabled people’s needs are causing many to be placed in an institution](#) or live without the

services they require. – The News & Observer – February 7, 2020 – (California) - <https://is.gd/D9eeJR>

3. “Video Shows Turlock Student with Special Needs Being Bullied, Beat Up by Classmate” - In the cell phone video, which has gone viral on social media, a kid can be heard asking Michael, "You ratted, huh?" as he punched him repeatedly. Monica Valdez's son, Michael, a Turlock Junior High School student with special needs, came home from school last Tuesday, and as soon as she saw him at the door, she knew something was wrong. "He started crying, and he had no shoes on," Valdez recalled. "There were four boys. They held him down and took off his shoes and they started hitting him on the ground." – ABC 10 – February 10, 2020 – (California) - <https://is.gd/MT49qw>

4. “‘Princess’ Diane’s Parents File \$25 Million Suit Against Riverside County, Foster Home” - Lawsuit claims the county ‘acted with deliberate indifference to the grave risk’ posed to the disabled high schooler and others. Riverside County effectively signed a disabled girl’s death warrant by placing her in a foster home dogged by decades of complaints, charge the parents of “Princess” Diane Ramirez in [a lawsuit](#) seeking at least \$25 million. Angel Cadena Ramirez and Alberto Ramirez filed suit on Monday, Feb. 10, against the county and foster home operators Michelle Morris and Larry Kerin. They allege wrongful death, breach of duty and violations of child abuse neglect reporting laws. “No parent should have to attend his or her child’s funeral,” the suit said. “Yet, due to the collective, systematic malfeasance and deliberate indifference of (the county and foster home) ... plaintiffs will never again have the opportunity to experience the life and vibrancy of their daughter.” – The Orange County Register – February 13, 2020 – (California) - <https://is.gd/AkICEu>

5. “Connecticut State Police Arrest Rhode Island Special Education Teacher for Sexual Assault of Child” - At 10:55 this morning, Nicholas Oliveira, 29, of Lincoln, RI turned himself into the Troop D barracks after learning there was a warrant out for his arrest. Troopers were initially dispatched on July

10, 2019 for a complaint from the victim's mother claiming that her 9-year-old daughter was "touched" and "looked at" the previous July by her "uncle" while at the Hideaway Cove Campground in Killingly. Oliveira is not actually related to the victim, but rather a close family friend. According to the arrest warrant, he is a special education teacher at Ashton School in Cumberland, Rhode Island. – Fox 61 – February 8, 2020 – (Connecticut) - <https://is.gd/fqxbhU>

6. "Report: Disabled Woman with one Leg Punched in Face by Pensacola Man" - A disabled woman tells deputies a Pensacola man beat her after she refused to get him a cigarette, an Escambia County Sheriff's Office report says. Michael Zetterstrom, 60, of Pensacola, is charged with abuse of a disabled adult and battery. The report states the incident happened on Sunday at a home in Escambia County. The woman said Zetterstrom was very drunk and asked her to get him a cigarette, according to the report. Since she is a disabled amputee with one leg, she refused -- which made him angry. – WEAR TV – February 10, 2020 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/7o1ELW>

7. "Former Florida Guardian Rebecca Fierle Jailed on Aggravated Abuse, Neglect Charges" - Deputies arrested Fierle, 50, on a warrant issued by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, according to a news release. "Medical professionals who examined him believed he was capable of making end-of-life medical decisions for himself and informed [Fierle] that her client had a strong desire to live and that he understood his condition," the FDLE said in a statement. The Sentinel reported his daughter, health-care surrogate and psychiatrist also protested. But "despite the wishes of the elderly man and those of his family and friends, [Fierle] ordered his doctors not perform any life prolonging medical procedures saying she preferred 'quality of life versus quantity of life.'" – WTSP – February 10, 2020 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/EMa2xU>

8. "Mother Wants Answers After 6-Year-Old Daughter Was Involuntarily Committed" - Martina Falk said she isn't looking to file a lawsuit, she just wants to know what happened. The mother of a 6-year-old girl is demanding

answers after her daughter was involuntarily committed to a mental health facility last week after an episode at a Jacksonville elementary school. Martina Falk said Monday her daughter is traumatized and does not understand why the school needed to take such extreme measures. – News \$ JAX – February 14, 2020 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/1fQeNF>

9. “Cobb Men Charged with Murder Following Disabled Mother’s Death” - Cobb County police have charged two men in connection with the death of their mother who suffered from a debilitating neurological condition. Christopher Lee Durham, 38, and 41-year-old James Stephen Stanfield, Jr., both of Mableton, are each charged with murder and neglect of a disabled adult, elderly person or resident of care facility. Durham is also charged with exploitation of a disabled or elderly person. All three charges are felonies. According to warrants, Dinah Durham, 65, suffered from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and was confined to a wheelchair. – Atlanta Journal Constitution – February 10, 2020 – (Georgia) - <https://is.gd/xSh07M>

10. “Rape Suspect Lured Victims Away from Local Group Home” - There are shocking new details about a rape suspect charged with multiple sex crimes involving minors under the age of 18 and how the victims landed in his custody. Patrick Conway was arrested for Child Molestation, Sexual Battery, Rape, Production of Child Pornography and several other serious charges earlier this week. First News has learned exclusively that the 52-year-old Conway lured his four victims as young as 14 years old away from a local group home according to a source with firsthand knowledge of the incident. – WLTZ – February 8, 2020 – (Georgia) - <https://is.gd/rJ4rC3>

11. “North Idaho Senior Living Facility Out of Compliance Following Numerous Violations” - A nursing home for seniors and those with disabilities has been out of compliance after an Idaho Department of Health and Welfare inspection found numerous violations. Records indicate that a variety of allegations leveled at the senior care facility were deemed "substantiated" in January, including abuse, exploitation, lack of adequate staffing, medication and treatment issues. Viydo has reached out to Pacifica

for comment but has not received a response. Documents obtained by Viydo from the IDHW say the inspection found evidence of failing to protect residents from sexual abuse and improper medical care, among other violations. – KREM – February 11, 2020 – (Idaho) - <https://is.gd/8NtgHg>

12. “Former Staff Claims Iowa Center Exploited Disabled Patients” - Two doctors and other former employees of an Iowa care center for people with intellectual disabilities have filed a federal lawsuit against a state agency and several officials alleging a conspiracy to silence complaints about sexual arousal research they claim exploited fragile and dependent residents. The allegations center on the former superintendent of the Glenwood Resource Center who was fired in December. – KTTC – February 11, 2020 – (Iowa) - <https://is.gd/9diy18>

13. “You Wouldn't Think You'd Go to Jail Over Medical Bills: County in Rural Kansas is Jailing People over Unpaid Medical Debt” - As CBS News correspondent Meg Oliver reports in partnership with [ProPublica](#), some people are even going to jail because they're squeezed by a system that's putting new demands on overburdened incomes. Tres and Heather Biggs' son Lane was diagnosed with leukemia when he was 5 years old. At the same time, Heather suffered seizures from Lyme disease. “We had so many — multiple health issues in our family at the same time, it put us in a bracket that made insurance unattainable,” Heather Biggs said. “It would have made no sense. We would have had to have not eaten, not had a home.” Tres Biggs was working two jobs but they fell behind on their medical bills, then the unthinkable happened. “You wouldn't think you'd go to jail over medical bills,” Tres Biggs said. Tres Biggs went to jail for failing to appear in court for unpaid medical bills. He described it as “scary.” - CBS News – February 9, 2020 – (Kansas) - <https://is.gd/pDbOOI>

14. “License Revoked for In-Home Saginaw Adult Foster Care Provider” - A Saginaw woman is prohibited from offering in-home adult foster care after state regulators suspended her license last week with plans to permanently revoke it. The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

says Barbara Mitchell failed to provide adequate care and supervision for her small group home at 1619 Janes Street in Saginaw. State regulators inspected the facility after receiving a complaint on Feb. 5. They allegedly found violations of Michigan's Adult Foster Care Facility Licensing Act and other administrative rules. Authorities say Mitchell did not have direct care staff on duty at all times, didn't conduct criminal background checks before hiring employees and didn't have staff members tested for tuberculosis before hiring them. – ABC 12 – February 10, 2020 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/yrD5D2>

15. “Warren Nursing Home Worker Charged in Abuse of 91-Year-Old Resident” - Rachelle Sharp's face said it all. While watching video of her grandma being abused at a nursing home in Warren, she put her hands over her mouth in shock. The man police believe is in the video is a 64-year-old named Ronald Fletcher. Employed by the nursing home for only three weeks before the incident happened, administrators with the facility said he had a clean background check before they fired him. A few hours later, the facility called the cops. Video obtained by FOX 2 from the nursing home shows a worker grabbing a 91-year-old woman by the back of the neck and forcing her head down. More footage shows him roughing her up and shoving her into her wheelchair. "And taking her by the back of her head, and then taking the head and pounding it down on the counter, viscously, violently," said Warren Police Commissioner Bill Dwyer. – Fox 2 Detroit – February 13, 2020 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/mnVWZ0>

16. “Couple arrested for caging autistic 9-year-old” - Two Maysville, Missouri women who admit they locked a 9-year-old autistic child in a cage have been charged with child abuse. The Dekalb County Sheriff’s Office reports the child’s mother, 35-year-old Katrina England, and her wife, 39-year-old Debra England, have been charged with child abuse and child endangerment. According to the sheriff’s office, the two women admitted they locked the child in the cage for 12 hours at a time. The child was also left in a locked cage when the house was empty. – Hays Post – February 13, 2020 – (Missouri) - <https://is.gd/ka131h>

17. “Nursing Home Failed to Protect Disabled Patient from Being Molested by Sex Offender, Suit Says” - The family of a severely-disabled man who was living at a Long Branch nursing home has filed suit against the facility alleging administrators failed to protect him from being molested by a registered sex offender who was also residing there as a patient. William Schymanski, 67, was charged with aggravated criminal sexual contact in May 2018 after officials from Monmouth Care Center called police to report he was found molesting another patient, who has cerebral palsy and is non-verbal, according to a police report. That charge remains pending along with an accusation Schymanski failed to properly register his current address under Megan’s Law. – NJ.COM – February 11, 2020 – (New Jersey) - <https://is.gd/qzlOGf>

18. “Two Boys with the Same Disability Tried to Get Help. The Rich Student Got It Quickly. The Poor Student Did Not” - Two boys with learning disabilities grew up just blocks apart in New York City. Public schools couldn't teach them. So, their parents battled to place them in private schools, on the taxpayers' dime. Both families set their sights on an option known as “private placement”: a federal guarantee that school districts must pay for tuition at a private school if they can’t meet the needs of a child with a disability. That set both families on an arduous and circuitous path – one biased toward wealthier families who have the money to hire pricey lawyers and the time and savvy to do extensive research on how private placement works. Indeed, once the two families made the decision that their sons’ needs could not be met in the public schools, their educational journeys could not have been more different. – USA Today – February 10, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/x9bak0>

19. “Abuse, Cruelty and a System that Failed a Child it was Supposed to Protect” - Questions that need answers in the death of 8-year-old Thomas Valva, who died of hypothermia after being forced to spend the night in a freezing garage at his father's Center Moriches home. As some details of his cruel end unfold, tearful eyes quickly turn to Suffolk County’s Child Protective Services, an agency whose title defines its critical mission. But is

CPS just a part — a small part at that — of what failed young Thomas? – Riverhead Local – February 9, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/S5ZCRn>

20. “An Inside Look at Erie County’s Unannounced Visits on Nursing Homes not Complying with Ruthie’s Law” - Erie County Commissioner of Senior Services David Shenk stood outside Humboldt House Thursday afternoon. It’s a two-star, 170-bed nursing home located in Buffalo’s Hamlin Park Historic District. It also doesn’t comply with Erie County’s Ruthie’s Law. The 2017 law mandates nursing homes submit a report detailing injuries and abuse to the county twice a year, as well as submit proof they disclose their ratings to prospective clients, but Humboldt House hasn’t done so in over two years. – WBFO NPR – February 10, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/zN5map>

21. “Judge: Stokes County Schools Not Negligent in Sexual Assault of Disabled Student by Van Driver” - Stokes County Schools officials were not negligent in a case where a disabled student was sexually assaulted 21 times on two separate days in 2015 by a van driver transporting her to and from her school, a judge ruled this week. The student and her mother sued the Stokes County school system in December 2018, three years after the sexual assault happened. That lawsuit alleged that the school system and YVEDDI, shorthand for Yadkin Valley Economic Development District Inc., and school board members were all negligent for a number of reasons, including the hiring of the van driver who sexually assaulted the student. – Winston Salem Journal – February 7, 2020 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/EWpS1M>

22. “Judge: North Carolina Falls Short in Service Access for Disabled” - North Carolina has failed to do enough to ensure people with certain disabilities receive access to services in their communities, a judge has determined. A ruling issued this week by Superior Court Judge Allen Baddour said the state and the Department of Health and Human Services violated a portion of the North Carolina Persons With Disabilities Protection Act.- Greensboro News and Record - February 8, 2020 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/Z8dx5Q>

23. “Mom & Daughter Charged with Death of Elderly Father/Grandfather” - Greenville police say Patricia Williams, and Samantha Williams have been charged with involuntary manslaughter, elder abuse, obtain property by false pretense, and domestic abuse of a disabled elder adult. Pearlie Lee Williams died on May 17, 2018. Williams was supposed to be under the care of his daughter and granddaughter, but police say the 77-year-old man was found by another relative in very poor condition. The man was hospitalized and later died due to his prior lack of care and maltreatment, according to police. Police say they later learned that the two women also financially exploited their father/grandfather by getting into his bank accounts and spending thousands of dollars of his money. – WITN – February 12, 2020 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/3vf8Mq>
24. “Mom of Three Asks Judge for Mercy in Neglect Case Originally Charged as Manslaughter” - A mother of three young children who was charged after a woman living in her home was found in April bedridden and lying in her own feces was sentenced in common pleas court last Monday afternoon. The victim, 66 year-old Darlene Conger, eventually died in June. Among other offenses, 33 year-old Sheila Allberry was originally charged with involuntary manslaughter, a first-degree felony, before pleading to a reduced charge of felonious assault in November. As police approached Conger, they could see she was in need of medical attention as bugs were crawling over her body and eating her rotting flesh. – Y-City News – February 11, 2020 – (Ohio)- <https://is.gd/Ln2gSW>
25. “Special Ed Parents Bring Their Battles with Ohio School Districts to Federal Court” - [In a case representing 260,000 students in Ohio's public education system](#), parents of special education kids testified in Columbus Tuesday to say they've been treated unfairly. "It is physical and mental abuse," said mother Beth Tendra who came from Akron. ["Not getting us the resources that we needed."](#) Tendra came with her eighth-grade son Mike who has Tourette's Syndrome and is intellectually delayed. In fifth grade, his mother said he read on a kindergarten level and had math skills on a first-grade level. Despite that, Tendra said she was refused any special education

resources. – ABC 6 On Your Side – February 11, 2020 – (Ohio) - <https://is.gd/qTSHNa>

26. “Nashville Caregiver Charged with Abuse of Vulnerable Adult” - A 51-year old man has been charged with assaulting a vulnerable adult he was hired to care for. According to an arrest affidavit, the victim is an adult with the mental capacity of a 4 or 5-year-old child. Metro police said the caregiver, Edward Williams, got close to the victim and asked, “I’m too close? Well I’m about to cut your hair.” Police said Williams ordered him to place his hands up and he grabbed him by the arms. Williams reportedly threw the victim to the ground, got on top of him and stated, “Do you want to see how hard I can punch?” He punched him in the eye, leaving a bruise under his left eye, according to police. – WKRN – February 11, 2020 – (Tennessee) - <https://is.gd/yJMMtl>

27. “Man Sentenced to 99 Years in Prison for 2018 Sexual Assault of Disabled Woman in Lubbock” - A 47-year-old man was sentenced Friday to 99 years in prison after he was found guilty of sexually assaulting a 54-year-old disabled woman in her apartment two years ago. Jurors deliberated for about an hour before returning to the 140th District Court with their verdict finding Robert Jade Lopez-Parker guilty on three counts of aggravated sexual assault. He faced an enhanced punishment of 25 years to life in prison after prosecutors entered into evidence two convictions against him. In 2001 he was sentenced to nine months in prison for molesting a 16-year-old girl in Washington State. In 2013, he was sentenced to 46 months in federal prison when he was convicted for failing to register as a sex offender when he moved to Texas. – Lubbock Avalanche Journal – February 7, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/EuTdMQ>

28. “Arizona Woman Accused of Defrauding Clients with Special Needs Captured in Kaufman County” - An Arizona woman accused of swindling money from at least four people with special needs as a fiduciary has been captured in North Texas. Krista Cline, 42, was booked into the Kaufman County Jail Monday morning and will be extradited, according to the

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office in Arizona. – DFW CBS 21 – February 10, 2020 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/tjFE8f>

29. “‘They are Going to Put Me in the Jail Room’: Henrico Mom Says Her Child is Terrified to go to School” - A Henrico County mother claims her 4-year-old daughter was isolated from classmates multiple times without her knowledge. 8News is not identifying the mom to protect the child, but she tells us, “Mom, I don’t want to go to Highland Springs Elementary, it has a jail room. They are going to put me in the jail.” ‘A jail room’ is how mom says the pre-kindergarten student at [Highland Springs Elementary](#) described her first school experience. – WRIC 8 – February 9, 2020 – (Virginia) - <https://is.gd/uYDVQb>

30. “3 Charged after Woman, 95, Spends Hours on Floor with Broken Leg and Later Dies, Records Show” - A 95-year-old woman with a broken leg was left on the floor for hours and later died after she fell at an adult family home in Puyallup, charging papers allege. [Police shut down the Able Care Adult Family Home](#) Thursday, and Friday prosecutors charged the people who ran it. Lilian Wambui Cubi, 51; Patrick Cubi Mbiri, 58; and Santana Wangui Cubi, 21 were charged with second-degree criminal mistreatment. – The News Tribune – February 8, 2020 – (Washington) - <https://is.gd/bNsyZ3>

31. “Parkersburg Authorities Seeking Suspects in Abuse Case” - The Parkersburg Police Department is looking for two people accused of abusing the woman’s disabled adult son. A warrant has been issued for the arrest of Herbert Boyles and Christina Boyles, stepfather and mother of the victim, according to the police department. They were arrested in July 2018 on the felony charges, but posted bond and have fled from the area, the police department said in a Facebook post on Friday. Officers arrived and located a 21-year-old malnourished man who had several wounds from ligatures used to restrain him, the department said. – News and Sentinel – February 8, 2020 – (West Virginia) - <https://is.gd/6LbTIO>

32. “Trial Set for Former Northwoods CNA Accused of Sexual Assault” - A former Northwoods CNA will be tried this August for accusations of sexually assaulting some of his former patients. Jacob Schlosser faces three felony counts of second-degree sexual assault. One of those counts comes against a mentally ill victim. All three allegedly occurred while he was working at a nursing home. Court documents state Schlosser was bathing one of the patients when it "turned sexual." Schlosser then reported the incident and acknowledged that the patient was unable to consent to sexual contact. – WAOW – February 11, 2020 – (Wisconsin) - <https://is.gd/bMFCPf>

GUARDIANSHIP

33. “Primer: Conservatorship” - The Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, California’s guiding conservatorship law, allows an individual to be involuntarily confined and treated if they are a danger to themselves, a danger to others or gravely disabled because of their mental illness. An individual is considered gravely disabled if they are unable to provide their own food, clothing or shelter, have no third party to help them meet those basic needs and are unwilling or unable to accept treatment. – Santa Monica Daily Press – February 8, 2020 – (California) - <https://is.gd/ZlkVAf>

34. “Massachusetts Law Meant to Protect People with Mental Illness May Make Them Sicker” - The Rogers Guardianship is meant to preserve a patient’s right to refuse medication. But refusal of medication may reflect their underlying illness. The Commonwealth’s mental health statutes consider antipsychotic medications — used to treat conditions such as psychosis, mania, and paranoia — as “extraordinary measures.” This label differentiates these medications from virtually all others that doctors prescribe. Such a distinction creates challenges for doctors, mental health facilities, families, and communities in caring for patients in their most vulnerable moments, often when they lack the insight to make decisions for themselves. – Boston Globe – February 13, 2020 – (Massachusetts) - <https://is.gd/gMnfMa>

LAWS & LEGISLATION

35. “Disability-Related Bills Stemming from Phoenix Hacienda HealthCare Case to Get Hearings” - Last December, two Arizona lawmakers issued a handful of recommendations aimed at keeping people with disabilities and senior citizens safe from abuse. Since then, legislation has been drafted and some of those measures, will be getting a hearing this week. Democratic [Rep. Jennifer Longdon](#) and Republican Rep. Tim Dunn each sponsored a bill stemming from the ad hoc committee they co-chaired last year. The committee was formed after an incapacitated woman was raped and later gave birth to a baby at the Hacienda HealthCare long-term care facility in Phoenix. The bipartisan committee examined what laws would be needed to keep vulnerable populations from abuse and neglect. [Longdon sponsored a bill](#) that defines emotional abuse. [Dunn’s measure would require an independent audit of Adult Protective Services](#). Both bills will be heard later this week – KJZZ – February 10, 2020 – (Arizona) - <https://is.gd/Hd8EUv>
36. “Kupuna-Focused Bills Aim to Protect Elderly from Criminals and Abuse” - With 1 in 5 Hawaii residents at least 60 years old or older, lawmakers are pushing for measures that make it harder for criminals to take advantage of kupuna. Harsher punishment can help deter criminals, says Michael Kitchens, founder and administrator of anti-crime Facebook group Stolen Stuff Hawaii -- a platform to support victims and aid law enforcement. He says residents need to protect themselves and is pushing for Hawaii to lift its ban on stun guns. From the streets to homes... the Kupuna Caucus in the state legislature also wants better oversight of long-term care facilities across the state. – KITV – February 8, 2020 – (Hawaii) - <https://is.gd/OWNAUo>
37. “Controversy Arises Over Adding Cameras in Nursing Home Rooms” - Michigan lawmakers are proposing a bill that would add video cameras in the rooms of nursing home patients. “Every person I talk to says this is a great and absolutely wonderful idea except the nursing home,” said Michigan Sen. Jim Runestad, who is proposing a bill that would allow video camera surveillance inside the rooms of nursing home resident only if

residents agree. The goal is to help combat elder abuse. “There are unbelievable numbers of videos and the stark, horrific nature of the abuse was mind blowing to me,” Runestad said. – WNDU – February 7, 2020 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/D3TFBX>

38. “Legislation to Combat Elder Abuse Passes Committee” - House Memorial 10 sponsored by Rep. Deborah Armstrong (D-Albuquerque) today passed the House Health and Human Services Committee. The memorial seeks to address the growing incidence of elder abuse and abuse of adults with disabilities. It directs the non-profit Senior Citizens Law Office to convene a task force to study abuse, especially financial, and recommend civil and criminal penalties to be enacted. – LA Daily Post – February 7, 2020 – (New Mexico) - <https://is.gd/o54Yrp>

39. “New York Medical Aid in Dying Act a Recipe for Elder Abuse” - Attorney [Margaret Dore](#), president of [Choice is an Illusion](#), a nonprofit corporation opposed to assisted suicide and euthanasia, made the following statement in connection with the Medical Aid in Dying Act, now pending before the New York State Legislature. (Bills A 2694 and S 3947). “The Medical Aid in Dying Act is a recipe for elder abuse, financial exploitation and legal murder,” said Dore. “Older people with money, meaning the middle class and above, will be especially at risk to their heirs and other financial predators.” Dore added, “The poor will also be at risk, but for a different reason.” – EIN News Desk – February 11, 2020 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/Apd3Yx>

STUDIES & STATISTICS

40. “Patients' Lives at Risk: State Investigation Shows Disturbing Reports of Abuse, Neglect at Post Falls Nursing Home” - KHQ has uncovered documentation of state and federal investigations into a Post Falls nursing home that detail disturbing findings. According to the report, patients' lives at Life Care Center Post Falls were at risk, the care was inadequate, and the corrective action was sporadic. An Idaho Department of Health and Welfare report describes some of the violations. The investigation, dated November

8, 2019, mostly covers a three-month period, from August 2019 to November 2019. – KHQ Q6- February 12, 2020 – (Idaho) - <https://is.gd/HpBOOs>

41. “Exploiting Trust’: Minnesota’s Senior Citizens are Financially Abused by Family Members” - According to national data gathered by the U.S. Department of Justice, roughly 50% of all elder exploitation cases in the United States involve family members. However, in Minnesota, that number is closer to 69%. The defendants included sons, daughters, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, as well as in-laws and other distant relatives. Lori Swanson is the former Minnesota attorney general. She spent two decades investigating elder abuse and exploitation in that position. – WDIO – February 7, 2020 – (Minnesota) - <https://is.gd/Phn9X8>

42. “As Caregivers Age, People with Disabilities See Few Housing Options” - national study finds housing choices are limited for people with developmental disabilities who often get little say about where they might live when they leave home. Currently, about 75 percent of adults with disabilities live with an aging parent or caregiver and most are not utilizing public supports or services, according to a new [report](#) from The Arc. More than half of families have no plan for the future. – Disability Scoop – February 10, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/VALgrF>

43. “Why Autism Research Needs More Input from Autistic People” - Too much autism research fails to acknowledge autistics as people who can read and make valuable contributions to the field. Instead, it casts them as little more than passive study participants or recipients of treatment. This shortsightedness damages research and scientists’ ability to help autistic people. Reading autism research as an autistic person can feel like being treated as an alien. For example, consider a 2019 paper that stated: “This finding reinforces other work which shows that autistic people can have, maintain, and value close [romantic relationships and friendships](#).” Imagine how bizarre it would be to read that about yourself. – Spectrum – February 11, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/uzb7Oe>

44. “College of Charleston Study Looks at Autism in the Workplace” - Autistic individuals face many challenges, but getting a job is often one of the biggest. Despite the millions of people on the spectrum, there’s currently not a lot of information on the subject. A new study at the College of Charleston could help those on the spectrum succeed at work. Researchers are currently studying autism in the workplace and the barriers that exist. Dr. Christopher Whelpley, Assistant Professor of Management, is one of the lead researchers. “Autism seems to be a stigmatized category within society,” Dr. Whelpley said. – ABC News 4 – February 10, 2020 – (South Carolina) - <https://is.gd/3WMGaS>

IMPROVED SUPPORTS

45. “Access V. Abuse: Decades of Attempts to Reform ADA Have Fallen Short” - In 2018 alone, [10,163 cases](#) were filed for violations against the law, according to a report from the high-profile law firm Seyfarth Shaw, an exponential uptick from five years before when there were only [2,722 cases](#). The ADA’s enforcement in California tells two stories — it’s either working as intended to protect and uphold the rights of millions of disabled people, or it’s being used as a legal tactic against small businesses to financially suck them dry. – San Jose Spotlight – February 9, 2020 – (California) - <https://is.gd/hFImDA>

46. “Victim Was A ‘Prostitute’” -In 2010, Congress passed Rosa’s Law, which eliminates all references to mental retardation in U.S. federal law. However, it wasn’t until last September that the LAPD updated its own manual to remove that term. Before then, the LAPD had a code to describe a victim as “mentally challenged/retarded/intellectually slow.” Sandra Baker, a family support specialist at the Down Syndrome Association of Los Angeles, has a 21-year-old son with Down syndrome. She said “retarded” is still a widely used term and there needs to be more training for police to learn about different disabilities since they are members of the community people should be looking up to. – Witness LA – February 9, 2020 – (California) - <https://is.gd/F3gEk3>

47. “ISU Gets Federal Grant for Work with Deaf or Blind Children” -Two professors at Illinois State University have received a \$1.23 million federal grant to help students who’ll work with infants and toddlers who are blind or deaf, university officials announced. The money will go toward a training program integrating special education and speech language pathology. “We have a perilous shortage, not only in the state of Illinois, but the nation, of early intervention practitioners for children who are blind or deaf, ages birth to three,” said Maribeth Lartz, a professor of deaf education who trains teachers. – Washington Times – February 9, 2020 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/LCzGuh>
48. “Organizations Start Plans for a Maryland Deaf Community Center in Frederick” - Twenty-two different deaf organizations in Frederick County are banding together to create a Maryland Deaf Community Center, which would be a central location for deaf services as well as a community meeting place. Linda Stoltz, president of the MDCC, said there are plenty of deaf organizations in Maryland, many of which are in Frederick, but none of them have a physical office or center. “We felt like we needed to have a facility,” she said this week through a sign language interpreter. – The Frederick News Post – February 8, 2020 – (Maryland) - <https://is.gd/45bbAI>
49. “‘This Hits Very Close to Home.’ Vision Zero Town Hall Draws 200+ People, Including Victims” - The nine-member Montgomery County Council hosted a Vision Zero Town Hall Sunday, drawing an audience of more than 200 people. The event, which was held inside the auditorium at Wheaton High School, ran from 2-4 p.m. [and was later posted on the council's YouTube channel](#). Attendees included residents who are hearing and vision impaired, plus at least half a dozen people who rely on wheelchairs to get around. "I'm a resident of Downtown Bethesda, I've been there for around 20 years, and I think there has been very little thought given to wheelchair-user safety," a handicapped woman told councilmembers during the open forum, which included a welcome video in both English and Spanish. "I'm wondering why all of this construction was allowed to take

place without thought to having continued sidewalk access." – WJLA – February 10, 2020 – (Maryland) - <https://is.gd/W7D5cy>

50. "MDHHS Working with Partners to Spend Federal Dollars to Improve Outcomes for Children Placed in Foster Care" - The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Children's Services Agency was awarded the funding from the Federal Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments Program. Funds being spent this year will allow the MDHHS Children's Services Agency to address a number of priorities. – Upper Michigan Source – February 10, 2020 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/MrMklc>

51. "They Couldn't Find Girl Scout Troops for Kids with Special Needs so Moms Started One" - Now Hillsborough Troop #60561 is filling that need. The parent who was trying to sign her daughter up was Kathy Kafka, who is now the co-troop leader. The two reconnected recently and teamed up to create a troop for girls with cognitive needs. "I loved being a Girl Scout, and when Maya was in first grade I wanted her to socialize as much as possible and so I thought of signing her up," Kafka said. "And although it didn't work out at first I think everything has worked out in the long run." – NJ.COM – February 10, 2020 – (New Jersey) - <https://is.gd/24MBYh>

INTERNATIONAL

52. "Austrian Urologist 'Abused 109 Patients'" - A urologist sexually abused 109 boys and youths over the course of nearly 20 years in Austria, according to an indictment. Forty of the alleged victims were younger than 14, the prosecution office in the Upper Austrian town of Wels said in a statement on Monday. All of the victims were patients of the 57-year-old medic. The doctor's pedophilia amounts to a serious mental disorder, according to an expert witness report that was drawn up for the prosecution which requested that the defendant be locked up in a prison for mentally disturbed criminals. He faces up to 15 years behind bars. – Australian Associate Press – February 10, 2020 – (Australia) - <https://is.gd/11NAvs>

53. “Gratuitous cruelty’: Two jailed over kidnapping and abuse of disabled woman” - Brooke Levina Jane Brown, 20, and Matthew James Leuthwaite, 23, were on Thursday sentenced for their role in the "gratuitous cruelty" inflicted on Kayla Kendrigan. The group wanted revenge because they believed she had bad-mouthed them on social media. She was tied to a chair, hit with a bat and had her eyebrows shaved off after the group forced her into a car and took her to a western Sydney house. Leuthwaite cut off Ms. Kendrigan's ponytail while Brown stabbed her in the leg. She also had a sock soaked in cleaning fluid shoved in her mouth and a cigarette stubbed out on her hand. – The Sydney Morning Herald – February 13, 2020 – (Australia) - <https://is.gd/FEhfKc>
54. “Berland Charged with Defrauding the Sick in Scheme Worth NIS Millions” - Six senior community officials were arrested in December, in an alleged scheme by Berland and his associates in which he offered to bless terminally ill patients in exchange for large sums of money. Disgraced rabbi Eliezer Berland, a convicted sex offender and leader of the Shuvu Banim Breslov sect, was arrested in the early hours of Sunday morning in a police raid at his Jerusalem home on suspicion of fraud, financial exploitation, and tax offenses.- The Jerusalem Post – February 9, 2020 – (Jerusalem) - <https://is.gd/7w94F2>
55. “Expatriate Sexually Assaults Disabled Person” - A case of an expatriate sexually assaulting a disabled person has been reported to the police. The case was reported on Wednesday from the region of the Northern Police Central Division. However, it is not known if the offender has been arrested. Recently, the reporting of sexual assault cases is on the rise. There has been heavy criticism from the public accusing that the government has neglected to take actions against such criminals. – AVAS – February 13, 2020 – (Maldives) - <https://avas.mv/en/78105>
56. “Man, 30, Charged with Alleged Sexual Assault of Physically Challenged Girl” - A 30-year-old man, Oyekola Dare, has been arraigned before an

Ogba, Lagos, chief magistrate court allegedly for sexually assaulting a 20-year-old physically challenged woman. However, the defendant, through his female counsel, objected to his remand in prison custody. The counsel argued before the court that her client and the woman were lovers, and that the defendant was prepared to marry her. – Daily Trust – February 13, 2020 – (Nigeria) - <https://is.gd/McIvhP>

57. “Boy Whose Legs Were Amputated after Vile Abuse Receives First Prosthetics Legs” - A boy whose legs were amputated after vile child abuse is walking tall on his first prosthetic legs. Brave Tony Hudgell, five, can now stand shoulder to shoulder with classmates and play football with brother Jaden, 12. He even has trainers to match Jaden’s for his life-like feet. Tony's legs were amputated at the knee in 2017 because of a violent assault by his birth parents when he was 41 days old. Since then Tony, who also suffered numerous fractures at their hands, multiple organ failure and [sepsis](#), has worn short prosthetics known as stubbies covered with a Spider-Man design. – Mirror – February 8, 2020 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/IFuvmP>

58. “Carer Caught Violently Abusing Vulnerable Man on Hidden Camera” - A woman has been caught by a [hidden camera](#) punching, slapping and dragging around a vulnerable man who she was employed to care for. In footage released by police, Pearline Baugh is seen physically [abusing](#) Peter Evans who has [autism](#), [epilepsy](#) and is unable to speak. Baugh was jailed for four months after admitting a charge of ill-treating an individual last month. She had been employed as a night carer after Mr. Evans began struggling to sleep and his mother Louise Evans needed extra help. – Independent – February 9, 2020 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/4PGGPZ>

MISCELLANEOUS

59. “The Privilege of Being 'Against' Mental Health Medication” - I would never take medication.” It’s something I’ve heard a lot in my life. At age 20, I lost my mind overnight, but this isn’t really about that. It’s about

what resulted in the following years. After this incident happened in college, I sought psychiatric help. I went through years of med trials, therapeutic interventions, shamanic depossessions, you name it. I tried over 20 different medications looking for something, anything, that would help me get my basic sense of mental functioning back. Since bipolar disorder is something that runs in my family, I was lucky to have some basic [background knowledge of what treatment includes](#). – The Mighty – February 19, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/Dvsr48>

60. “In First, Actor with Down Syndrome Presents at Oscars” - Zack Gottsagen, who has the chromosomal disorder, took the stage Sunday night to announce the Oscar for best live action short. Gottsagen presented alongside Shia LaBeouf who co-starred with him in “The Peanut Butter Falcon,” which came out last year. In the film, Gottsagen plays a man with Down syndrome who runs away from the nursing home where he lives to pursue his dream of becoming a professional wrestler. LaBeouf stars as an outlaw who’s on the run and ends up traveling with Gottsagen’s character. – Disability Scoop – February 10, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/euXpFJ>

61. “How AI Technology Discriminates Against Job Candidates with Disabilities”- She says the technology is a recipe for bias because it doesn’t accurately capture those living with disabilities. Their appearance, voice or ability to make eye contact may not match what the software expects. That’s a problem because people with disabilities already face disadvantages in the workforce and in hiring. People with disabilities are particularly underrepresented, Givens says, and the algorithms can make that problem worse. “The idea that you can train a model to accommodate all these different forms of disability is really hard, not least because we don’t have that training data, and often people don’t want to disclose their disabilities to help shape and train tools like that,” she says. – KUT – Austin NPR – February 11, 2020 – (National) - <https://is.gd/fO1CmI>