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According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, people with disabilities were the victims of 1.3 million nonfatal violent crimes in 2012 (BJS, 2014). These crimes included aggravated assault, rape, sexual assault, and robbery. People with disabilities are three times more likely to be the victims of violence than people without disabilities. They are also three times more likely to be the victims of serious violent crimes such as rape and aggravated assault. When these statistics are broken down by gender, males with disabilities are nearly twice as likely to be victims than their nondisabled male counterparts while women with disabilities are more than 3 times more likely to be victims of violence than women without disabilities. People with multiple disabilities account for over half of all victims of violent crimes committed against people with disabilities. There has been a 41% increase in violent crime against people with multiple disabilities since 2009. Compounding the issue is the fact that 97 - 99% of abusers are known and trusted by the person with an intellectual or developmental disability (Reynolds, 2005). Reports on abuse cases show that 32% of abuses were committed by family members or friends, and another 44% came from professionals working with individuals, such as care staff or transportation providers (Reynolds, 2005).

Affective Control Theory (Tsoudis, 2000) suggests that a person's presentation during sentencing impacts the length of sentence given to the perpetrator. When a person with a disability is the victim of a crime they may have difficulty providing a victim impact statement. People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may have difficulty with demonstrations of emotion and as a result, the perpetrator may receive a shorter sentence as a result of the difficulty experienced by the person with a disability in expressing the impact of the crime.

The statistics presented here today are sobering and suggest that SB-17-024 is an essential step in providing people with disabilities safeguards to ensure they are afforded equal protection under the law.

Reynolds, L.A. (2005). *People with mental retardation and sexual abuse*. Retrieved from www.wsf.org/behavior/guidelines/sexualabuse.htm

Tsoudis, O. (2000). Relation of affect control theory to the sentencing of criminals. *The Journal of social psychology*, 140(4), 473-485.

United States Department of Justice (2014). Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Crimes Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009-2012- Statistical Tables*. Retrieved from: <file:///C:/Users/laspe/Desktop/crimes%20against%20people%20with%20disabilities%20statistics.pdf>