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## **Nevada Supreme Court Opinion Reversal Requiring Jury Trial Potentially Endangers Domestic Violence Victims**

**(RENO, Nev., September 16, 2019)** - On September 12, 2019, the Nevada Supreme Court issued an opinion that requires jury trials as an option for offenders of domestic violence misdemeanors. At issue is a law passed by the 2015 Nevada Legislature that prohibits an individual convicted of domestic violence battery from possessing a gun. This law, which mirrors federal law, increases the penalty for a domestic violence conviction so the batterer will be charged with a crime serious enough for a jury trial.

This is reversal of their 2014 opinion. NCEDSV is concerned this opinion will likely make it more difficult for domestic violence victims to be protected from their batterers because of cost and infrastructure barriers in the Nevada court system.

In Nevada, misdemeanor charges are the jurisdiction of municipal and justice courts, yet these courts are neither structured nor funded to conduct jury trials. District Courts, where jury trials are held, have no jurisdiction over misdemeanor domestic violence cases.

"This conflict must be addressed quickly," said Susan Meuschke, Executive Director of the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCEDSV). "Nevada is among the top ten states in which domestic violence batterers commit homicides, so the Legislature's action to prevent them from possessing guns is essential. At the same time, Nevada is one of only a handful of states that does not provide for jury trials in misdemeanor cases."

Meuschke continued, "The Court systems are already stretched to the limits of their capacity and we anticipate this decision will delay cases as they attempt to work through accommodating this process. Further, for victims to be required to face juries adds time and stress to the physical, financial and emotional challenges they already face. Unless solutions are found, we gravely fear that it will be the victims of domestic violence that will pay the price."

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**About NCEDSV**

The Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (previously The Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence), is the statewide coalition of domestic and sexual violence programs. NCEDSV provides statewide advocacy, education and support to the front-line organizations that help those impacted by domestic and sexual violence. To learn more, visit [ncedsv.org](https://ncedsv.org).