

March 3, 2024

House Committee on Health and Human Services

Proponent, SB 352, written testimony only

Respected Chair Landwehr and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB 352, the John D. Springer Patient Bill of Rights. I am a proponent of this bill and understand it has been scheduled for a hearing on March 5.

While I personally had no family members who were isolated from me in a hospital or senior care facility during the pandemic, I couldn't help thinking of how this would have affected me 12 years ago when my own mother was a resident of the Sweet Life at the corner of 119th and Lamar Avenue in Overland Park, 5 minutes from my home. My mother was 90 years old and a retired general practice physician (she would proudly correct me and said she was in Family practice, as that term changed while she was practicing). I couldn't help but think of her every day during that time, realizing how terrible it would have been for me and my family AND FOR HER, if she'd been stuck there with no family support of any kind. Knowing her, she would have headed for the door, but the point is that was a terrible time for so many people. I know many lost their parents during this time and were not able to be there during their last days and hours and minutes. Honestly, I really can't imagine it.

I understand this bill would require hospitals to allow in-person visitation, adopt visitation policies and procedures and it would create a civil cause of action for violation of these rights. We simply cannot EVER allow a repeat of the pandemic policies to take place in our state again. We...all of you...have rights as do our parents and anyone in a hospital setting. The Constitution of our country and the State of Kansas were not set aside anywhere in those documents for a time such as then. Actually, the country has been through similar times, but the Constitution was not shredded.

Please pass this bill favorably out of committee.

Thank you so much.

Most sincerely,

Jill O'Connor

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