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

Springfield — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded the Illinois Senate's Public Health Committee 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, which is sponsored by Sen. Terry Link (D-Waukegan) and Rep. Greg Harris, passed by a vote of 5-0.

"Placing a loved one into a nursing facility means that a family is putting a tremendous amount of trust in the facility's caretakers," Madigan said. "Something as simple as a camera in a resident's room can go a long way in providing much-needed peace of mind for those families."

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 am proud to sponsor this measure to reassure families that their loved ones are receiving high quality care, especially when they cannot be present," Link said. "I appreciate Attorney General Madigan's advocacy for the residents of nursing facilities and their families."

Madigan cited an increasing need for additional safety measures at Illinois nursing homes as the state's population continues to age. Currently, Illinois has more than 860 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 monitoring 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. The legislation heads to the full Senate for consideration.

