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ATTORNEY GENERAL APPLAUDS HOUSE PASSAGE OF BILL TO ALLOW VIDEO, AUDIO MONITORING IN NURSING HOMES

Springfield — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded the members of the Illinois House of Representatives after it passed her proposal to allow nursing home residents and their families to place video or audio monitoring devices in their rooms to help ensure their safety and well-being. House Bill 2462 sponsored by Rep. Greg Harris (D-Chicago) passed with 85 votes in support and now heads to the Senate for consideration.

“Placing a loved one in a nursing facility is a difficult decision that many families will face,” Madigan said. “This measure provides an extra layer of security for nursing home residents, while giving their families peace of mind knowing that their loved ones are receiving safe, quality care.”

The initiative stems from complaints Madigan received from nursing home residents and families who are concerned for their relatives’ care and security. Madigan’s proposal would allow residents of nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities or their family members to purchase and install video or audio monitoring devices in their rooms.

“I would like to thank Attorney General Lisa Madigan for her leadership on this important issue for Illinois families,” Harris said. “When families place an aging loved one into a nursing facility, it is important that they have access to a commonly accepted and widely used technology to ensure safety, and assure families that their relatives are receiving attentive and caring services.”

Madigan cited an increasing need for additional safety measures at Illinois nursing homes as the state’s population continues to age. Currently, Illinois has over 1,100 nursing home facilities with over 76,000 residents. The U.S. Census Bureau also estimates that by 2030, 22.3 percent of Illinois’ population will be aged 60 and older, an increase of more than 28 percent from 2012.

Madigan noted that video and audio surveillance could be used as an added tool to help resolve disputes about suspected abuse or negligence. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) receives more than 21,000 calls annually and responds to approximately 5,000 complaints. In 2013, the IDPH found 106 allegations of abuse, neglect, or misappropriation of property against residents by facility staff to be valid.

The main provisions of Madigan’s proposal would:

- Allow for audio and video electronic monitoring devices;
- Require resident and roommate consent;
- Make nursing home residents or their representatives responsible for the purchase, installation and maintenance expenses of the devices;
- Prohibit facility retaliation for the use of the devices;
- Provide for recordings to be admissible into evidence in administrative, civil and criminal proceedings; and
- Provide misdemeanor and felony penalties for any person or entity that intentionally hampers, obstructs, tampers with, or destroys a recording or an electronic monitoring device.

If enacted, Illinois would become the fourth state to explicitly allow electronic monitoring devices to be installed in resident rooms in nursing home facilities.

