

Chairwoman Gossage and Committee Members,

I would like to start by saying it is a sad world when legislation is required to ensure no one dies alone. When I saw the brief description of this bill, I was excited thinking it would protect people like my mom who is in memory care at a patient care facility. Then I read the bill. This bill doesn't promote health freedoms, rather it promotes patient control.

Why would a facility be allowed to restrict visitors who are not included on a list of "authorized" visitors? I don't have immediate family members in town. According to this bill, unless my friends were included in my DPOA, I'm not allowed any visitors. If I'm terminally ill, or receiving end of life care, only two people are allowed to visit me at once. What if I have four children and I want them all with me at the same time? If I don't meet the medical requirements of this bill the facility is allowed to prohibit visitors? Or, if the facility determines I need rest more than the support of my loved ones, once again they are allowed to prohibit or restrict my visitors. Other than an ICU or similar type room, I have never been restricted to the dates and times or length of my visit. My sister-in-law spent several days in hospice before she passed. She had 5 children, 3 siblings with spouses, 2 parents and 6 nieces. We were all there and no one ever suggested we needed to leave.

What happens if a young adult (over 21) falls from a 2-story apartment balcony and lives but is unable to communicate for several days and has no DPOA? Is that person refused visitors until they heal enough to communicate their wishes? What if that never happens? Does **that** patient die alone? Yes, I know someone who experienced such an accident.

Next, we have the authorization for the facility to require all visitors to agree in writing to follow the facility's policies. My family and friends may love me, but I believe there are several who would refuse to sign any visitor agreement. I know I would have a difficult time signing one.

What happened to following the party platform? How does this bill value life? Do you honestly believe this bill is giving an individual control over their health care when a facility is allowed to dictate who they can see, when they can be seen, and how many can see them at one time? Our platform says "Families and communities are not abstract constructs, but rather, natural and intrinsic to human existence." Yet this is an attempt at passing a bill which restricts "families and communities."

After what happened in hospitals and other health care facilities during Covid I don't think any patient care facility should be immune from civil liability.

I saw what the Covid lockdowns did to the elderly in a health care facility. FaceTime chats, window visits and phone calls are not conducive to healing. Direct contact, hugs, holding a hand, or simply just being there do much more to promote healing and mental health. I truly believe my mom's dementia progressed more rapidly during the Covid lockdowns. Do I have any proof of this? No. But I did observe the decrease in her desire to live, an increase in depression, and a definite decrease in her interaction with others even after the lockdowns were lifted.

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I'm baffled that any Republican thinks this is a good bill. Covid not only took people from us, but also freedoms that I'm afraid will never be restored. Passing this bill would be a continuation of the disaster

that was started in a lab in Wuhan. Change this bill so that no restrictions are placed on any patient's visitors. Rather than protecting the patients from their visitors, protect them from the systems which were implemented during Covid and are now the norm. I strongly encourage the committee to vote no on HB2264.

Respectfully,

Kari Sue Vosburgh