

Statement of: Julia Alzofon **Date:** August 3, 2017 before the Disabilities Concerns Subcommittee of the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee

Regarding: Retail Store Security Systems that Hinder Access to Disabled Persons.

Statement:

I ask The New Mexico Legislature to make it a requirement that store security systems do not impede access to disabled persons and that safe, effective and practical “reasonable accommodations” be offered.

I am a disabled Medical Laboratory Director. The recently installed security “Carttronics POPS” system at the Albertsons’ St. Francis and Zafarano stores in Santa Fe, poses a barrier to my shopping there. The system’s purpose is to help prevent loss of inventory by locking a shopping cart wheel if the shopper does not leave the store within a narrow window of time after check out. This was 60 seconds but it may have been extended. If the time limit is exceeded, the system video-records the incident, an alarm sounds and lights flash. The recordings are captured and used for security purposes.

I have severe fatigue from low blood pressure and a slow heart rate and I must stop to rest quite often. I used to shop using one of Albertsons’ motorized electric carts, check out, rest, transfer my purchases to a regular shopping cart, rest again, leave the store and go to my car using the regular shopping cart both to carry my purchases and to support me while I walked. I cannot do that now because I would have to get a shopping cart activated just before leaving and that activity would tire me out to where I would have to rest again. I have chosen to buy fewer groceries and hand-carry them from the electric cart to my car instead.

When I discussed this matter with the store’s manager, Dan, and the District manager, Roger Molton, I was offered some alternatives. One is to be escorted while I go to my car while still in the motorized cart. I wonder how this is appropriate since these carts are not meant to be stable on the uneven surfaces found outdoors. These carts carry warning signs to this effect. They are also low to the ground and very slow so are unsafe for crossing the motor vehicle byway of the parking lot even with an escort. Another alternative offered was to rest and then find a qualified store employee to have a cart activated just before I leave or I could tell a manager at check out that I would need a cart after I had rested and that someone would monitor me until I signaled him or her and then I would be assisted out of the store. These alternatives involve tasks that are too exhausting to be practical for me and being monitored while I rest is not restful. I have contacted the Santa Fe Office of ADA Compliance to see if they might help me obtain permission to bring and use my own lightweight foldup cart but I have not heard back yet.

At this point, I cannot buy more groceries than I can carry because I cannot use the Stores’ shopping cart system in keeping with their rules. The new system imposes additional procedures,

surveillance and scrutiny on me simply because I cannot leave the store as quickly as everyone else. The managers with whom I spoke offered unsafe and impractical accommodations. I am concerned that other stores will adopt similar security systems. Food is a necessity and I would like to access this basic need unobstructed.

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Contacts:

Cartronics: <https://www.cartronics.com/>

Albertsons Customer Complaints: 1-877-848-6483 (ref#34444046)

Albertsons District Manager: Roger Molton 505-297-7778

Albertsons St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, Store Manager: Dan 505-992-8663

The City of Santa Fe ADA Coordinator : David A. Chapman

Phone: 505-955-2012 Fax: 505-955-2020 e-mail: dachapman@santafenm.gov

Electric Scooters' Safety: <http://humanfactorsblog.org/2009/06/16/electric-scooters-and-their-warnings-a-guest-post-by-kim-wolfinbarger/>