

Disability and Abuse Newsfeed

Week of September 7, 2019 – September 13, 2019

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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 sometimes, *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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Abuse and Neglect:

Sexual Assault: 2, 5, 14, 21, 25, 28, 29, 30, 34, 34, 54

Physical Abuse: 1, 9, 19, 22, 24, 26, 27, 57, 58, 61, 65

Emotional/Verbal Abuse: 2, 9, 15, 17, 24, 66

Financial abuse: 13, 37, 57, 66

Human Trafficking: 36

Murder: 55, 67 (mercy killing)

Neglected: 12, 16, 17, 18, 22, 33, 34, 37, 63

Related to special education: 1, 19, 22, 24, 33, 34, 59

WINNER of most egregious award: 2: Abused for three years, hospital nurses indicted in State Owned program under Department of Public Health; 10: nursing home mogul commits financial fraud; 60: New Drag Show said to exploit men with developmental disabilities.

WHO DUN IT (listed by article number):

Family: 12, 16, 17, 18, 35, 63

Neighbor: 5

Co-student: 34

Carer: 2, 8, 11, 14, 15, 17, 23, 26, 27, 29, 37

Nurses: 2

Stranger: 21, 57, 58

Special education employee: 1 (Assistant Principal); 19 T.A.; 22 Teachers

Group home: 28, 36

Therapist: 34

In-Home health: 35

Hospital: 2, 11

Chaplain: 14

Nursing Home: 14, 15, 23

Psychiatric Hospital: 9

Autism Treatment Center: 13

Independent Living Program: 8

Men: 1, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30, 33, 34, 35, 57, 58, 61, 63

Women: 2, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 26, 27, 37, 54, 63, 65, 66, 67

Teams*: 2, 9, 12, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26 (** This is a new category I have recently added, as the number of incidents involving more than one person seems to have increased, and it is an important factor in abuse cases.*)

Good News: 42: Net Anti Vilification bill introduced; 43: Disability Rights Groups join effort to stop Trump's "public charge rule" as discrimination against people with disabilities; 69: New Improv Comedy show starring cast of only actors with Down syndrome.

Bad News: 4: Sacramento City USD segregates special education students; 7: Death of special education student at California high school; 20: MA Department of Public Health acknowledges delays in responding to nursing home complaints; 30: Jury deadlocks in trial of man for sexual assaulting a boy with I/DD, saying "I don't know how my DNA got on his underwear..."; 52: people with disabilities are locked up in Australia with no charges against them; 56: Survey reveals number of children with disabilities who were excluded from school activities; 68: School prints yearbook without any photos of special education students, republishes after complaints from their parents.

ABUSE & NEGLECT

1. "Former W.S. Neal Middle School Assistant Principal Indicted for Torturing a Child" - The former assistant principal at W.S. Neal Middle School has been indicted on a charge of torture and willful abuse of a child. An Escambia County, Alabama grand jury indicted 56-year-old Donald Eugene Hardyman Jr. on August 28th. He

remains behind bars on \$25,000 bond. “He grabs my son by the shoulders, slams him in a desk, then flips the desk over with my son in the desk,” Brian Hawsey said. “My son gets back up...he grabs my son by his shoulders again and slams him into another desk.” “My son has ADHD, he has ADD, ODD and he’s on the autism spectrum,” Hawsey said. – WKRG – September 4, 2019 – (Alabama) - <https://is.gd/eEYwmS>

2. “Sordid Details Emerge in Abuse of Patients at Laguna Honda Hospital” - The new details of the abuse by nurses no longer employed in the facility [are in reports from](#) the California Department of Public Health’s investigation of the abuse conducted in June and July and obtained by the San Francisco Examiner through a public records request. The abuse is said to have occurred between 2016 and January 2019. – San Francisco Examiner – September 6, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/2niwq9>
3. “Video of Girls Hitting, Bullying Boy with Autism at California School Draws Outrage” -The distressed boy is seen surrounded by a group of girls who laugh while hitting and pulling at him on campus at Rowland High School. In the video, he fights back, trying to push and swat them away while in tears. "The administration handled the situation with immediate and firm disciplinary action before the end of the school day," the school said in a [statement](#) after the video quickly spread online. The school did not provide information on how the incident was handled, but students told KTLA the girls were suspended for five days. – Fox 13 – September 6, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/nHmHRm>
4. “Lawsuit Alleges SCUSD Discriminated Against Students with Disabilities” - "It's our understanding and belief that the district segregates approximately half of its students with disabilities into either entirely separate schools," said Carly Munson, attorney for Disability Rights California. "So, non-public schools or even public

schools that only serve students with disabilities." The Sacramento City Unified School District is being sued by advocacy groups that claim the district is discriminating against students with disabilities. – KCRA – September 6, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/gv7arP>

5. "Plea Agreement Proposed in Case Alleging Man Assaulted 13-Year-Old" - Norris Blaine Domer, 55, of Martinsburg, is charged with three counts of third-degree sexual assault, three sexual assault-related charges and three sexual abuse-related charges after the alleged assault of a disabled juvenile. The victim first disclosed on May 22, 2018, to a neighbor that Domer was having sex with her, court records said. The indictment alleges the crimes were committed as early as 2016. – The Journal – September 10, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/K2LJYO>

6. "Deaf Woman Said Jack in The Box Worker Refused Her Order, Mocked Her. It's on Video." - A California woman who is deaf said she was yelled at, mocked and denied service at the drive-thru of a Jack in the Box restaurant because she drove straight to the service window without placing her order at the drive-through's speaker. – NBC News – September 8, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/lr2AQ8>

7. "Friends Demand Answers after Student with Special Needs Dies at OC High School Campus" - Students at an Orange County high school are demanding answers after one of their classmates, a student with special needs, died from injuries sustained after crashing a security guard's golf cart on the campus. Dozens of students at El Modena High School walked out of class Thursday morning to protest the death of 15-year-old Emanuel Perez, known by many as Manny. The 15-year-old [died from "major" injuries he sustained after crashing the golf cart into a pillar](#), according to the Orange Unified School District. Specific details on the crash have not yet been released, but the school district says he was under supervision by a one-to-one aide at the time of the incident, and that others tried to stop him

unsuccessfully when he got on the golf cart. – ABC 7 – September 13, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/CFyogR>

8. “Man Charged with Elder Abuse for Operating 'Squalid' Home in College Area” - The city of San Diego shut down a squalid independent living facility in the College Area after an investigation found the residents living with bed bugs, cockroaches, rodent feces, and leaking gas pipes. Mark Rogers, the 59-year-old operator of the home, was charged Thursday on 22 misdemeanor counts, including one of willful cruelty to an elder, three counts of unlawful maintenance of a public nuisance, five counts of using the home without a proper permit, three counts of theft and 10 counts of failing to have a valid business certificate. – 10 News – September 13, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/P18TiQ>

9. “Brother of Abused Middletown Psych Hospital Patient Offers to Settle Lawsuit” - The patient, William Shehadi, was abused for 24 days in spring 2017 at the state-run facility. That abuse was [caught on surveillance footage](#) from a camera in Shehadi’s room. The abuse, the Courant reported, included supervisory nurse Mark Cusson and forensic treatment specialists. Footage showed the staff members kicking, hitting and taunting Shehadi, who is physically and mentally ill. Of the more than 35 workers dismissed from their jobs, 10 of them were arrested on cruelty charges. Nine of the 10 were convicted after entering pleas and a former supervisory nurse got a [five-year prison sentence](#) for his role in the abuse after a trial. – The Middletown Press – September 13, 2019 – (Connecticut) - <https://is.gd/yAQmgU>

10. “Nursing Home Mogul Philip Esformes Sentenced to 20 Years for \$1.3 Billion Medicaid Fraud” - Former Illinois and Florida nursing home mogul Philip Esformes wept and pleaded for mercy Thursday before being sentenced to 20 years in prison for what the U.S. Justice Department called the largest single health care bribery and

kickback scheme in American history. A separate hearing will be held in November to determine the amount of money and property Esformes may be required to forfeit. – Chicago Tribune – September 13, 2019 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/6UUn9E>

11. “Florida Nursing Home Employees Face Charges in Hurricane Irma Deaths” - Three former workers at a Florida nursing home where 12 died in extreme heat when [power was cut after Hurricane Irma](#) face charges after surrendering to authorities on Monday, the Associated Press reports. Lawyers Jim Cobb and Lawrence Hashish said their clients, two nurses and an administrator at the now-shuttered Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills, are expected to be slapped with manslaughter charges. – The Daily Beast – August 26, 2019 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/Z1utiW>

12. “2 Charged with Neglect of Elderly Watkinsville Grandmother” - Bridgett Rose Shenkel, 21, and Edward Parker Shenkel, 20, were both charged with the neglect of a disabled or elderly person, a felony, after the deputy concluded they were not providing the woman with adequate health care. In addition, the woman was transported to St. Mary’s Hospital and the Georgia Adult Protective Services was also contacted to investigate the matter. The brother and sister were released from jail on bond the day after their arrest. The deputy documented what he observed in the house from the nauseating odor of feces to the sunken-in bed that was brown from feces, along with feces on the carpet, the floor and piled in the unflushed toilet. – Athens Banner Herald – September 13, 2019 – (Georgia) - <https://is.gd/nXRxja>

13. “Head of Suburban Chicago Autism Center Accused of Fraud” - Latrice Harrell is the executive director of The Champion Center for Autism in Oak Forest. She is charged in U.S. District Court with health care fraud, making false statements in a health care matter and identity theft. Harrell of Olympia Field pleaded not guilty

Thursday. Federal prosecutors allege the 46-year-old Harrell billed Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois at least \$3 million for services never provided patients. As a result, Harrell received more than \$1.6 million from the insurer between November 2015 and May 2018. – WGN 9 – September 6, 2019 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/MPL1Ew>

14. “Former Quincy Chaplain Sentenced to 26 Years for Sex Crimes” - According to court records, James Riley, 58, was sentenced to a total of 26 years in prison on multiple charges in both cases. “If we were to take it to trial, I feel like we would have a very good case and would have very cooperative victims,” said Adams County Assistant State’s Attorney Anita Rodriguez. “The big thing about the negotiation is that none of these four victims will have to testify.” In the case involving nursing home residents. He pleaded guilty to two counts of Aggravated Criminal Sexual Abuse of a Victim over 60. – WGEM – September 9, 2019 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/iwqcnr>

15. “Ex-Abington Employees Plead Guilty to Taunting 91-Year-Old Dementia Patient” - Two former employees of The Abington in Glenview, a nursing home and rehabilitation center located near Glenview Road and Milwaukee Avenue, pled guilty to misdemeanor charges connected to the taunting of a 91-year-old patient — actions that were recorded and posted on social media. Brayon Cortez, 20, of 10380 Michael Todd Tr., Glenview, and Jamie Montesa, 21, of 911 Central Rd., Mount Prospect, were sentenced to supervision and community service. – Journal & Topics – September 9, 2019 – (Illinois) - <https://is.gd/jK8BaA>

16. “Lebanon Woman Charged with Felony Neglect after Leaving Special Needs Daughter Alone in Car” - Doris Lindsay, 54, is accused of placing her adult daughter in a situation that endangered her life or health, according to a probable cause affidavit obtained by News 8. Police described her daughter Rebekah Lindsay, 28, as

nonverbal and unable to care for herself. When the detective questioned Doris, who was working inside the cafe, she claimed her daughter had been in the vehicle for 10 minutes and would be picked up by somebody in “1 to 10 minutes,” according to charging documents. – WISHTV – September 11, 2019 – (Indiana) - <https://is.gd/Z0fxYk>

17. “Police: Elderly Man Abused by Adult Grandson and Daughter” - A concerned neighbor called the police when she witnessed an 87-year-old man being forced to push mow his yard at 9 p.m. by his 40-year-old grandson. Police have since charged the grandson and his mother with elder abuse. Clarence Dyal told police his daughter takes him to the bank once a week and withdraws money from his account, but “she won’t speak to him.” Officers confirmed that Clarence Dyal owns the home, but his grandson and his daughter – who is in the process of moving out of the home – keep him locked in his bedroom most of the time. “He talked about how he only has access to the bathroom,” according to Holtzleiter’s affidavit. “I asked him if he can get through the locked gate and he said that the only way he could do that is to go over the top, but he’d hurt himself.” – The Herald Bulletin – September 11, 2019 – (Indiana) - <https://is.gd/ctLGbm>

18. “Couple Legally Changes Adopted, Disabled Daughter’s Age from Child to Adult; Then Move to Canada Without Her: Docs” - [Kristine and Michael Barnett, 45 and 43, are facing neglect of a dependent](#) charges for allegedly leaving their adopted daughter in a rented Lafayette apartment in July 2013. The Lafayette Journal & Courier reported that the couple adopted Natalia—who has a form of dwarfism called spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia congenita (SED)—in 2010, two years after she moved to the U.S. from Ukraine through an adoption program. An affidavit alleged that the Barnetts rented the apartment for Natalia and [changed to her age to 22](#). Hospital records stated that doctors estimated her age to be 8 in 2010 and 11 in 2012, according to The Purdue Exponent. – Crime Online – September 13, 2019 – (Indiana) - <https://is.gd/Mf2Rkp>

19. “Kentucky Teacher's Aide Accused of Dragging Disabled Student” - News outlets report [Brenda Stamper](#) has since been fired from Campton Elementary School and charged with child abuse. A state police arrest warrant served Thursday says [Stamper](#) intentionally dragged the child by her hands when the student refused to return to class after recess on Aug. 28. The warrant says the dragging left visible injuries on the student. Authorities didn't immediately release the student's age or name. Wolfe County Superintendent Kenny Bell said [Stamper](#) was fired Friday after being put on paid leave. – The Washington Times – September 9, 2019 – (Kentucky) - <https://is.gd/Uvep6H>

20. “Massachusetts Department of Public Health Acknowledges Delays Investigating Nursing Home Complaints” - The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has acknowledged that it was not investigating complaints about nursing home care quickly enough for two years due to a lack of staffing. The acknowledgement came in an audit by state Auditor Suzanne Bump, which faulted DPH for not conducting investigations in a timely manner. Bump's office reviewed 200 cases involving complaints that had been deemed a high enough priority that they required an on-site inspection, out of a total of more than 1,500 with that designation during the audit period, between July 2016 and June 2018. – Mass Live – September 11, 2019 – (Massachusetts) - <https://is.gd/px9Abj>

21. “Two Men Charged in Sexual Assault of Vulnerable Adult at Mystic Lake” - Francis Ndegwa Kamau, 39, of Spring Lake Park was arrested in Minneapolis and booked in the Scott County Jail on Aug. 8 in connection with third-degree felony criminal sexual conduct. Kamau's arrest came three months after the county attorney filed charges against Kamau and Kenneth Wagacha Kibe, 37, of Burnsville. According to Prior Lake Police and court records, the warrant for Kibe has not yet been served, and he has not been

arrested. Both men are charged with third-degree criminal sexual conduct for sexual penetration of a person who “is mentally impaired, mentally incapacitated, or physically helpless.” The county’s criminal complaint states officers found multiple videos of the alleged assault and a text conversation about the victim on the men’s phones. – SW News Media – September 10, 2019 – (Massachusetts) - <https://is.gd/2s9StW>

22. “ Special Needs Student Repeatedly Bitten by Classmate on First Day of School, Family Says” - A special needs student in New Jersey had a traumatic first day of school after allegedly being bitten and bruised by a classmate. Video documents the more than five bite marks and bruises eight-year-old Emily Montero allegedly endured during her first day at William F. Halloran School No. 22 in Elizabeth. Her family says the special needs student was hurt by another child, while under the care of special needs staff at the school. The school district says three adults were in charge of the eight special needs students in the class at the time of the incident. – CBS New York – September 6, 2019 – (New Jersey) - <https://is.gd/3IbVUa>

23. “7 on Your Side Investigates: Video Shows Health Care Worker Accused of Assaulting Patient” - A family in New Jersey is accusing a health care worker of assaulting their elderly father while he drew their father's blood. The incident happened in August at a long term care facility in Union City and was captured by surveillance video. That video shows a phlebotomist, Rafael Manchego, drawing Benjamin Mejias' blood while he laid in his nursing home bed. In the video, Manchego appears to struggle to put a bandage on the patient after drawing the patient's blood. Manchego appears to become frustrated with the patient, and shortly after, is captured twisting the patient's arm in a manner the patient's family describes as overly aggressive. – ABC 7 NY – September 9, 2019 – (New Jersey) - <https://is.gd/CP4461>

24. “3 New Lawsuits Filed Against Tottenville Special-Needs School Allege Abuse” - Parents Alexandra Simone, Shawna Gallow and Suzanne Larancuent filed separate suits on behalf of their children on Aug. 30, 2019 against Volunteers of America — the organization that ran the Early Learning Center on Joline Lane — alleging that their children were subject to “torment, mental abuse, harassment, assault, battery, abuse, hazing and bullying” as a result of the negligence of five unnamed employees, listed as John/Jane Doe, and one named employee of the school. The newly filed lawsuits allege that the school, along with the six other defendants mentioned in the court documents, failed “to provide a safe environment as required by law and acceptable standards.” – SI Live – September 7, 2019 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/fP5jVa>
25. “Buffalo Man Pleads Guilty to Rape of Mentally Disabled Woman” - Blaine Boyer, 43, pleaded guilty to second-degree rape before Erie County Court Judge Kenneth Case. Prosecutors said Boyer admitted that he "engaged in sexual intercourse with the victim, who was incapable of consent by reason of being mentally disabled" in Buffalo on June 22. Boyer was charged with second-degree rape upon arrest; he had originally also been charged with second-degree endangering the welfare of an incompetent or physically disabled person. – The Buffalo News – September 12, 2019 – (New York) - <https://is.gd/oqZfB4>
26. “Woman Charged with Felony Elder Abuse Pleads Guilty to Lesser” - Ivory McPherson, a former assisted living facility caretaker charged with felony elder abuse in March pleaded guilty to a lesser charge last Thursday, September 5th in Ashe County Superior Court. According to Ashe County Line.com, twenty-five-year-old McPherson was alleged to have assaulted 77-year old Stephen Roop in his home earlier this year on Feb. 19th. In a plea arrangement with the state, McPherson accepted a reduced charge of misdemeanor assault on a handicapped person. – Go Blue Ridge- September 9, 2019 – (North Carolina) - <https://is.gd/VOhOvi>

27. “Police Arrest Caretaker for Throwing Hot Water on Disabled Woman Causing Burns” - Police call it a heinous crime, as a caregiver is accused of dumping hot water on a woman with disabilities, causing burns. Now, she's in the Hamilton County Jail after the serious allegations. Karen Taylor, 50, is set to be arraigned Tuesday morning in Hamilton County Court. North College Hill police said when the assault occurred, Taylor was employed by a company called RMS. – WLWT 5 – September 9, 2019 – (Ohio) - <https://is.gd/sxl1G0>
28. “Deputy Police Chief Urged Teen to Drop Sex-Abuse Charges at NC Group Home, Report Says” - A top officer in a North Carolina police department tried to get a teenager to drop sexual-abuse charges against an employee of a group home he owned, a state report says. James Hinson, who reportedly co-owns the group home, announced he would retire Friday from his job as the deputy police chief in Greensboro, the city said in a news release. The state report, which focuses on the Center of Progressive Strides, doesn't mention Hinson by name. But multiple media outlets, including the Greensboro News & Record, have reported that Hinson co-owned the home for teenagers. – The News & Observer – September 13, 2019 -
29. “Mannford Police Call Case of Elder Abuse 'Sick & Sadistic’” - Mannford Police are investigating what they are calling a "sick and sadistic" elderly abuse case. The police chief said he is frustrated and believes action could have been taken earlier this summer to stop the abuse. Today, Mannford police arrested certified nursing assistant Senite Smith for complaints of abuse by a caretaker and sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult. Police say they expect to arrest three other men for the crimes. They believe seven patients were abused over the past several months. – News On 6 – September 6, 2019 – (Oklahoma) - <https://is.gd/qymbxF>

30. “Jury Deadlocks in Sexual Assault Trial” - Prosecutors plan to retry Jose Armando Chavez, 52, of Oklahoma City. Oklahoma County District Judge Natalie Mai has not yet set a new trial date. Chavez is accused of assaulting the developmentally disabled boy on Dec. 29, 2013. He took the witness stand Wednesday and denied the crime, telling jurors he didn't know how his DNA ended up on the boy's underwear. Chavez said the boy's underwear could have belonged to him because he was very skinny when the alleged crime occurred and bought the same size underwear. "We will retry this case and see that justice is done." – The Oklahoman – September 13, 2019 – (Oklahoma)- <https://is.gd/FDjxgy>
31. “Oregon under pressure to provide services for at-needs kids” - State Sen. Sara Gelser, a Democrat from Corvallis and chairwoman of the Senate Human Services Committee, said she wants the number reduced to zero quickly. Gelser, who has been at the forefront in the effort to bring the kids back to Oregon, said newly released documents show that as recently as last November, the Department of Human Services, or DHS, anticipated having over 120 kids in-out-of-state placements by the end of June. The state reversed course amid reports the children face abusive environments in some of those facilities. – Greenwich Time – September 6, 2019 – (Oregon) - <https://is.gd/2eRjib>
32. “People Can’t Afford to Bathe Themselves’: What Life is Like for Pennsylvanians Who Lost Cash Assistance” - Dalia is a former beneficiary of the state-run program, which provided a \$205-a-month stipend to more than 12,000 people with disabilities, in treatment for addiction, and fleeing domestic violence. This summer, the Republican-controlled Legislature voted to eliminate it as part of a budget bill signed by Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf. – Pennsylvania Capital Star – September 11, 2019 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/MsGMWa>

33. “Driver Charged for Leaving Student with Special Needs in Van” - A driver who left a Pennsylvania high school student with special needs unaccompanied in a school van for four hours has been charged. The Morning Call reports 75-year-old Rodger Sander, of Palmerton, was charged with reckless endangerment Friday. – WITF – September 7, 2019 – (Pennsylvania) - <https://is.gd/zwfPqN>
34. “Lawsuits: Two Orangeburg Special Needs Students Repeatedly Sexually Assaulted by Special Needs Classmate” - Two lawsuits filed against the Orangeburg Consolidated School District allege two special needs students were forced to perform sexual acts and raped multiple times by a fellow special needs classmate at Edisto High School earlier this year. The lawsuits allege what was previously Orangeburg Consolidated School District Four was negligent in ensuring the students within the class were protected and properly supervised. Additionally, the district is accused of being in violation of federal ADA law, Title IX and the IDEA Act. Documents released under the Freedom of Information Act reveal the application of the woman who applied for a substitute teacher position after the full-time teacher of the special education class at the high school took a leave of absence. – WISTV – September 13, 2019 – (South Carolina)- <https://is.gd/hqF2mH>
35. “Gregory Man Charged with Sexual Assault of Disabled Family Member” – Clarence Klein Jr., 56, is charged with sexual contact with a person incapable of consenting, a Class 4 felony; abuse of an adult with a disability, a Class 6 felony; and simple assault, a Class 1 misdemeanor. According to an affidavit filed on Aug. 28, the family member told law enforcement he had woken up to find Klein sexually assaulting him. After the alleged assault, the family member was hospitalized for self-inflicted injuries. – The Daily Republic – September 9, 2019 – (South Dakota) - <https://is.gd/AhBKuN>

36. “Chula Vista Group Home Suspected of Imprisoning Homeless” - Church leaders in San Diego, El Centro, and Brownsville, Texas were arrested Tuesday on suspicion of subjecting homeless people to forced labor, according to U.S. Department of Justice officials. Forced victims to beg for hours on the street and turn over all the money. – Yahoo News – September 21, 2019 – (Texas) - <https://is.gd/RYfa90>
37. “Police Charge Health Care Worker with Adult Abuse, Drug Fraud” - Susan Cassidy Gerado-Stewart, 71, 13974 Piney Woods Road, Timberville, stands charged in Shenandoah County General District Court on one count each of obtaining drugs by false pretenses and four counts of possession of a controlled substance, all felonies. Authorities also charged Gerado-Stewart with one count of petty larceny and seven counts of abuse or neglect of an incapacitated adult not resulting in injuries, all misdemeanors. – The Northern Virginia Daily – September 13, 2019 – (Virginia) - <https://is.gd/jv0d3p>

GUARDIANSHIP

38. “Britney Spears' Father, Jamie, Asks to Step Down as Conservator after Being Accused of Abusing Her Son: Report” - [Britney Spears'](#) father has [asked the court](#) to let him step down as her [conservator](#) after he was accused of [physically abusing her son](#). A source [told People](#) that Jamie Spears, 67, “decided to temporarily step down” following allegations that he put his hands on the [singer's](#) 13-year-old son, Sean Preston Federline. – Fox News – September 8, 2019 – (California) - <https://is.gd/gAkCKi>
39. “Gainesville Woman Sounds Alarm Over Guardianship” - Nearly a decade before law enforcement began investigating a professional guardian, Gainesville resident Angela Woodhull was desperately trying to get anyone’s attention to share her concerns

about Rebecca Fierle. State and federal investigators initially dismissed her claims. Lawyers threatened to sue her. She was discredited in court and local media outlets wouldn't listen. Woodhull, an accordion-playing comedian who also happens to be a licensed private investigator, claims that the former guardian drained nearly \$700,000 from her dying mother's bank account after being fraudulently being appointed by the courts. – Gainesville.com – September 6, 2019 – (Florida) - <https://is.gd/bUZRUR>

40. “Nessel Intervenes in Macomb County Guardianship Case” - Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel said Monday her office is intervening on behalf of a Macomb County family embroiled in a controversial guardianship case. In the highly publicized case, the daughter and stepdaughter of Robert Lee Mitchell and Barbara Delbridge complained that the elderly couple's guardians, Caring Hearts Michigan, had denied them visits and that the agency was appointed guardian and conservatorship of the couple over the objections of relatives. – The Detroit News – September 9, 2019 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/qW5efu>

41. “Board Reprimands Former Probate Judge over Guardianship Case” - In [an order issued late last week](#), the board wrote that Lewis had violated the Code of Judicial Conduct by failing to dispose of cases “promptly, efficiently and fairly.” Lewis formally accepted the reprimand instead of fighting it at a hearing that was scheduled to take place in October. At issue was the judge's handling of a nearly decade-long family feud over the guardianship of an elderly Newbury woman, Miriam Thomas, who has since died. [As Seven Days reported last year](#), three of her children had accused a fourth of abusing his power as her court-appointed guardian and depleting her assets by more than \$1 million. – Vermont's Seven Days – September 10, 2019 – (Vermont) - <https://is.gd/nTPGSE>

LAWS & LEGISLATION

42. “Why Victoria's New Anti-Vilification Bill Strikes the Right Balance in Targeting Online Abuse” - Two weeks ago, Victorian Reason Party MP Fiona Patten introduced a new anti-vilification bill to the state parliament. In the midst of heated public debate over the federal government's draft Religious Discrimination Bill, Patten's bill has been given far less attention. The Racial and Religious Tolerance Amendment Bill is described by Patten as an 'Australia-first' attempt to target hate speech and trolling on social media, particularly against women. – MENAFN – September 10, 2019 – (Australia) - <https://is.gd/aHovzs>
43. “Disability Rights Groups Join Challenge to 'Public Charge' Rule” - A coalition of 17 disability advocacy and civil rights groups filed a brief in support of a lawsuit filed by 21 states against the Trump administration’s “public charge” rule, which would expand the forms of public aid that could disqualify immigrants from receiving green cards. In the amicus [brief](#) filed Tuesday in the Eastern District of Washington, the groups, which include the Center for Public Representation (CPR), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network and the American Association of People with Disabilities, argue the rule will restrict disabled people from becoming citizens. – The Hill – September 11, 2019 – (District of Columbia) - <https://is.gd/6Q5RJ2>
44. “New Hampshire Law Helps Protect Vulnerable Adults from Financial Exploitation” - A new law in New Hampshire, taking effect Sept. 8, will help protect vulnerable adults from financial exploitation. Securities brokerage firms and investment advisors can now delay disbursement of funds from a financial account if they believe it could result in exploitation. A 2016, report from the AARP Public Policy Institute says one in five older Americans are victims of financial exploitation each year. Those victims lose \$3 billion annually or more than \$120,000 apiece. – WCAX 3 – September 8, 2019 – (New Hampshire) - <https://is.gd/X3R6Ct>

45. “Poe Bats for Protection Vs Elderly Abuse” - Sen. Grace Poe wants to institutionalize an assistance program to victims of elder abuse, and the training of health and government professionals to assist such victims. In a statement, Poe cited the particularly alarming development in the incidence of elder abuse, as she filed Senate Bill 946, which aims to protect senior citizens from abuse, neglect and exploitation. – Business Mirror – September 7, 2019 – (Philippines) - <https://is.gd/GiQ5bx>

STUDIES & STATISTICS

46. “U.S. Autism Rates Rising Fastest for Hispanics, Blacks” - Autism rates among U.S. children are rising fastest among blacks and Hispanics, researchers say. "We found that rates among blacks and Hispanics are not only catching up to those of whites -- which have historically been higher -- but surpassing them," said study author Cynthia Nevison, a research scientist at the University of Colorado Boulder. "These results suggest that additional factors beyond just catch-up may be involved," she added in a university news release. – HealthDay News – September 12, 2019 – (Colorado) - <https://is.gd/N1dZJL>
47. “Children with Special Needs are Marginalized at School, says NAO” - Children with special needs and disabilities are being marginalised by mainstream schools in England, according to a report by the National Audit Office (NAO) which says the system incentivises them to be less inclusive. The NAO accuses the government of misjudging the financial impact of its changes to education, with rising numbers of pupils with special needs unable to be accommodated in mainstream schools following a combination of funding strains, [off-rolling](#) and exclusions. – The Guardian – September 11, 2019 – (England) - <https://is.gd/Qtdr4r>

48. “Meals on Wheels is Starved for Cash, Leaving Many Seniors Hungry” - Indeed, millions of seniors across the country quietly go hungry as the safety net designed to catch them frays. Nearly 8% of Americans 60 and older were “food insecure” in 2017, according to a [recent study released by the anti-hunger group](#) Feeding America. That’s 5.5 million seniors who don’t have consistent access to enough food for a healthy life, a number that has more than doubled since 2001 and is only expected to grow as America grays. – Truth Out – September 3, 2019 – (National) - <https://is.gd/gKKIPV>

IMPROVED SUPPORTS

49. “Local Organization Works to Decriminalize Mental Health” - Puente Human Rights Movement held a rally to demand the release of Valentina Gloria and Breanna Gonzales, who are both held in Lower Buckeye Jail, outside of Maricopa County Attorney’s office Monday. Gloria, 19, and Gonzales, 17, who both have a mental illness and are survivors of sexual assault. -Downtown Devil – September 10, 2019 – (Arizona) - <https://is.gd/TfMRfN>
50. “Nessel Launches New Elder Abuse Investigation Tool for Law Enforcement, Prosecutors” - Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel announced Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019, one result of a series of listening sessions her newly created elder abuse task force held in Michigan. Now, law enforcement will use a uniform investigation form that aims to provide as much information to prosecutors as possible. – WWMT – September 10, 2019 – (Michigan) - <https://is.gd/qmkN5S>
51. “Columbia School Board Sends Seclusion, Restraints Policy Change Back” - The Columbia Public Schools Board of Education voted Monday night to send the policy change back to its policy committee for further discussion. ORIGINAL: A Columbia Public Schools policy change would require the district to provide parents a written report of any incident where staff uses seclusion, isolation or

restraint with a student. – KMIZ 17- September 9, 2019 – (Missouri)-
<https://is.gd/aQOhnp>

INTERNATIONAL

52. “People with Disability Tell United Nations About Abuse, Discrimination” - Today, I’ll be telling the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN Committee) that we have to stop locking up Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability,” said Damian Griffis, delegation co-lead and mentor, and CEO of First Peoples Disability Network. “We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability aren’t getting access to the supports we need, and all too often, end up in prison indefinitely when they haven’t been convicted of a crime.” – Mirage News – September 9, 2019 – (Australia) - <https://is.gd/em1z73>
53. “Bupa's Aged Care Homes Failing Standards Across Australia”- More than half of the nursing homes run by Australia's largest private provider Bupa are failing basic standards of care and 30 per cent are putting the health and safety of the elderly at "serious risk", according to accreditation reports analyzed by the ABC. Advocates are now asking whether Bupa — which receives almost half a billion dollars in government funding each year — is fit to be an aged care provider. But with almost 6,500 residents and 72 homes, they also question whether the Government could revoke Bupa's accreditation without "catastrophic" consequences for the residents. – ABC.NET – September 12, 2019 – (Australia) - <https://is.gd/xmNW1b>
54. “Female Therapist Is Charged with Sexually Assaulting Intellectually Disabled Woman, 38, After 'Grooming Her for Eight Months and Giving Her Medicine that Interfered with Her Memory’” - Tuggerah Lakes Police began an investigation and executed a search warrant at the occupational therapist's home on Friday, where

they seized several items. The woman attended Wyong Police Station later that afternoon, where she was arrested. She was charged with two counts of sexual intercourse with person with intellectual disability and one count of use intoxicating substance to commit indictable offence. She was bailed to appear in Wyong Local Court on October 2. – Daily Mail – September 13, 2019 – (Australia) - <https://is.gd/iTzehl>

55. “Disabled 41-Year-Old Man is Euthanized After Funding for Home Health Care Runs Out” - Canadian Sean Tagert, aged 41, was killed by assisted suicide after health officials decided to cut the funding for his in-home care hours. Mr. Tagert suffered from Motor Neurone Disease (MND) which is known in Canada as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). His illness reduced his ability to move his body, eat or speak, however his mental awareness remained unaffected. Doctors recommended 24-hour in-home care to support Mr. Tagert. However, Vancouver Coastal Health, initially only offered Mr. Tagert 15.5 hours of care a day, which was then raised to 20 hours a day, meaning that Mr. Tagert was forced to pay \$263.50 a day for the remaining care that he needed to survive. – Life News – August 21, 2019 – (Canada) - <https://is.gd/Z4AzkO>

56. “BC Parent Group Dismayed by Number of Times Special-Needs Kids Excluded from School” - Advocacy group BCEDAccess launched an online survey a year ago where they invited parents to document how many times their kids were excluded from classroom activities. “It could be anywhere from kids not being in school at all, or routinely missing an hour, two hours, three hours, half days, because of their disability and not getting the support they need to participate,” explains the group’s Nicole Kaler. The survey received nearly 500 reports and captured 3,600 instances where students were excluded from school last year. – City News – September 6, 2019 – (Canada) - <https://is.gd/A0zm47>

57. “2 Suspects Wanted after Man Allegedly Forced out of Wheelchair and Robbed in Brampton” - Officers said on Tuesday that Jerome Smith was arrested in connection with the incident. Durval Rego, a man who was allegedly assaulted in the lobby of his Brampton apartment and pushed out of his wheelchair, says he’s upset and scared he may be targeted again. – Global News – September 9, 2019 – (Canada) - <https://is.gd/t9c3qe>
58. “Sister's Anger at Unprovoked Gang Attack on Autistic Man in the Street” - Samantha Louise said the 38-year-old victim was having a private conversation with his brother and a friend outside her home on Ormerod Street in Accrington when he was approached by a group of men. The victim, who has autism and is classed as a ‘vulnerable adult’, was taken to Royal Blackburn Hospital for treatment to a head wound but no stitches were required. – Lancs Live – September 7, 2019 – (England) - <https://is.gd/JJYSJm>
59. “St Albans Mother 'Beyond Upset' at Schooling Support for Autistic Son” - A parent whose autistic son has not had a full education for two years as she battles to get support for him has told how she is "beyond upset". Denise, from St Albans, Hertfordshire, said her 13-year-old son has a place in a school but his special educational needs (SEN) were not being catered for. She has fought to get him assessed for an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). – BBC – September 13, 2019 – (England) - <https://is.gd/z8qq2U>
60. “Sick Idea Finds Way to Get Sicker” - The sick, twisted drag queen story hour has landed a new opponent after picking a new, vulnerable target. “What happens when you cross a deviant misogynistic sexual fetish with people who are intellectually disabled?” writes Anna Bohach [in an Activist Mommy online post](#). “You get a sexually exploitative nightmare that is the equivalent to a turn-of-the-century freak show.” She is speaking out after learning a London-based drag performer, Daniel Vais, has recruited

Down syndrome men for his “Drag Syndrome” shows that are now touring the United States and Canada. In the commentary, the conservative activist calls Vais nothing less than a “carnival barker” for exploiting men who are vulnerable to sexual abuse. – One News Now – September 13, 2019 – (England) - <https://is.gd/SA9j9T>

61. “William Meno Perez Accused of Strangling Woman in Wheelchair” - According to court documents the incident occurred at a Harmon apartment over the weekend. William Meno Perez and the woman were allegedly arguing. After the woman threw a plastic chair at the door, Perez is accused of taking the chair, throwing it back at her and hitting her face. He then allegedly began to strangle the wheelchair-bound victim even after she fell on the floor. He only stopped when an employee of the apartment called out from outside, court documents state. – KUAM News – September 10, 2019 – (Guam) - <https://is.gd/F915ne>

62. “Life Inside Ireland's Disability Services: Allegations of Abusive Staff and Unexplained Bruising” – Allegations have been made regarding physically and verbally abusive staff, unexplained bruising and poor hygiene standards in disability services in Ireland, according to documents released to TheJournal.ie under the Freedom of Information Act. – the Journal.ie – September 8, 2019 – (Ireland) - <https://is.gd/x0NrUs>

63. “Niece Faces 10 Years Jail for Neglect of Dementia Patient” - An 89-year-old woman with severe dementia was abused by her family before being eventually discovered in a horrific state - fused to a couch and with an ulcer down to the bone. She was supposed to be cared for by her 42-year-old niece and the niece's husband. When they pulled back the blanket they discovered her body appeared to be fused to the couch at her left thigh, hip and lower back. She was also covered in urine, faeces and pus, which had formed an adhesive gluing her to the sofa. Ambulance staff could not separate her from

the couch without causing further pain and injury. – Otago Daily Times – September 7, 2019 – (New Zealand) - <https://is.gd/1Dlo0H>
*** This gets my vote for Most awful!

64. “Disabled Passenger Told to Stand up and ‘Stop Doing Drama’ by Airport Security Staff” - Virali Modi, an American disability rights activist who has lived in Mumbai since 2008, is a wheelchair user and has been unable to walk or stand since she sustained a spinal cord injury in 2006. A [disabled passenger](#) travelling through [New Delhi](#) airport was “humiliated” when security staff ordered her to “stop doing drama” and “stand up” for a check. – Independent – September 11, 2019 – (India) - <https://is.gd/VPjp2E>

65. “Woman 'Beats Adopted Son' to Cash in on Disability Benefits” - Natalya Kasperskaya, from the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro, adopted the boy in 2014 and local media have reported that she beat him black and blue, that she starved him, that she pricked him with needles - all so she could leave him mentally impaired so the state would give her more money to look after him. – NZ Herald – September 12, 2019 – (Ukraine) - <https://is.gd/UXwg69>

66. “Swindon Mum's 15 Month Campaign of Controlling Abuse Against Disabled Daughter” - Jackie Williams was said to have controlled almost every aspect of her grown-up daughter’s life, telling her what to wear, stopping her from taking a prescription for depression, using disability benefits to buy clothes online, setting up online dating profiles and peppering her with texts when she went to meet friends. Williams was sentenced to 17 months imprisonment suspended for two years and ordered to complete a six-month mental health treatment programme with the probation service. A restraining order bans her from contacting her daughter for five years. – Swindon Advertiser – September 7, 2019 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/DwDCy5>

67. “Pensioner Accused of ‘Mercy Killing’ Disputed Evidence Against Her, Court Told” - A pensioner accused of killing her terminally-ill husband as an act of mercy told police that nurses had “put words in my mouth” during an alleged confession, a court has heard. Jurors at Stafford Crown Court have been told 80-year-old Mavis Eccleston was arrested a day after her husband Dennis died from a “potentially lethal” overdose of prescription medication. – Yahoo News – September 10, 2019 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/Bm7Npx>

MISCELLANEOUS

68. “Parent: Special Needs Students Left Out of Yearbook” - A parent says pictures of about 20 special needs and special education students have been left out of a yearbook for a junior high school in Louisiana. The Advocate reports Westside Junior High School in Livingston Parish is offering free reprints of its 2018-19 yearbook that will include two classes not in the original. Parent Angela Grunewald says she has a child in each class. She says some of the students are nonverbal or can't comprehend that they've been left out. She doesn't believe the misprint was intentional but thinks everyone should receive a corrected yearbook, not just those who request it. – Houston Chronicle – September 10, 2019 – (Louisiana) - <https://is.gd/4fl4NG>
69. “Meet the First All-Down Syndrome Cast Improv Comedy Group the Improvaneers” - True to form, Ohio-based improv group [the Improvaneers](#), with a cast comprised exclusively of people with Down syndrome, are saying “yes, and” to bringing a fresh perspective to the improv comedy world. On paper, the Improvaneers began in April 2018. However, according to [Improvaneers founder Rob Snow](#), the idea to create a comedy group for people with disabilities started a little earlier. – The Mighty – September 2019 – (Ohio) - <https://is.gd/6lsLFk>

70. “Legalizing Assisted Suicide 'Will Put Vulnerable People at Risk of Abuse’” - Vulnerable people will be at risk of abuse and pressure to end their lives prematurely if assisted suicide is legalized in the UK, an anti-euthanasia campaign group has said. The warning from Care Not Killing follows the death of British man Richard Selley at the Dignitas euthanasia clinic in Switzerland on Friday. – Christian Today – September 8, 2019 – (United Kingdom) - <https://is.gd/NhM8ek>
71. “On Sex and Relationships for Autistic Folks” - One of the greatest dangers that face an autistic adult is not having sufficient information to deal with adult issues,” writes autistic romance writer Dahlia Donovan [on her blog](#). One of the big problems, according to Dahlia, is that the information that’s out there isn’t designed for autistic folks. The Problem: Lack of Resources Specifically for Autistic Folks. “Sex education is almost entirely written by non-autistics,” Dahlia explained. – Rebellious Magazine – (No Date and No State) - <https://is.gd/bYkP19>